Lady Carnarvon talks about Howard Carter, the 5th Earl of Carnarvon and Highclere Castle’s Egyptian connections
Features

8 The mysterious Mr Mellaart
A tribute to an old friend and fellow archaeologist who led a rich, inspired and sometimes controversial life. John Carswell

10 Amarna – city of light
A century after the world-famous head of Nefertiti was discovered, we look at what life was like in Akhenaten’s capital city. Barry Kemp

16 Roaming with Romer
Talking to Egyptologist, historian and writer John Romer. Diana Bentley

18 Is this the wickedest woman in history?
Going beyond scathing Roman propaganda and glamorous Hollywood images in search of the real Cleopatra. David Stuttard

22 Carnarvon, Carter & the curse of Tutankhamun
Lady Carnarvon explains her husband’s deep family connections with Egypt and why she loves the country and its people. Lindsay Fulcher

26 A history of handy work
Taking a look at the meaning of handprints and stencils in prehistoric caves and in today’s graffitied cityscapes. George Nash

30 From ‘wine-dark sea’ to silver screen
The cultural journey of Homer’s hero across the centuries. Edith Hall

34 Mayan days
Did the Maya really predict the end of the world? Murray Eiland

38 Constantine the great
Looking at the man behind the revolutionary Edict of Milan, which established Christianity in Europe. Dalu Jones

42 Gifts and discoveries
A tour through the galleries and the history of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge. Nicholas Thomas

46 Green Spain
Finding traces of the Romans and the Visigoths in the sites, churches and sweet chestnuts of Cantabria and Asturias. Ursula Kampmann

50 Apps on tap
How iPads, tablet screens, apps and the Google Art Project are helping archaeologists, Classicists, art historians and students. Kirsten Amor

Regulars

02 From the Editor
03 In the news
54 Book reviews
56 In the saleroom
59 Calendar
Those ladies of the Nile

Ancient Egypt is a passion for some, an obsession for others, but no one can ignore the grandeur and mystery of its civilisation.

On 6 December it will be 100 years since the exquisite, unfinished head of Queen Nefertiti, that graces our cover, was found on a shelf in a sculptor’s dusty workshop among the ruins of the city of Amarna. Anyone who has seen the head – displayed as it is in a glass cabinet, so it can be seen from every angle, in Berlin’s Neues Museum – cannot help but agree that she is one of the most beautiful women ever portrayed.

Her husband Akhenaten, on the other hand, was a strange-looking man who could almost be described as horse-faced, with large ears, a pot belly and a slouching posture. When he decided to change the religion of Ancient Egypt and to build a new capital city much further north than Thebes, he turned the country’s stable and ordered history upside down for over 20 years, some would say for ever. Professor Barry Kemp has been excavating at Akhenaten’s capital, Amarna, for 35 years, so who better to describe the setting that this radical king and his wife inhabited over 3,000 years ago?

Another alluring, much later, Egyptian queen was Cleopatra VII who, despite Elizabeth Taylor’s smouldering film portrayal, was not a great beauty – but what she lacked in looks she more than made up for in personality, intelligence and political instinct. Two of the greatest Roman generals were captivated by her charms, but the third defeated her and she died, allegedly, from a snake bite.

It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bite that led to It was an infected mosquito bit...
A Roman shipwreck in Antibes

A team of French archaeologists from the Institut National de Recherches Archéologiques Préventives (INRAP) have uncovered a Roman shipwreck in Antibes in what was once part of the bustling ancient port of Antipolis. It all started with a routine exploration prior to the building of an underground car park on the site of the ancient harbour basin, which silted up in antiquity and today is located between the modern marina and the ramparts.

A preliminary diagnosis carried out in 2007 by core-boring (the bottom of the ancient port is 4 to 3 metres below today’s sea level) revealed archaeological material from the third century BC to roughly the sixth century AD, and the possibility of finding a shipwreck was not ruled out.

Excavation proper could only start when seawater was pumped out of the basin, in early 2012. Layers of sediment were examined and numerous objects extracted. Because the sediment was below sea level, it helped to preserve organic material such as wood, leather (used for the soles of shoes) and cork (stoppers for amphorae). The wreck itself was uncovered during the excavation of the last section, lying on its side in shallow water (less than 1.60 metres below the ancient sea level), and the preserved section is over 15 metres.

In conjunction with the Camille Jullian Centre, INRAP commissioned a specialist in naval archaeology to analyse and interpret this important find.

The remains consist of a keel and several hull planks joined together by thousands of wooden pegs inserted into mortises hollowed out in the planks. About 40 transverse ribs (shown right) are lying on top, some fixed to the hull by metal pins. The wood used is mainly conifer. Parts of the hull are reinforced by lead plating held in place by small nails.

Tool marks (saw and adze) are also clearly visible, as is the pitch used to make the hull watertight. This was a medium-sized trading sailing boat (20-22 metres long, 6-7 metres wide, with a hold about 3 metres deep). The fact that the hull was not built over a frame and that the ribs were only there to reinforce it, confirm the dating suggested both by stratigraphy and by the ceramics collected near the vessel, around the second century AD. The ship can be classified as a typical imperial Roman vessel trading in the western Mediterranean. The wreck has been taken apart and sent off to the ARC-Nucléart laboratory in Grenoble, which specialises in treating ancient waterlogged wood. In 18 months’ time it will be reassembled and exhibited in Antibes.

Nicole Benazeth

Winner of the Minerva/Peten Travels Prize Draw

In our January/February issue we announced a Prize Draw for a 16-day archaeological tour of Ancient Anatolia for two (worth over £6,500). Here, the lucky winner, Roald Knutsen, describes his trip:

‘When I heard that I had been fortunate enough to win the Hittites and Phrygians tour arranged by Peten Travels of Istanbul (www.petentour.com), I could hardly believe my luck. My personal interest in the region lies in the ancient trade routes that led east along the famed Silk Road, so here was a rare opportunity not to be missed.

‘It is difficult to outline briefly all we saw, as we visited so many important ancient sites scattered across the Anatolian plain. But I will say that at each of them – ranging from the Phrygian capital of Gordium, near the tomb of King Midas’ father, to the incredible 10,000-year-old site of Catal Höyük, an ancient city which once had a population of 8,000 people – we were welcomed and guided round them by the excavation director himself or a senior archaeologist. Their enthusiasm was boundless and infectious, and their patience was unexpected and exemplary.

‘Besides these two famous excavations, our tour also included Kaman-Kale Höyük, Pteria, Alaca Höyük, Sapinuwa, the city remains of Bogazköy-Hattusa, Kültepe and Açik Höyük, the neo-Hittite rock relief of King Warpalawas at the mountain site of Ivriz.

‘We saw buildings from all periods, ancient to early medieval, temples and other sacred places, ancient sculpture and excellently laid-out modern museums displaying the most important finds. Outstanding for me was to see one of the three surviving cuneiform texts of the peace treaty between the Hittite leader Muwatalli and the Egyptian pharaoh Ramesses II after the Battle of Kadesh.

‘Throughout the tour, put together by Mrs Ifet Ogou, Director of Peten Travels, we were accompanied by an excellent and knowledgeable guide and supported by Minerva. If ancient Anatolia interests you, don’t hesitate – book your place now.’
Lost Roman town resurfaces

Having lain dormant for 1,500 years, the town of Interamna Lirenas, 50 miles south of Rome, has been rediscovered and is changing scholars’ view of the nature of Roman colonial settlements.

Long known about from the writings of the Roman historian Livy and the Greek geographer Strabo, Interamna Lirenas had always been seen as a quiet town of little consequence, which followed the standard template of urban development. But the recent work of a collaborative project involving Cambridge University, the British School at Rome, the British Academy and the Italian State Archaeological Service has shed more light on this supposed backwater.

The exact location of the town, in the Liri Valley in Southern Lazio, was gleamed from ancient sources. The fact that it was still unexcavated, and was thought to have developed relatively little during the Imperial Roman era, made the town an ideal candidate to accurately reflect original colonial settlement features.

Led by Martin Millett, Laurence Professor of Classical Archaeology at Cambridge and Fellow of Fitzwilliam College, and Dr Alessandro Launaro, Postdoctoral Fellow at the British Academy and Fellow of Darwin College, the team knew that a full-scale excavation of the site, which covers more than 25 hectares, would be impractical, so they started with geophysical mapping.

By using a combination of scientific techniques – ground-penetrating radar and magnetometry – the team began to build up a picture of the original street plan, and specific features came to the fore.

The greatest surprise was the appearance of a building with radially arranged walls and tiered seats within, which soon revealed itself to be a Roman theatre. This suddenly changed the perception of this town as a small settlement. With its dominant temple and forum, Interamna Lirenas distinguishes itself considerably from nearby Fregellae, which is also on the Via Latina – the principal road leading south-east out of Rome – and which was previously thought to be a comparable colonial town.

Millett explained the significance of the find: it challenges the formerly held view that Rome projected a certain image of itself by building all colonial towns to a pattern, and hence organising what the communities’ priorities would be, a view this discovery now challenges.

There are hopes that excavation may begin again in earnest in summer 2013, starting with the northern corner, which incorporates the theatre and the forum, this would hopefully allow the precise dating of these structures. The local mayor hopes to turn what is know an unassuming stretch of farmland into an archaeological park in the future.

Geoff Lowsley

Dental detritus reveals useful facts

The idea of picking through someone else’s dental detritus would fill most of us with horror, but it is by doing exactly this that Christina Warriner, of the Centre for Evolutionary Medicine at the University of Zurich, is gleaning valuable information about the lives of Iranian miners who died 2,000 years ago.

Archaeological geneticists study some of the more unusual elements of the material remains of our ancestors to gain an insight into the past. From animal, plant and bacterial remains to human tissue, bone and teeth, all the biomolecules left in what was once living can pass down a vast amount of information about the surrounding environment.

Warriner explained how millions of threads of DNA belonging to bacteria that inhabited the mouth and throat are captured in dental calculus (commonly called plaque). Extracting and examining these DNA threads should ‘allow us to investigate the long-term evolutionary history of human health and disease, right down to the genetic code of individual pathogens, and it should allow us to reconstruct a detailed picture of the dynamic interplay between diet, infection and immunity that occurred thousands of years ago’.

Her particular area of interest is the mummies of miners from the salt mines of Chehr Abad, in north-west Iran, dating from the 4th century BC to the 4th century AD. The bodies of men were naturally preserved by desiccation when the salt mines collapsed. Unlike Egyptian mummies, they did not have their organs removed and, incredibly, some of the tissue is still intact.

The aim of her project is to find evidence for an inherited genetic trait, a deficiency in the enzyme G6PD (glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase), which causes anaemia, a particularly common condition in modern-day Iran.

It has been postulated that many of today’s digestive disorders may be precipitated by modern food-production techniques causing an imbalance in the bacteria within the gut. It is possible that identifying the bacteria carried by our ancestors could help to determine what is a healthy balance.

This type of study need not be limited to digestive conditions, however. Warriner explains: ‘Diseases and disorders such as periodontitis, heart disease, allergies and diabetes all have an evolutionary component related to the fact that we live in a different environment to the one in which our bodies evolved.’

So we may also learn valuable lessons that can help in modern medical treatment.

While dentists tell us to brush our teeth regularly, we are fortunate that those before us were not schooled in dental hygiene, as we now have this invaluable archaeological record written in their plaque.

Geoff Lowsley
Ancient obsidian trade in Syria reflects current conflict

Dr Ellery Frahm, an archaeologist from the University of Sheffield, has revealed the origin and trading routes of razor-sharp stone tools 4,200 years ago in Syria, where many ancient sites are under threat due to the current conflict.

An interdisciplinary research team hopes this new discovery, which has major implications for understanding the world’s first empire, will help to highlight the importance of protecting Syria’s heritage.

Obsidian, naturally occurring volcanic glass, is smooth, hard, and far sharper than a surgical scalpel when fractured, making it a highly desirable raw material for crafting stone tools during most of human history. In fact, obsidian tools continued to be used throughout the ancient Middle East for millennia after the introduction of metals, and obsidian blades are still used today as scalpels in some specialised medical procedures.

Researchers from social and earth sciences studied obsidian tools excavated from the archaeological site of Tell Mozan, in Syria. Using new methods and technologies, the team successfully uncovered the hitherto unknown origins and movements of this coveted raw material during the Bronze Age, more than four millennia ago.

Most obsidian at Tell Mozan, and surrounding archaeological sites, came from volcanoes some 200km away in Eastern Turkey; this can be confirmed by models of ancient trade developed by archaeologists over the last five decades. However, the team also discovered a set of exotic artefacts made from obsidian originating from a volcano in central Turkey, three times further away. Just as important as their distant origin is where the artefacts were found: a royal palace courtyard.

They were left there during the height of the world’s first empire, the Akkadian Empire – the Akkadians invaded Syria in the Bronze Age. These finds have exciting implications for understanding links between resources and empires in the Middle East.

Dr Frahm, Marie Curie Experienced Research Fellow at the University of Sheffield’s Department of Archaeology, who led the research said: ‘This is a rare, if not unique, discovery in Northern Mesopotamia that enables new insights into changing Bronze Age economics and geopolitics. We can identify where an obsidian artefact originated because each volcanic source has a distinctive “fingerprint”. This is why obsidian sourcing is a powerful means of reconstructing past trade routes, social boundaries, and other information that allows us to engage in major social science debates.’

Not only did Dr Frahm and his collaborators identify the particular volcano where the obsidian originated, they were able to pinpoint two particular areas on the exact flank of the mountain where it was collected.

Such specificity was possible using a combination of scientific techniques, including a portable X-ray analyser and instruments that measure weak magnetic signals within rocks.

The earliest techniques of matching Middle East obsidian artefacts to their volcanic origins were developed partly at the University of Sheffield by Colin Renfrew, Lecturer in the Department of Prehistory and Archaeology from 1965 to 1972. Dr Frahm commented: ‘Studying the use and origin of obsidian reveals some compelling parallels with the modern-day Middle East and has resonance with issues that the region faces today.’

For example, we think that invading powers, intent on controlling access to valuable resources, would have faced resistance to occupation from small states across the region ruled by peoples who were ethnic minorities elsewhere in the Middle East.

‘A mountain insurgency could have resulted in a blockade of natural resources, and the colonisers may have been forced to instead seek resources from more distant sources and forge alliances with other regional powers to raise their status. This was 4,200 years ago during the Bronze Age – the parallels to the recent history of the area are extraordinary.’

I went to Syria as an American after the US had called Syria part of the “Axis of Evil”, and only had positive experiences there. The degree of hospitality I encountered was extraordinary. Perfect strangers took me into their homes during my journey from Damascus to the site, which involved a nine-hour bus-ride through the desert. I was welcomed, fed, offered a shower and change of clothes, introduced to family and friends, and shown around.

‘The current situation in Syria is tragic and precarious. It can be so overwhelming and heartbreaking that I have to take a break from it which, unlike the people who are living through the fighting, I have the luxury of doing. Whatever the future holds, there will be a lot of work to do there, both humanitarian and archaeological, and I’m very much interested in the interfaces between them. How can archaeology perhaps help Syria recover from this?’

*Dr Frahm’s original paper is published online in the Journal of Archaeological Research at [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305440311004857](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305440311004857).*

---

1. Dr Ellery Frahm, Marie Curie Experienced Research Fellow at the University of Sheffield’s Department of Archaeology.

2. Some of the ancient obsidian blades, dating from 4,200 years ago, excavated at the site.

3. The site of Tell Mozan in Syria is situated near the border with Turkey and Iraq.
Mystery red head identified

A fine, Roman, red porphyry head, recently sold by the Temple Gallery in London, has been identified as that of a Tetrarch, dating from the early 4th century AD.

Because of its Julio-Claudian hairstyle, at first glance the head appears to belong to the beginning of the Roman Imperial period, circa 50 BC – circa AD 50. But this retrospective look was probably intentional because any dynasty, particularly during insecure times – and these times were indeed insecure – would clearly want to proclaim its legitimacy by linking itself to an impressive imperial lineage.

There is a very similar example in the Vatican (except that it is a complete bust) that is said to be Constantius II (d. 361). This bust, now in the Museo Pio Clementi, was acquired in 1772 from Princess Cornelia Costanza Barberini so, unlike the famous porphyry sarcophagi of Constantine and Helena, it cannot be said that this item has resided on the Vatican Hill since late Roman times – but that is not to say the bust has not been in Rome since it was made. This and the London head are closely related, made at the same time and possibly in the same atelier, probably in Rome.

The style of the London head is quite different to the more crude style of porphyry sculpture emanating from Eastern Europe – like that of the massive, full-length Tetrarchs (scandalously looted from Constantinople in 1204) that now stand outside the Duomo in Venice.

Roman portraiture had become increasingly less realistic by the end of the 3rd century, as easily datable coins show, and images of the emperor and members of his family were hardly portraits but more properly representations of the high office that they held.

The London head is in excellent condition. The face has been polished in recent times – during the Renaissance or later (there is no way of knowing exactly when) – but despite this the original form has not been markedly altered.

Still apparent is the ethereal, rather dreamy expression of the eyes and countenance, first used in AD 313 or shortly before, at about the time when Christianity became the Rome’s state religion although, in fact, this look is derived from posthumous images of Alexander the Great, who died in 323 BC, particularly on the coins of Lysimachus (d. 281 BC).

It seems to me that the London head is one of an original group of four; the other three being the Vatican head and two other busts, still attached to their original pillars, that are in the Louvre. Like them, both the Vatican and the London heads were also originally attached to pillars. This is demonstrated by similar damage to the back of both heads. The back of the London head has a chip and the hair below it down to the nape of the neck has been re-cut and the back of the neck shows re-polishing. The surface of the hair on the rest of the head shows some wear but the re-cut hair is crisp and new. The Vatican head exhibits similar traits and this damage is clearly where the integral plain support has been torn away.

This corpus constitutes a group of four heads that would be consistent with their being a set of Tetrarchs. The attribution is further strengthened by the fact that this group of four heads is not replicated elsewhere.

It should be conceded that the two examples in the Louvre have been recorded as the heads of Nerva (AD 96-98) and Trajan (AD 98-117). There is also a porphyry head of Trajan in the Glyptotheque Ny Carlsberg, Copenhagen that is probably co-eval with them, although it might date to the early 2nd century AD.

Recent research, however, suggests later dates (early 4th century) for both the Copenhagen and Louvre heads as the earlier dates that have been attributed to them are before Imperial porphyry was more generally available.

The identification of this new head at the Temple Gallery is an exciting event matched only by my finding, in 1993, of another porphyry (the head of an emperor) that now resides in the Ashmolean Museum.

Richard Falkiner
I first met James Mellaart (Jimmy to his friends) at Jericho in 1952. He was one of a group of disenchanted young Egyptologists who had been unable to pursue their chosen career because Egypt was in the clutches of Gamal Abdel Nasser and thus forbidden territory. The group of youthful aspirants included Diana Kirkbride and Neville Chittick, both of whom, because of this reverse, became instead pioneers of investigative archaeology in Palestine and East Africa.

My own role, a very humble one, was to draw pottery and plans of tombs for the formidable ‘Great Sitt’ (sitt means ‘lady’), as Kathleen Kenyon was known to all the Arab workmen, with no aspirations of any sort except to earn my living (£1 a week) and free board and lodging. In those years we stayed in tents around an old two-storey farmhouse beside Elisha’s Spring, which pumped out thousands of gallons of fresh water every day and sustained the luxuriant gardens and orchards of modern Jericho (Ariha). It also sustained a refugee camp of over 60,000 Palestinians who had fled their villages in the wake of the Israeli conquest of Palestine in 1948.

Meals were taken on the first floor of the farmhouse, under the beady eye of the Great Sitt, who sat at the head of the table, at that stage in the evening sustained by several stiff gins and an ever-present pack of cigarettes. This did not suit Jimmy at all, and he and other non-conformists took their dinner in a little annexe off the main room, where they held subversive conversations about the dig and its progress. The ground floor beneath was occupied by the cook and his kitchen staff, and also served as a pottery storehouse where finds could be conveniently washed in the spring and laid out to dry on rush mats.

There was also an outhouse which was the Great Sitt’s office, where she spent long hours after dinner pondering on the daily results of her campaign. Incidentally, such was the powerful image of the Great Sitt, who proudly wore the hockey shorts she had had as a schoolgirl, that one of the younger workmen told me he was more frightened of her than of his own father. I myself once witnessed a spectacular demonstration of her authority. One day at breakfast she was informed that a mob of thousands of Palestinian refugees were gathered below, just about to storm the camp. She calmly finished eating, then strode downstairs to face the mob, across the stream from Elisha’s Spring. Planting her feet akimbo, she quietly lit a cigarette and simply stared at them. As if hypnotised, the mob quietly dispersed.

In the meantime the great main trench across the centre of the mound progressed onwards, until Kathleen Kenyon pronounced that bedrock had, at last, been reached, and retired to Jerusalem for the weekend. But Jimmy was cheekily not convinced, and on the Sunday returned to the site with his group of workmen and proceeded to dig a hole in the bedrock.

To give Kathleen her due, when she returned on Monday morning to be confronted by what he had done, she graciously conceded that he was right and began to dig down even further. The rest, as they say, is history. Or rather, prehistory, for the epic achievement of Jericho was to join history as we know it on to the prehistoric past of our cave-dwelling ancestors, and the evidence for the invention of farming and the domestication of animals, and civilisation as we know it today.

The climax came when she did indeed reach bedrock, and the evidence of semi-subterranean dwellings. Kathleen bellowed, ‘Get Dot!’ Dot was Dorothy Garrod, who was immediately flown out to Jericho and sent down the trench for two whole days. The conversation at dinner that night was monosyllabic: ‘Well, Dot, what have you got?’ To which Dot replied: ‘K, you’ve got it!’

What was ‘it’? ‘It’ was the moment, just after the last Ice Age, when mankind left its
comfortable caves and a hunter-gatherer existence, to settle beside the spring at Jericho and build a village based on agriculture and the domestication of animals – the first definite evidence of a link between the historical past and prehistory, some time around 9500 BC. It was Jimmy’s scepticism that had been the trigger for this momentous discovery.

James Mellaart was born in 1925 in London, of a Dutch father and an Irish mother. The family moved to Amsterdam in 1932, where his mother died and his father remarried, moving in 1940 moved to Maastricht. As a young man Jimmy worked at the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden and studied Egyptology. He returned to England in 1947 to start a BA at University College in London.

Jimmy was conspicuously proud of his Scots ancestry, as a member of the Maclarty clan, a branch of the Macdonalds. This led to a fervent admiration of everything Scottish and a lifetime’s happy consumption of whisky, one of the many endearing aspects of his singular personality.

In England he participated in one of Kathleen Kenyon’s postwar excavations at Sutton Walls, an Iron Age site in south-west England. He graduated from the Institute of Archaeology in 1951, and was promptly given a two-year Fellowship at the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara (BIAA). There he devoted himself to exploring much of south-western Turkey, either on foot or by staying overnight in villages anywhere he could find a bed, and being interrogated by his inquisitive hosts about his motives before being allowed to go to sleep.

In 1952 he met Arlette Cenani, whom he married in 1954 and who bore him a son, Alan, in 1955. This was also the moment when the curious incident of the Dorak Affair happened. As he told the story, he was accosted while on a train journey to Izmir by an attractive young Greek woman, Anna Papastrati, wearing an ancient gold bracelet. She took him into her confidence, told him the bracelet was part of a fabulous treasure hoard reputedly unearthed in the village of Dorak in Bursa province. She then invited him back to her house to see the hoard and allowed him to draw it and to make notes about it. In return he gave her his word to keep it secret (which he did) until she told him he could release the news. But she and the hoard both vanished into thin air. In 1958, he revealed his manuscript of over 60,000 words and annotated drawings, which were then published in the Illustrated London News. This caused a sensation, and a public outcry in Turkey, which accused him of being a party to a criminal theft. He denied the charge, and an independent investigation by the BIAA exonerated him. The entire manuscript has remained locked up by the BIAA till this very day. The few individuals who have seen it were astonished by the depth and detail of his record, which went way beyond the imagination of any scholar. The truth of the Dorak Affair has gone with Jimmy to his grave.

Arlette was his devoted partner at this time and remained so for the rest of his life. I remember meeting both of them when I was passed on by Kathleen to Seton Lloyd, Director of the BIAA, to work as a draughtsman between her seasons at Jericho, followed by a similar instruction to Sinclair Hood, Director of the British School of Archaeology in Athens, to keep me occupied in Athens and subsequently at Knossos.

At Beycesultan, where Seton Lloyd and Jimmy were working in tandem, I again was paid a nominal sum, and accommodated in a tent in the grounds of the old Anatolian house in the village which housed the archaeologists. One day, working on the site, I contracted sunstroke and was carried back to the village in a bullock cart. Arlette, who was acting as interpreter, photographer and general manager, took a maternal interest in my recovery. Later I stayed with the Mellaarts in Arlette’s stepfather’s magnificent wooden yali at Kanlica, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. Sadly it was destroyed by a fire which also burnt many of Jimmy’s excavation notes.

Seton Lloyd was a highly intelligent man who early on recognised Jimmy’s extraordinary talents, making him Assistant Director of the BIAA from 1959 to 1961 and, as I have said, jointly excavating Beycesultan with him. The only thing that disconcerted me was the fact that Jimmy proceeded to redraw all my pottery drawings. I realised many years later that this was not because they were inaccurate, but simply to etch the images in his own prodigious memory. That this can happen I can testify from my own experience, for I can remember almost to this day thousands of drawings I made at Jericho, which are indelibly etched into my consciousness.

I also remember being asked to make a copy of a wall painting at Beycesultan which they were convinced depicted a man leaping over a bull’s horns. I simply could not see this, and decided I would just copy the marks on the wall as best I could. They were perfectly happy with the result.

Jimmy’s real moment of glory came with his discovery of Çatal Höyük in 1958 and its subsequent excavation. This conclusively proved that the development of mankind was not limited to the Levant and the Fertile Crescent, but extended westward into the Cenani Anatolian heartland. This revolutionary discovery gave him fame and secured his immortality. Its extensive settlement and extraordinary array of artefacts suggest a date of around 7500-5700 BC.

Finally established as Lecturer in Anatolian Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology in London, and disdainful of committees and any formal academic responsibilities, James Mellaart inspired generations of young scholars with his sheer enthusiasm and breadth of knowledge.

His name has been linked to the concept of genius, which he may well have been. But for his many friends he will be remembered much more as a lovable human being, with all those eccentricities that made him utterly unique.

• James Mellaart
(14 November 1925–29 July, 2012)
History has its colourful episodes. For ancient Egypt none is more so than the 17-year reign of Pharaoh Akhenaten. From a position of unassailable authority, he set out to change the character of Egyptian kingship, creating an image of himself that is still uncomfortable to encounter and a simplified state religion that asserted that the only worthwhile object of veneration was the disc of the sun, the Aten. In pursuit of a mission to confound and to cleanse, he chose an empty stretch of desert beside the Nile to be the new place where his god could be properly venerated, on ground that was uncontaminated through prior association with gods or humans. He named it Akhetaten, ‘The Horizon of the Aten’. Lying roughly halfway between modern Cairo and Luxor, it survives as a major archaeological site now known as Tell el-Amarna or, more simply, Amarna. All that is novel about the ideas and culture of Akhenaten’s reign, and controversial about the personal histories of those involved, is summed up in the term to which the place name has given rise, the Amarna Period.

Akhenaten was not an ascetic looking for a life of isolated contemplation in the desert. He remained ruler of Egypt and of a substantial empire, and continued to think in terms of the grand architectural style that was so firmly rooted in Egypt. The city he created now strikes an odd note, however, a compromise between grand vision and a limited acceptance of what state power could achieve in city creation. For himself and his god he built palaces and temples at irregular intervals along a seven-kilometre line. It is 100 years this December since the world-famous painted head of Queen Nefertiti was discovered at Amarna. Barry Kemp, who has been working on the site since 1977, shares his findings about the city of Akhenaten and its people.
line that must have been close to the river. A cluster towards the middle, called in modern times the Central City, was clearly his centre of government. It included the ‘House of the Aten’, the main temple to the sun god. A mud-brick wall enclosed a flat expanse of desert measuring 800 by 300 metres (around 40 football pitches). Almost lost in this space were two stone-built temples that were, appropriately enough for a cult of the visible sun, series of open courts entered through traditional-looking pylon gateways. The courts were filled with rectangular stone offering tables that together numbered around 900. They were insufficient, however, to satisfy the king’s desire to display the scale of his piety, so a field of 920 extra ones were built from mud bricks in a corner of the great enclosure.

The offering tables were not symbols. Contemporary pictures of the temple show them piled with food offerings and incense. The ground outside housed a huge food depot where bread and meat, in particular, were prepared. Working out how the system functioned is a research exercise in itself. The idea behind it, that large temples were major providers of food and other commodities to the community, was not new. Akhenaten seems, in a spirit of literalism, to have wanted to make the scale of his piety and the people’s dependence on the Aten fully visible. It was the ultimate step in accounting transparency, in which everything was laid out in rows. For there can be little doubt that, after display beneath the sun, the destination of the food was Akhenaten’s court and at least a portion of the city’s inhabitants.

Akhenaten took his court and an important part of the administration with him to Amarna. Senior officials relied on junior officials, and all of them had extensive households. Among them were people who manufactured things for the court, including fine sculpture. In the end, probably as many as 30,000 people moved there.

They did not find a ready-made city to inhabit, only a flattish, open desert surface not marked out with roads. But very quickly, the arriving communities organised themselves and built neighbourhoods that were like villages, centred on the larger houses of the officials. If the result resembles the plan of a squatter city, irregular but not haphazard, it matched the expectations of the rich and powerful officials who ran the country. The life of the city spanned the period between Akhenaten’s fifth regnal year and his 17th and last, and a few years beyond that, a total of around 15 to 17 years.

The successor kings, beginning with Tutankhamun, rejected Akhenaten’s ideas, withdrew the court to the old centres of power and had the stone buildings demolished so that their stones could be reused as building material. The myriad houses were abandoned. Amarna was never lost, however. It remained visible—first as a ruin, then as a spread of sand-covered mounds—until archaeologists began to excavate it at the end of the 19th century. Some of its decorated rock tombs remained open and became home to a Christian
monastic community in the early centuries AD. The scenes on their walls, and the content of huge boundary tablets that Akhenaten had had carved into the perimeter cliffs, alerted European visitors to the character of Akhenaten’s reign from early in the 19th century.

Excavation of the city began with a single six-month season, spanning 1891 and 1892, carried out by the British archaeologist WM Flinders Petrie, assisted by Howard Carter, then on his first assignment in Egypt. His one season was enough to satisfy his curiosity, and he never sought to return. Some 15 years later, in 1907, the Egyptian government granted a permit to work at Amarna to Ludwig Borchardt. Although working in the name of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society), he was funded directly by one wealthy Berlin textile merchant and philanthropist, James Simon. Borchardt set out on a long-term, methodical excavation of much of the city. Through this he hoped to achieve two things. One was a detailed exploration of its architecture (reflecting his own early training as an architect); the other was the discovery of objects and works of art that would grace the rapidly growing collections of the Berlin Museum, by this time a cultural showpiece for Germany’s ambitions.

In both he was quickly successful. In three seasons, between 1911 and the spring of 1914, he and his small team excavated and made meticulous plans of a huge part of the main residential sector of the city. The culmination came on 6 December, 1912. In a small room in the house of a sculptor, probably named Thutmose, lay an extraordinary collection of sculptor’s models and related material, among them a brightly painted limestone head and shoulders of a woman, instantly identifiable by her distinctive crown as Queen Nefertiti, Akhenaten’s wife. The head, with the rest of the Thutmose material, passed through the Cairo Museum divisions system and, following export to Berlin, became the property of James Simon. He subsequently presented it all to the Berlin Museum. There it remains, the head of Nefertiti almost as much a symbol of Berlin as it is of the Egyptian tourism industry.

To mark the centenary of its discovery, there is an exhibition in the impressive setting of the Neues Museum, the part of the museum ensemble in Berlin which is home to the Egyptian collection and is itself only recently restored from the ruin that was left at the end of the Second World War.

The outcome of the First World War, and the increasing feeling in Egypt that the head of Nefertiti should be returned, meant the end of Borchardt’s expedition. In its place, from 1921 to 1936, the London-based Egypt Exploration Society fielded an annual expedition...
that continued where Borchardt left off, gradually moving from ancient houses to Akhenaten’s temples and palaces. By 1936, with the completion of the excavation of the Central City, the site’s attraction had sufficiently diminished for the work to be abandoned.

The archaeology of that era had a style and set of expectations of its own. It took advantage of cheap local labour to dig on a large scale. It sought ‘discoveries’ – and it depended for its funding on being able to provide a stream of suitable objects to foreign museums and their patrons, taking advantage of the system by which the Egyptian government allowed foreign expeditions to export a share of the finds.

I started working at Amarna in 1977, with a set of ideas in keeping with the new times. The social and economic processes by which ancient societies worked and how they manifested themselves in the details of buildings and objects were hot topics. Settlement archaeology was becoming a subject in its own right. It seemed worthwhile to document what was in the ground in immensely greater detail than before and to bring in a wider range of experts in order to extract more and different kinds of information. We were starting to use computers and it was exciting.

I saw Amarna’s unique combination of city-size scale and narrow interval of time as perfect for developing an investigation of this kind.

What made Amarna as a city tick?

Akhenaten and Nefertiti were barely in my mind. Once again the work was under the auspices of the Egypt Exploration Society, largely using government funds channelled to them by the British Academy.

This kind of archaeology does not provide quick and easy answers. The quantity of humdrum finds – tens of thousands of potsherds, shelf after shelf of boxes of charcoal fragments that are gold to archaeo-botanists – is almost overwhelming. In the 35 years that have followed, sometimes buffeted by difficult conditions in Egypt, we (myself and the Amarna team) have carried out excavations of limited scale at a series of places that cover the spectrum from small to large houses, royal buildings and now an extensive cemetery where the ordinary inhabitants were buried and whose bones represent an entirely new kind of evidence for the life of the people.

Sometimes, as with the bones, the evidence tells a tale directly. More often it fuels debate. How far was Akhenaten’s society one directed from above and what scope was left for individual responsibility? Was it tightly or loosely organised? As the discussion and thinking about the site has continued, Akhenaten has moved to a more prominent place.

Did he care about his people or not? And what about his religious drive? Did it generate the kind of intolerance that we might expect? Here the answer seems to be no, for Amarna emerges as a particularly rich source for the archaeology of domestic religion that, in its visible manifestations, paid little heed to the Aten.

As with the humanities in general, there are no final answers. Each new generation changes the questions and terms of debate. Those who come in the future will find, in our publications, archives and material stored on site, the raw material for taking research forward as to how Egyptian society evolved.

The Amarna Trust (www.amarnatrust.com) is a registered charity that supports a broad programme of fieldwork (www.amarnaproject.com) run in agreement with the Egyptian Ministry of State for Antiquities.

The City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti: Amarna and Its People by Barry Kemp (£29.95) is part of the series New Aspects of Antiquity, general editor Colin Renfrew, published by Thames & Hudson.

In the Light of Amarna, an exhibition celebrating the discovery of the bust of Nefertiti 100 years ago and including 600 objects from, or related to, Amarna, opens at the Neues Museum in Berlin (www.neuesmuseum.de) on 6 December and runs until 13 April 2013.
When John Romer entered the Royal College of Art in 1966 to study the art of stained glass, little did he think that it would lead him all the way back to ancient Egypt. But when he saw a note posted on the Stained Glass Department’s noticeboard asking for artists to join the University of Chicago’s Epigraphic Survey in Luxor, he leapt at the chance. ‘I’d been interested in ancient Egypt since I was a child. I gave a lecture on the Pyramids at school when I was 12, and the first book I purchased was Wallis Budge’s Guide to the British Museum’s Egyptian Collections, price 1/3d,’ he recalls. Romer and his new wife Beth, a fellow art student who later became an archaeologist, set off for Egypt together, and an enduring and mutual passion for the country and its long, enthralling history was born.

The renowned archaeologist, author and television presenter remembers how he felt when he first arrived there: ‘My initial impressions, during a night drive from the airport, were unforgettable. Hot, marvellously perfumed air, dark streets, with little fires lit on the pavements and people in galabeyes flitting in and out of the shadows.’

In Luxor the Romers set to work as epigraphic artists, although at first they found the ancient temples disappointing. ‘I couldn’t see what all the fuss was about,’ he says. ‘It took years of working in them to appreciate their beauty – you have to be able to look through the dust and ruin.’ The sites were also disconcertingly disordered: ‘Thebes looked like an explosion had occurred, with mummies lying all around.’ Nevertheless, after working six days a week in the temples, the Romers spent the seventh looking at other monuments and, like other artists before them, including the legendary Howard Carter, they became increasingly drawn to archaeology. Fortunately, the environment was perfect for those keen to learn.

‘Chicago House, the very grand headquarters of the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute Epigraphic Survey in Luxor, was a centre of archaeology and had a superb library. I spent all my waking hours reading and asking an extraordinary range of archaeologists what they were doing and why,’ Romer explains. ‘So Beth and I had seen dozens of digs before we were employed to work on one.’

The Valley of the Kings especially attracted the couple’s interest. After many years of working privately at the site, they organised and ran an expedition to make geological, epigraphic and conservational studies between 1977 and 1979.

‘It was the first ever at that site, which then was little known or cared about by Egyptologists. Not much had been done since Howard Carter’s day and it was suffering greatly because of a rise in tourism,’ Romer explains. ‘We needed a base in the valley to store our equipment, and Ramesses XI was a huge open and largely empty tomb which seemed perfect for that task. Carter, in fact, had used it as a store and a dining room when he excavated Tutankhamun.

Before they could use the tomb, however, the debris within it had to be cleared away. ‘That’s when we realised that most of this debris was very ancient, that the tomb was only half finished and had been used at the end of the New Kingdom as a storeroom for the royal mummies. So we found lots of extraordinary stuff. It was the first tomb to be excavated in the valley since Carter’s work on Tutankhamun. It was tense work and very exciting but, nonetheless, a side show to the expedition’s main task of conservation, of which I am very proud. Virtually all the later work in the Valley of the Kings stems from some of the brilliant work of the specialists who worked on the expedition and later wrote articles in our reports,’ he says.

The team also found that despite its arid appearance, the valley was subject to flooding, so work was undertaken to lessen the damaging effect of water on the tombs. Much work was also done to clean up the area and organise its tourist facilities. ‘The ticket office lay in the middle of the valley and buses and taxis were driving right into it,’ Romer recalls. In 1979 he and his wife, together with some American colleagues, also founded the Theban Foundation, based in Berkeley,
California. A body dedicated to the conservation and documentation of the Royal Tombs of Thebes, many of its ideas have been taken up. This resulted in the Theban Mapping Project. Now run by the American University in Cairo, the project provides a comprehensive database of Thebes and has an extensive website.

Today Romer is still publishing reports stemming from this early expedition. Vivid memories of those early days also remain: ‘The tombs were entirely beautiful, quiet and dark, with the scent of cedarwood in them,’ he says. Since then, Egyptian archaeology has evolved considerably.

‘It has entirely changed from the days when I first went there. Then it was largely sand-shovelling to recover more inscriptions. Now there are professionally trained dirt archaeologists digging difficult sites with great skill to discover the ways of life of the ancient people. They are slowly writing a new history for ancient Egypt.’

Nonetheless, funding is now more difficult to obtain and the situation in Egypt has greatly changed. ‘New excavation has been stopped in Upper Egypt – which is actually no bad thing, as those sites require more conservation than exploration,’ he comments.

Other developments also cause him concern. ‘Parts of Egyptology have become filled with unsuitable jargon from other academic disciplines. Introducing mock-scientific jargon into what is fundamentally a humanistic discipline has led to parts of a lovely old subject becoming nastily politicised, ancient history employed to provide a pedigree for the modern Western world,’ he says. One chilling example in his book is where great tombs were referred to as examples of ‘the conspicuous consumption of prestige commodities by an elite’.

His favourite figure from the early days of archaeology, he says, is Flinders Petrie. ‘He was a crusty individualist who virtually invented Egyptian archaeology. He was usually irascible, often wrong, but upfront with his personal opinions, an incredibly hard worker who had something interesting to say about everything he came across – and certainly he was a lover of old Egypt.’

John Romer has proved to be that too and has been rewarded, he says, by embracing the country as it is today.

‘Village life in modern Egypt has had a huge effect upon me – not because I think people there today live like ancient Egyptians, but simply because they have shown me beautiful and viable alternatives to my Western way of life. The Egyptian landscape, too, has had a profound effect upon me. I’m amazed at how many European and US scholars never bother to visit the countries which they spend their lives studying.’

Working on his books and television documentaries allows him to immerse himself in a range of diverse subjects. The documentaries in particular, which include Ancient Lives, Testament, The Valley of the Kings and Byzantium: The Lost Empire, have been demanding and intellectually bracing.

‘I want to know more about things than I do already, and there’s nothing like writing a television series to discover the gaps in your knowledge of a subject,’ he insists. ‘It’s a tremendous amount of work. But working on Bible history, Hellenism and Byzantium have been very useful to my work with ancient Egypt too. Like modern Egypt, they have shown me other ways of being besides life in the modern West and other ways of approaching ancient history as well – Egyptology is very compartmentalised.’

There are common elements in the subjects he has chosen, as he explains: ‘They’re all based in the Eastern Mediterranean, they all start from the assumption that the past was very, very different from today, and they all deal in arts and crafts that have had extraordinary longevity. To that extent, I think that they’re all linked to my having made stained glass windows, too.’

He was prompted to write his latest book, A History of Ancient Egypt: From the First Farmers to the Great Pyramid, by a belief that people like himself, who have been working on ancient Egyptian material for some time, should set down their vision of the place. A major deficiency of Egyptology is, he says, that there are no up-to-date accounts of the entire civilisation written by a single voice.

‘The problem with history by committee is that there is no coherent vision of the subject. I think it’s a good discipline to work out ideas right down to the point where they become narratives that anyone can understand. It’s much harder than writing academic articles, which only have to make sense to a few.’

His book is the first consistent account of Egypt’s early history, as opposed to a description of the surviving remains strung together on a single time-line. It starts with an absorbing account of the exploration of some of the earliest excavated settlements along the Nile. Where did these people come from? He says he tries not to speculate:

‘People “come out of nowhere” because they come and go so easily from the archaeological record. As far as the first inhabitants of Egypt are concerned, I suppose it depends whether or not you follow the popular “out of Africa” scenario for modern humans. If you do, perhaps there’s a case for saying that some people travelling north out of the Rift Valley decided to go no further. As to the first farmers, they could either have been the descendants of those same peoples, or perhaps there were farmers from the north who already had developed the technologies of farming. That they skillfully and quickly adapted the rhythms of rain-irrigated economies to that of the Nile Valley flood plain shows great practical knowledge of the local environment. Perhaps, as with almost everything else that happened in the distant past, we’ll never know.’

Romer does, however, disagree with some of the popular ideas about the Egyptian pharaohs: ‘They weren’t despot and they didn’t enslave people,’ he maintains. ‘As to slavery, it seems to me that in its present usage, the concept revolves around money and property values, neither of which were around in ancient Egypt – nor incidentally, was the modern concept of freedom.’

One of his favourite projects was Ancient Lives, a series he made in the 1980s about a village of artists in ancient Egypt.

‘It was a delight to make and people still remember those films – parts of their scenario are now on the Luxor tourist circuit, although at that time no one could have foreseen the tourist tidal wave to come.’

He is now engrossed in writing a second, self-contained volume on the later history of ancient Egypt (due for publication in 2014) at his base in Tuscany, where he and Beth have lived for many years. ‘We’ve grown to love the country and its culture and we’ve been here so long now that when I land at Rome or Pisa I feel I’m coming home.’

Does he feel that there is a growing interest in history and archaeology?

‘Yes, I suppose there is, although sometimes I think that it’s a funny sort of interest. Classics, for example, always makes me think of Arnold of Rugby and Billy Bunter. Let’s hope it’s not all nostalgia for an age that never was, but a fascination for a past that was remarkable, fresh and interesting with something new to teach us.’

His work has undoubtedly fired the imagination of readers and television audiences.

‘Every so often someone sends me a thesis or a book they’ve written with a note telling me that something I’ve done has encouraged them to take up their present profession,’ John Romer tells me with evident and well-deserved satisfaction.

A History of Ancient Egypt: From the First Farmers to the Great Pyramid by John Romer is published in hardback by Allen Lane at £25.
Mention the name Cleopatra to anyone, and they will no doubt immediately conjure up their own image of the Egyptian queen. For many, it is an image which has been shaped by film and television: Elizabeth Taylor in the 1963 epic *Cleopatra*; Lyndsey Marshal in HBO’s blockbuster series *Rome*; even Amanda Barrie in *Carry on Cleo*. Others will think of stage versions of her life: Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*; Shaw’s *Caesar and Cleopatra*. Yet others may see in their mind’s eye the seductive paintings of 19th-century artists, such as Alma-Tadema or Jean-André Rixens, who delighted in the opportunity to paint the suicidal queen bare-breasted, her robe falling tantalisingly from her shoulders, or, better still, fully naked.

Throughout history, so many people have interpreted Cleopatra in so many different ways that it is almost impossible to discover the real person behind the myth. Yet the reality (or what we know of it) is even more intriguing than the fiction. Born in 69 BC into the murderous, incestuous and faction-riven family of the Ptolemies (descendents of one of Alexander the Great’s Macedonian generals) who had already ruled Egypt for well over 200 years, Cleopatra possessed an undoubted charisma. Plutarch, whose biography of Mark Antony she effectively hijacks, writes of her: ‘Her own beauty, so we are told, was not of that incomparable kind which instantly captivates the beholder. But the charm of her presence was irresistible and there was an attraction in her person and her talk, together with a peculiar force of character which pervaded her every word and action, and laid all who associated with her under its spell. It was a delight merely to hear the sound of her voice, with which, like an instrument of many strings, she could pass effortlessly from one language to another.’

What she lacked in beauty (and, judging from depictions on her own coinage, even Plutarch’s description may be best described as gallant), Cleopatra more than made up for in intellect. She had grown up in Alexandria, home to the famous Library and Museum and at that time a leading centre of learning, and she had made maximum use of its facilities. Plutarch goes on: ‘In her interviews with barbarians she seldom required an interpreter, but conversed with them quite unaided, whether they were Ethiopians, Troglyotes, Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Medes or Parthians. In fact, she is said to have become familiar with the speech of many other peoples besides, although the rulers of Egypt before her had never even troubled to learn the Egyptian language, and some had never given up their native Macedonian dialect.’

Despite her undoubted assets, when she became queen in 51 BC, Cleopatra was faced with almost insuperable difficulties. Rome, whose power and population had mushroomed in the previous three generations, had already identified Egypt’s fertile cornfields as a
potential solution to its own food shortages, while in Egypt, domestic political rivalries meant that she was soon at war with Ptolemy XIII her younger brother (and husband, at least in name). And, as if that were not enough, Cleopatra was a woman in what (internationally) was quite definitely a man’s world. For her even to survive required not only tenacity, ruthlessness and diplomacy, but also luck – and luck favoured her for 20 years. By chance, just when it seemed as though her army was about to be defeated by Ptolemy XIII, Julius Caesar arrived in Alexandria and threw his weight behind the queen. An inveterate womaniser as well as a consummate general, the victorious Caesar subsequently left Egypt only weeks before she gave birth to their son, Caesarion. For Cleopatra, it was a perfect outcome.

With Caesar’s continuing support, her position, both domestically and internationally, was secured, and understanding perfectly the power their child bestowed on her, she twice made the long sea
voyage to Rome, where she set up court in Caesar’s leafy villa in Trastevere. But in March 44 BC, on Cleopatra’s second visit to the city, the assassins struck. Caesar was cut down in Pompey’s Theatre and, at a knife-stroke, everything she had worked so hard to build was suddenly under threat.

For the next three years, while the Roman world was maulled by civil war, Cleopatra played a waiting game, watching to see which side seemed likely to come out on top, cautious lest she should be seen to have supported the defeated.

When, in the end Octavian and Antony emerged victorious at Philippi, Cleopatra knew instinctively what she must do; and when Antony, to whom had fallen the command of the Eastern Roman empire, summoned her to meet him in Tarsus to account for her actions (or lack of them) during the war, Cleopatra drew on all her assets, political, intellectual and personal, to ensure that she won him over as certainly as she had once won over Julius Caesar.

Now aged 27 (‘the age’, according to Plutarch, ‘when women are most beautiful and their minds are most acute’), and dressed as Aphrodite, goddess of desire, Cleopatra, reclining in a golden barge, accompanied by her ‘fairest handmaids’, with clouds of perfume drifting sensuously across the waters, sailed up the River Cydnus to meet Antony. She had pitched it perfectly. Antony, she knew, had an eye for the theatrical – and for women, too. In the words of the historian Appian, ‘... as soon as he saw her, Antony lost his head to her, as if he was a young man, although he was 40 years old’.

That he became infatuated with Cleopatra seems incontrovertible. That his feelings were reciprocated is far from certain. For a while, the union proved fruitful. As with Caesar, Cleopatra’s alliance with Antony brought security. Indeed, such was the Roman’s devotion that he even ceded to her territories which it was not in his power to cede. But 10 years (and three children) later, Antony’s increasingly erratic behaviour brought him into conflict with his erstwhile ally Octavian, and the Roman world was plunged once more into a bloody war.

This time Cleopatra did not have the luxury of sitting on the fence. This time, indeed, to make it seem at least that he was not embarking on civil war, Octavian had declared his enemy to be not Antony but Cleopatra herself. For the Egyptian queen the campaign was disastrous. Antony’s generalship proved catastrophic. At the Battle of Actium in western Greece on 2 September, 31 BC, he and Cleopatra abandoned their burning fleet, while they themselves took flight for Alexandria.

Less than a year later, with the ravening Octavian at that city’s gates, the tables turned. Antony’s fleet and army abandoned him. For Antony, at least, the game was clearly up.

It is now that truth diverges from romantic legend. We like to think that Antony and Cleopatra, passionate lovers to the end, committed suicide in each other’s arms. Not so – in fact, for some time the hard-headed Cleopatra had been negotiating with Octavian. Just what the terms of those negotiations were we do not know, but the writings of the Greek historian Dio contain tantalising hints: ‘Cleopatra sent Octavian the golden sceptre, golden crown, and royal throne of Egypt, as if through these symbolic gifts she was offering him her kingdom, and at the same time to ensure that, even if Octavian hated Antony, he would at least feel sympathy for her. Octavian considered these gifts to be a good omen and accepted them. His public response was combative, insisting that only when Cleopatra was ceding such was the Roman’s devotion that he even ceded to her territories which it was not in his power to cede. But 10 years (and three children) later, Antony’s increasingly erratic behaviour brought him into conflict with his erstwhile ally Octavian, and the Roman world was plunged once more into a bloody war.

This time Cleopatra did not have the luxury of sitting on the fence. This time, indeed, to make it seem at least that he was not embarking on civil war, Octavian had declared his enemy to be not Antony but Cleopatra herself. For the Egyptian queen the campaign was disastrous. Antony’s generalship proved catastrophic. At the Battle of Actium in western Greece on 2 September, 31 BC, he and Cleopatra abandoned their burning fleet, while they themselves took flight for Alexandria.

Less than a year later, with the ravening Octavian at that city’s gates, the tables turned. Antony’s fleet and army abandoned him. For Antony, at least, the game was clearly up.

It is now that truth diverges from romantic legend. We like to think that Antony and Cleopatra, passionate lovers to the end, committed suicide in each other’s arms. Not so – in fact, for some time the hard-headed Cleopatra had been negotiating with Octavian. Just what the terms of those negotiations were we do not know, but the writings of the Greek historian Dio contain tantalising hints: ‘Cleopatra sent Octavian the golden sceptre, golden crown, and royal throne of Egypt, as if through these symbolic gifts she was offering him her kingdom, and at the same time to ensure that, even if Octavian hated Antony, he would at least feel sympathy for her. Octavian considered these gifts to be a good omen and accepted them. His public response was combative, insisting that only when Cleopatra was

Circa 50-40 BC. D. 2.6cm.

Circa 50-49 BC.

Circa 5-6

H. 12.5cm. L 10cm.

H. 35.5cm.

H. 2.6cm.

H. 6.5cm. L 10cm.

H. 30-25 BC.

H. 30-25 BC.

H. 6.5cm. L 10cm.

H. 35.5cm.

H. 30-25 BC.

H. 35.5cm.

H. 30-25 BC.

H. 35.5cm.

H. 30-25 BC.

H. 35.5cm.
calculated, would drive Antony to suicide. She was right. But even a successful suicide was beyond Antony’s capabilities. Injured, he was taken to Cleopatra, hauled up on a rope into her own half-finished mausoleum, in which she had taken refuge. About what happened next, we can but speculate.

Tradition tells how, cradled in Cleopatra’s arms, he died of his self-inflicted wounds. Perhaps he did. Yet she must have known that he was now more valuable to her dead than alive. For her to be found nursing a maimed, yet living, Antony would have wreaked any chance she might yet have had to negotiate successfully with Octavian. If, in the privacy of the mausoleum, Cleopatra was moved to expedite her former lover’s death, she may simply have believed herself to be fulfilling the terms of a private understanding with Octavian. To ‘keep her kingdom undisturbed’ had, after all, been at the forefront of her policies all along.

Whatever the truth, with Antony disposed of, Cleopatra spent the next 10 days negotiating with Octavian. No records of their conversations remain, and the two accounts that have survived (by Plutarch and Dio) diverge so wildly from each other that it is not unlikely that they are both fictitious. No doubt Cleopatra tried to win Octavian over, as she had once won over Antony and Caesar before him; but the icy Octavian was altogether more calculating than either of those hot-blooded conquerors had been. In the end, Cleopatra was found dead.

How she died remains a mystery. Plutarch recounts several versions: ‘It is said that, following Cleopatra’s instructions, an asp was brought in to her, hidden under the leaves in a basket of figs, so that the snake might bite her without her knowing. Others say that the asp was carefully enclosed in a water-jar and that, as Cleopatra provoked it with a golden spindle, sprang up and fastened on her arm. No-one really knows the truth: there is even another version that she carried poison with her in a hollow hairpin which she kept hidden in her hair.’ We do know that no rash or any other sign of poison showed on her body. As Plutarch says, ‘no-one really knows the truth’ – except perhaps Octavian. Cleopatra would not be the last enemy of the state whose death would be less troublesome than her continued living.

Almost immediately the Roman propaganda-machine went into overdrive, painting Cleopatra as a wanton seductress, a witch who had corrupted and ensnared Rome’s fine upstanding son, Mark Antony. As the years went by, romantic fiction swamped cold fact. Cleopatra, the brilliant politician, gave way to Cleopatra, the scheming siren and so, in 1934, when Cecil B DeMille offered Claudette Colbert the role of the infamous Egyptian queen, he is said to have asked her: ‘How would you like to play the wickedest woman in history?’

**31BC Antony, Cleopatra and the Fall of Egypt** by David Stuttard and Sam Moorhead is published in paperback by The British Museum Press at £9.99.

**Cleopatra: The Search for the Last Queen of Egypt** is on show at the California Science Center (www.californiasciencecenter.org) until 31 December 2012.
When Fiona, Lady Carnarvon goes on holiday, her poolside reading is more likely to be Gardiner’s *Egyptian Grammar* than a bestselling novel. She can actually decipher hieroglyphs – not all of them, she is quick to point out, as she is still learning – but if she had more time, she tells me, she would devote it to applying herself more diligently to her linguistic task.

‘I love old languages – learning them is fun. The subtleties of the tenses in ancient Egyptian fascinate me. A language is extraordinarily important in the study of a culture and it throws up all sorts of philosophical questions about how we developed and how human thought has evolved. It gives an insight into the world view of the ancient Egyptians. We have a lot to learn from them. I feel humbled by what they did and what they wrote, especially about the inclusive nature of their culture and their religion.’

This interest is perhaps understandable when you learn that Lady Carnarvon’s husband, Geordie, is the great-grandson of the 5th Earl of Carnarvon who supported and worked with Howard Carter in the Valley of the Kings. When the couple met, her love of ancient Egypt had not yet developed.

‘When I first met Geordie I had barely even heard of Howard Carter,’ she recalls.

Things have certainly changed: Lady Carnarvon has done a great deal of research into her husband’s family history and has written several books, including *Egypt at Highclere: The Path to the Curse of Tutankhamun*.
One aspect of this famous relationship she wants emphasise is that it was based on partnership, rather than patronage. She is keen to correct the common perception that Lord Carnarvon provided the money and Carter did the work.

‘They were a good combination and they complemented each other,’ she explains. ‘Both of them were mavericks in the sense that neither of them were formally trained archaeologists and they shared an absolute passion for Egypt. What a lot of people don’t realise is that from around 1901 the 5th Earl spent four months every year in Egypt. Initially it was for health reasons, but gradually his interest in archaeology grew. There he met Carter, who had been working in Egypt since 1891 and employed him to supervise an excavation in Thebes from 1907 to 1911. It was a meeting that would change both their lives.’

In the book recording their first working collaboration, Carnarvon thanks Carter for his ‘unremitting watchfulness and care in systematically recording, drawing and photographing everything as it came to light’.

This was a decade before the now legendary finding of the tomb of Tutankhamun. Everyone knows the story of the monumental discovery, in which the intact tomb, with its fabulous gold treasures, was opened...
on 16 February 1923. The wild publicity that accompanied the discovery – the first global media event – and the ‘Tut-mania’ craze for all things Egyptian that followed, is also well documented. As is the death in 1923 of Lord Carnarvon at only 56. This early death gave rise to the tale of the ‘Pharaoh’s Curse’, which gripped the public imagination and, helped by films such as *The Mummy*, continues to do so to this day. What does the current Lady Carnarvon think about the legend of the curse?

‘I am asked about it quite often,’ she says, ‘and all I can say is that there are lots of things in life we don’t understand. But I can confirm that the 5th Earl’s dog, Susie, died here at Highclere at the same moment as her master, and also that there was a blackout – all the lights went out – in Cairo at the same time. General Allenby confirmed this.’

‘When Carnarvon died Carter lost his right-hand man. Carnarvon was good at diplomacy and often smoothed things over, whereas Carter, who admitted to having a hot temper, was not so good at that side of things. The 5th Earl was not an academic but he was extremely well read. He was also stoical – a quality useful when engaged in archaeology – and modest. He didn’t blow his own trumpet. Carter was besotted by him. He even started dressing like him.

There have also been suggestions that Carter carried a flame for Carnarvon’s daughter, Lady Evelyn. But if he did, it was not reciprocated. ‘Lady Evelyn found Carter rather tricky, he was not the easiest dinner guest as he only wanted to talk about Egypt, explains Lady Carnarvon. ‘Besides, he was much older than her and she was in love with Sir Brograve Campbell Beauchamp, the man she went on to marry in 1923.’

‘After the 5th Earl’s death, Almina, his widow tried to help Carter but she was saddled with enormous death duties and was..."
forced to sell her husband’s collection of Egyptian antiquities. It went to the Metropolitan Museum in New York after the British Museum could not raise the amount needed.’

Almina’s son, the 6th Earl of Carnarvon, was a bon viveur and not at all interested in Egyptology, but Lady Carnarvon tells me she was pleased to find that he did continue to invite Carter to Highclere – his name appears in the visitors’ book during the 1930s. Howard Carter died, aged 64, in 1939, while the 6th Earl lived to the ripe old age of 89. So it is good to hear that the effects of the curse did not continue. ‘The 6th Earl did not like to talk about Egypt,’ says Lady Carnarvon, ‘but after he died in 1987, his butler Robert Taylor mentioned that some Egyptian artefacts had been hidden away behind a false wall. This was very exciting and most of these are now on show in our Egyptian exhibition at Highclere, together with some objects lent to us by the British Museum. My husband chose the objects and oversaw all the displays; he is as mad about Egypt as I am. We invite lots of Egyptians, from archaeologists to ambassadors, to stay here.’

The warm affection that Lady Carnarvon has for the country and its people is apparent and, despite the Downton Abbey effect, she is delighted that 80 per cent of visitors to Highclere visit the Egyptian exhibition. So, the Carnarvons’ archaeological legacy is not forgotten. ‘Carnarvon and Carter complemented each other and they both gave their lives for Egypt,’ she says. Will her son follow in the footsteps of his great-great-grandfather? ‘Well, I don’t believe in pushing children into things, as it often doesn’t encourage them and can have quite the opposite effect. But two years ago I took my son, who was 10 at the time, to visit the places that had meant so much to the 5th Earl. We had a wonderful trip. I really like the people of Egypt and I respect them. I hope after all the turmoil of the last few years they can find their way through to peace, democracy and stability.’

‘I can confirm that the 5th Earl’s dog, Susie, died here at Highclere at the same moment as her master’

15. Watercolour of Hatshepsut’s temple painted by Howard Carter in 1915.
16. The Pyramids at Giza with the Nile in flood photographed by Lord Carnarvon in 1910-11.
17. Calcite jar bearing Ramesses II’s cartouche, found by Carnarvon and Carter in 1920, and one of the objects rediscovered at Highclere in 1987.
18. Fragment of wall from the tomb of Bakenrenef (664-610 BC) in Saqqara. The hieroglyphs form part of Spell 22 from the Book of the Dead.
19. Ivory-handled razor used by Carnarvon in Cairo in 1923, when he nicked a mosquito bite which turned septic. He later died of pneumonia brought on by blood poisoning.

All images courtesy of Highclere Castle unless otherwise stated.

‘My beloved friend and colleague Lord Carnarvon, who died in the hour of his triumph. But for his untiring generosity and constant encouragement our labours could never have been crowned with success. His judgement in ancient art has rarely been equalled. His efforts, which have done so much to extend our knowledge of Egyptology, will forever be honoured in history and, by me, his memory will always be cherished.’

(Tribute by Howard Carter to the 5th Earl of Carnarvon, April 1923)
All over our towns and cities graffiti artists and taggers spray-paint the available surfaces of buildings and structures with their personalised insignia. These once strictly subversive, underground motifs have created recognisable signatures for British-based artists such as Banksy, kELzO and Aerosol Arabic. Regarded by most as a scourge of modern urban living, graffiti in the recent past have become mainstream in the art world. In a recent study by the author, one signature – the hand-stencil or handprint – has been used within the historic quarter of the city of Bergamo in northern Italy. This is not a new concept, however; it can be traced back to the earliest artists, who roamed the landscapes of southern Europe some 40,000 years ago.

Throughout the ancient world, and wherever humans have colonised and eventually settled, art has been an essential and dynamic force that acts as a signature, not just for the artist but also for the clan or tribal group, creating identity and ownership. The artistic repertoire of the first rock artists, some 35,000 to 40,000 years ago, featured one particular representative motif above all that showed the ultimate human touch – the hand-stencil.

The hand-stencil and the handprint are phenomena found in a multitude of diverse areas around the world. They have been created in a number of ways, the most common being for the artist to use his, or her, mouth to spray organic or inorganic pigments over the hand and surrounding rock. Dry powdered charcoal and possibly haematite (red ochre) may have been blown through a straw reed in order to get an even texture across the surface. Artists also painted round the outline of their hands, creating handprints. Left-handed stencils made by artists with their right hands were most numerous, and it appears that these signatures included all age groups, probably representing family groups.

Recent scientific dating in a series of caves in northern Spain by an Anglo-Spanish team, led by Dr Alistair Pike from the University of Bristol, has managed to push back the dating of hand-stencils to around 37,300 years ago. It is conceivable, but not yet proven, that hand-stencils in El Castillo Cave were made by Neanderthals who, based on the direct dating and the artefacts left behind in this and other nearby caves, were roaming this landscape some 40,000 years or more ago (1).

Moving very slightly forward in time, over 420 hand-stencils sprayed with haematite have been found in one part of Chauvet Cave in the Ardèche, in southern France. These date to around 31,000 years ago. Near the entrance of the cave, the palm of a right-handed artist had been painted with red ochre and then applied to the wall (known as the Panel of the Red Dots), creating a multiple-dotted surface that, some think, forms the shape of a mammoth.

George Nash explores the meaning of handprints and stencils, from prehistoric cave art to the graffitied cityscapes of Bergamo and Belfast.
Outside the Franco-Cantabrian region, early prehistoric hand-stencils have been found in caves in Argentina, North America, South-East Asia and Australia.

Located on the Pinturas River in Patagonia, Argentina is the Cueva de las Manos (Cave of the Hands). This rock art, which includes human figures, guanacos, rheas and felines, is believed to date to around 9000 years BC. In one part of the cave is a panel covered in carefully super-imposed hand-stencils, some painted in red, others in white. According to archaeologists, they are all left hands and appear to be painted by one person, probably a young initiate who may have been making his, or her, mark in order to reach adulthood.

Further afield, hand-stencils appear in great numbers in Australian aboriginal art, both ancient and contemporary. A hand-stencil taken by the rock art specialist Professor Paul Taçon at the Djulirri site, in the Wellington Range, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, is believed to be between 9,000 and 12,000 years old (2).

Although we can never really know why or by whom such evocative motifs were placed on a cave wall thousands of years ago, we can get a few hints from the anthropological record.

Interestingly, both ancient and contemporary hand-stencils sometimes appear on the same panel, and more hand-stencils are added on a periodic basis, thus updating the visual narrative, forming a plethora of personal signatures. Based on the anthropological and ethnographic records, the most popular interpretation of hand-stencils and handprints is that they are personal signatures. However, is there anything more we can say about them?

It is believed that the position of aboriginal hand-stencils defines rank within tribal clans and, when replicated on a number of panels, defines territoriality. Within the rock art panel narrative it is considered that the higher the stencil is in relation to others, the greater the rank attained; by due process children’s hand-stencils are usually located at the base of the panel.

Based on individuals using this panel, the panel is in the legitimate ownership of the clan rather than a single artist. Saying this though, the production and panel position of hand-stencils would have been controlled by Big Men; they alone would have possessed the direct power between paint, image, rock and the spirit world (known as the Sealing Ritual); by touching the rock surface with one’s hand a direct contact with the spirit world is made. But what of the symbolic meaning of the handprint or stencil of the graffiti artist?

Throughout recent history the hand (and the clenched hand or fist) has been a powerful statement of defiance or solidarity, or both. Graffiti and multiple tagging are a common sight in urban areas, made famous by a number of once subversive and notorious street artists who have now become not only legitimate but recognised creators of expensive artwork. Banksy, KELZO and Aerosol Arabic are just three of these artists who are now considered to be mainstream (3).

In interviews about ancient and modern rock art conducted by the author for a series of programmes for the BBC, three graffiti artists claimed that their induction to this dynamic and sometimes dangerous art form was through tagging.

Tagging is one of the most common and simplest styles of graffiti, usually textual in form, reflecting the name or initials of the artist, or on occasions representing a crew/ gang name or community area (4).

This highly personalised kind of signature, which first appeared on the streets of Philadelphia in the early 1970s, is usually repeated on many surfaces, arguably laying artistic claim to a particular neighbourhood. In most cases tagging is a complex encrypted signature that involves the skill of linking individual letters to form a word or phrase. The identity and meaning of tagging is very much restricted to a peer group, usually involving the artist, his or her crew and some neighboring crews.

Strategically placed along the main thoroughfares and connecting side streets of the medieval quarter of Bergamo (known as Città Alta) are a series of distinctive handprint motifs (5). The handprints appear to be the work of one person and could represent a pictorial personal signature or tag.

The handprints in Bergamo’s Città Alta started to appear during 2009 and were initially confined to the main north-west/south-east thoroughfare, formed by two interconnecting streets, Via Bartolomeo and Via Gombito (6).

These two narrow streets, flanked by imposing medieval tenements constructed of worked and dressed stone, form the main commercial hub of the Città Alta. Leading off the two main streets are several side streets that again have been targeted
by handprint graffiti artists (7).

The handprinters, who have been active for at least four years, seem to target mainly business premises. Rather surprisingly, the city authorities have made no attempt to remove these or other graffiti such as the (anti) ‘Putin’ stencil that is prominent on a wall on one of the side streets (8).

Away from the main hub of the old town, handprints and other forms of tagging are absent, except for three that have been painted on the walls of a medieval apartment building (9) and a granite bollard (10) along a pedestrian walkway known as the Via San Salvatore, within a residential area south of the commercial centre and the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore.

As with the hand-stencils that adorn many caves throughout the early prehistoric world, the distribution of painted handprints in Bergamo’s Città Alta appears to be deliberate and strategic. It is not coincidental that the artist has targeted the two streets that form the commercial hub of the Old Town, and it is more than likely that these very visual statements are making a political point.

Recent blogging activity on the internet suggests that Bergamo’s handprints represent Red Hands – Red Heart, an extreme left-wing symbol that may hark back to the days of the extreme ideology of the Red Brigades, a radical group active during a rather dark period in Italy’s recent history. Alternatively, red handprints could represent a romantic gesture, say between the artist and his or her lover. The strategic location of the prints, though, suggests some form of protest against capitalism, commercialisation and commerce.

The majority of the handprints and sprayed stencils are right-handed and, unlike their prehistoric counterparts, all are anatomically correct (all have four fingers and a thumb). Based on the finger alignment, all are male (and were probably executed by a male artist). Many appear to have been painted/sprayed in haste; paint dripping is present on many handprints and limited contact between the stencil and the surface of the wall has resulted in webbing around the lower section of many hands.

Elsewhere, tagging has been used as a territorial marker by both passive taggers and rival gangs.

In Northern Ireland during the bloody civil insurrection of the Troubles, the Red Hand of Ulster was used to identify certain areas of Belfast as belonging to Loyalists (11). Ironically, this symbol was originally a heraldic emblem used by the Uí Néill clan during the Nine Years War (1594-1603) against the English; the war-cry in Gaelic was Lámh Dhearg Abú! (‘Red Hand to Victory’).

In both archaeological and contemporary graffiti contexts, single and multiple hand-stencils represent the epitome of signature and identity. From the prehistoric record, all sections of the family unit are represented, while in the graffiti world the hand-stencil represents the ideology of the individual and his or her peer group.

Although both groups are moving around their respective landscapes, both also establish a degree of permanency through boundaries held by the mark of the hand, and the hand stencils of Bergamo and Belfast are no exception to this rule.
Some 3,000 years ago, Odysseus returned to the Greek island of Ithaca. Homer’s epic, the Odyssey, tells of all the ordeals he suffered before he finally displayed his supremacy at archery, killed the suitors and was reunited with his wife, Penelope. The poem remains fresher and more familiar today than any other ancient text. Who has not heard of the one-eyed man-eating Cyclops, or of Circe, the enchantress who turned men into pigs? Odysseus has escaped from the narrow confines of academic libraries into the world of popular culture – novels and movies and musicals. I wrote my book *The Return of Ulysses* because I wanted to discover the reasons for its incredible ability never to go out of fashion.

The Romans loved Odysseus, whom they called Ulysses. They adorned their villas with wonderful frescoes portraying his adventures in the land of the gigantic Laestrygonians, who speared men like fish. The Odyssey was one of the first ancient Greek poems ever to be printed, in 1488 in Florence, and has since exerted an incalculable influence over the culture not only of the West, but increasingly of the world. Since 1991, when it was first translated into Korean, there is not a major written language in the world in which a translation of the Odyssey is not available.

It has often been used by creative artists to signal that they are setting a new fashion. Take the invention of opera: when the composer Claudio Monteverdi wanted to show the huge range of emotional effects that the singing voice could represent, he chose to create an operatic setting of the Odyssey. His *Il ritorno d’Ulisse in patria* (1640) was an instant hit at the time of its first production, in Venice, and stunned his rivals.

Revolutionary in their passion, realism and vitality, the recognition scenes were written with a superb sense of theatre. Monteverdi intuitively realised that the emotional centre of the action was Odysseus’ loyal, lonely wife Penelope: in an inspirational move, she is confined to the medium of austere recitative throughout much of the opera, but bursts finally into an ecstatic moment of melodic release in her love-song at the climax. Monteverdi showed how song can define psychological shifts, and thus made a pioneering statement about the potential of sung drama.

One explanation of Homer’s name is that it derives from a
Babylonian noun meaning ‘singer’, and the appeal of the Odyssey to musicians is encapsulated in the story of the Sirens. They symbolise the power of the singing voice to seduce and enchant the listener. Forewarned by Circe that their voices are irresistible, Odysseus has sealed his men’s ears with wax and has himself bound to the mast. But as he sails close to their meadow, the Sirens let forth their ‘high, clear song’ (Odyssey, 12.186-8): ‘No man has ever passed by us in his dark ship before listening to the honey-sweet sound of our singing voices; he sails away a more knowledgeable man after first feeling great joy.’ Odysseus has heard the most beautiful singing that can be heard anywhere, the price of which privilege is usually death, and lives to tell the tale.

The importance of the figure of the minstrel is reiterated when Odysseus spares the life of Phemius in Ithaca, even though the old bard had collaborated by performing for the suitors (1). Three millennia later, the Odyssey has been adapted to several genres of popular song. The queen of contemporary American folk, Suzanne Vega, recorded Calypso, a lament in the voice of the ancient goddess, on her 1987 album Solitude Standing; it made her an international star. Geoffrey Oryema’s synthesis of Ugandan and Soul music discovered in Homer the emotional range for his album The African Odyssey (1993).

And in O Brother, Where Art Thou? (2000), the Coen brothers mined a rich seam of American folk and popular song. The recurring Bluegrass song Man of Constant Sorrow, which the film suggests was invented impromptu by Ulysses Everett McGill (George Clooney), was actually first recorded by the Virginian Stanley Brothers in 1950.
and brought to the world on Bob Dylan’s debut album (1962). The Coen brothers drew an inspirational connection between this old folk song, from the oral culture of the American Deep South, and Odysseus’ formulaic epithet polu-las, ‘much-enduring’.

But the world created by the Odyssey appeals even more to the eyes than to the ears. Cicero remarked on the paradox that, although Homer was blind, ‘it is nevertheless his painting not his poetry that we see’. The earliest great description of a landscape in Western literature is the account of Calypso’s cave: ‘A luxuriant wood sprang up around her cave – alder and poplar and sweet-smelling cypress. Long-winged birds nested there, horned owls and hawks and cor-morants with their long tongues, whose sphere of operation is the ocean. Over the arching cavern there spread a flourishing cultivated vine, with abundant grapes. There was a row of four adjacent springs, with gleaming water, their streams running off in different directions, surrounded by soft meadows that bloomed with violet and parsley.’

No wonder the Odyssey has inspired famous painters, from Brueghel’s realisation of Calypso’s cave to Turner’s magnificent Polyphemus Deriding Ulysses (1829) now in the National Gallery in London, where the dark seascape and storm clouds reflect the punishment that Poseidon plans to impose on Odysseus for the crime of blinding the savage Cyclops.

Such arresting sensory details put the reader of the Odyssey into immediate sensory contact with the sea-going life lived by Homer’s ancient audience. The repeated evocation of the ‘wine-dark sea’, the white sails and creaking timber of the ships, the sound of the wind and the roar of the waves have inspired musical pieces, such as Debussy’s orchestral poem La mer and Ravel’s piano fantasy Une barque sur l’océan, both from 1905. But they have also mesmerised artists in language – poets and novelists – in every era.

Tennyson’s Ulysses (1833) cannot bear to stay confined to land, yearning ‘To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths/Of all the western stars’; in Ithaca (1911), Cavafy tells us to treasure every summer morning when we sail into new harbours, and buy fine things, ‘mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony, sensual perfume of every kind’.

When James Joyce wanted to stretch the capacity of language to record sense impressions in Ulysses (1922), the consummate example of Modernist fiction, set in Edwardian Dublin, it was almost inevitably to the Odyssey that he turned. The epic offered him not only its extraordinary palette of verbal effects for his own word-pictures, but the powerful, archetypal personalities and encounters that would engage us at a deep sympathetic level with his husband and wife, Leopold and Molly, estranged not by the Trojan war and heroic wanderings, but by the death of their beloved child.

Joyce was first introduced to the story by one of the earliest books ever written specifically for children, Charles and Mary Lamb’s The Adventures of Ulysses (1808). Countless children’s versions have followed: my personal favourite is Rosemary Sutcliff’s The Wanderings of Odysseus (1995), which preserves the melancholy tone and brutality of the original.

The access of the very young to the Odyssey goes a long way towards explaining why it is popular with such a wide general public. In 1932, TE Lawrence (no mean storyteller himself) wrote in the Introduction to his translation of the Odyssey that ‘by its ease and interest remains the oldest book worth reading for its story and the first novel of Europe.’ It is certainly the first great adult romantic novel – we identify with the pain of Penelope and her husband (even though in the patriarchal world of the Greek Bronze Age, only the man is permitted the comfort of a couple of extra-marital affairs) all the way until book 23 out of a total of 24,
when they are finally united (4). But it is also the first great ‘rite of passage’ novel, as their son Telemachus matures from boyhood to manhood. They set out to sea in search of his father, and faces his first military ordeal.

Since it contains information about every stage in Odyssey’s life from his infancy to his death, and since Odysseus relates many of his adventures in his own, first-person voice at the court of the Phaeacians, it is also the first example of biographical and autobiographical narrative. The many books devoted to his wanderings have informed and shaped countless ‘travelogue’ novels from Don Quixote onwards (Cervantes was very fond of ancient Greek literature). The transformation of Odysseus’ men into pigs on Circe’s island stands at the head of the whole family tree of literary transmutations and personifications, from Kafka’s Metamorphosis to Orwell’s Animal Farm.

In Stanley Kubrick’s film 2001: A Space Odyssey, the name of the protagonist, David ‘Bowman’, and the menacing Cyclopean computer Hal underlie the ancient epic’s continuing relationship with science fiction. It is certainly the role that the Odyssey has played in cinema that has brought it the worldwide fame and popularity that it enjoys today. Special-effects designers have been enthralled by its supernatural elements, from the morphing Proteus, who can turn into a lion, a snake, a tree or a waterfall, to the terrifying aquatic monster Scylla.

As early as 1905, the cinema pioneer George Méliès effected visual magic with his L’ile de Calypso: Ulysses et le géant Polyphème. Yet, paradoxically, the movie version of the Odyssey that has reached the widest audience exists only in snippets. It is a film being made within the frame plot of a movie integral to French New Wave cinema – Jean-Luc Godard’s Le Mépris (Contempt) of 1963. The director of the art-house version of the Odyssey under construction is Fritz Lang, acted by himself. There is one scene where the rushes are scrutinised, and they include dazzling white statues of the gods against azure skies, that seem to be coming to life. Penelope stands against a bright yellow wall, adorned with heavy make-up like a figure from a Mycenaean fresco; there are shots of sea-nymphs and Odysseus swimming towards a rocky outcrop. The film famously starred Brigitte Bardot as Camille, the ‘Penelope’ figure in the frame plot. Godard himself wrote that it could have been entitled In Search of Homer; he wanted to show that the high cultural status of the Odyssey has actually been made the original poem’s meaning almost irrecoverable, fragmented into an ever-increasing number of different retellings.

There have been several attempts to film the ancient Greek epic itself. Mario Camerini’s Ulysses of 1954 is still by far the best, featuring a morally complex Kirk Douglas in a pre-Spartacus loincloth, Anthony Quinn as the evil suitor Antinous, and the outrageously glamorous Silvana Mangano in an interesting double act as both Penelope and Circe. A large number of films about the return of a long-lost husband and father, especially from war, make allusion to the Odyssey: the most famous include Sommersby (1993), Mike Leigh’s Naked (also 1993), and Cold Mountain (2003). But the relationship of the Odyssey with cinema is even more complicated than this. It has always held a special place in aspiring screenwriters’ lore, as demonstrated in Christopher Vogler’s bestselling handbook The Writer’s Journey (1992). In it, Vogler suggests that the formula for a successful screenplay is structured around situations and archetypal figures that he traces back to the Odyssey. The wise elder figure that began as Homer’s Mentor can be seen as Obi Wan Kenobi in George Lucas’ Star Wars (1977). Hermes, who is the herald in the Odyssey, becomes the telegraph clerk in Fred Zinnemann’s High Noon (1952); while the shape-shifter Proteus has morphed into countless superheroes and their adversaries. Finally, the showdown scene of the Odyssey, featuring violent revenge at the climax, is replayed in virtually every film ever made by Clint Eastwood.

The long cultural odyssey of the Odyssey seems immune to changing tastes in the media and the forms that our entertainment takes. It turns out that the great critic Northrop Frye was right when he commented that ‘of all fictions, the formula for a successful screenplay is structured around situations and archetypal figures that he traces back to the Odyssey. The wise elder figure that began as Homer’s Mentor can be seen as Obi Wan Kenobi in George Lucas’ Star Wars (1977). Hermes, who is the herald in the Odyssey, becomes the telegraph clerk in Fred Zinnemann’s High Noon (1952); while the shape-shifter Proteus has morphed into countless superheroes and their adversaries. Finally, the showdown scene of the Odyssey, featuring violent revenge at the climax, is replayed in virtually every film ever made by Clint Eastwood.

Murray Eiland says the Mayan calendar has been misinterpreted, so we need not prepare for the end of the world after all.

The popular imagination has been darkly captured by the fact that the ancient Mayan calendar comes to an end on this year’s winter solstice, 21 December. But what exactly does this date, which was singled out by the Maya, signify? Was there really a unified Mayan world view culminating in a catastrophe?

What scholars think of this theory is comprehensively covered in a new exhibition, entitled Maya 2012: Lords of Time, currently on show at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia. It runs until January 2013, just to make the point.

A team from the Penn Museum was actively involved in excavations at Copan in western Honduras. The Early Copan Acropolis Program ran from 1989 until 2003. During the Classical Mayan period (AD 250-900) Copan, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was an important capital city.

Impressive architectural ruins still remain. The acropolis is the main royal complex, and extensive excavation has yielded solid information about the rulers whose names were recorded on Altar Q up to several hundred years later. The first structures of stone and adobe date to the 5th century AD, when king K'inich Yax K'uk' Mo' established the dynasty.

From the beginning, the Maya were intimately concerned with the passage of time, and searched for meaning in natural cycles. Many stone monuments erected by kings included calendars. Mesoamerican books that survive are, in part, devoted to numbers. The Dresden Codex (a book of Mayan astronomy dating from the 11th or 12th century) is awash with bar-and-dot numerals. Since the decipherment of Mayan text, it has also become clear that there is no clear line dividing art from mathematics and many representations of supernatural figures also seem to represent divisions of time. Ancient cultures from around the world conceive of days and months as deities, but the Maya took this to extremes. The sky was regarded as the home of perfection, while the underworld was ruled by death. A paradox is that it was the underworld that produced the first humans, water and plants.

Existence was seen as cyclical, a balance between life and death and, at the heart of the cycle was knowledge, with four old men (portrayed as living stones) holding up the sky to prevent it from crashing down on to the earth. Since the Mayan word tun meant ‘stone’ or ‘rock’, as well as ‘year’, so their monumental stone calendars also reflected those four old men holding up the sky.

Although calendars are thought to have been developed by the Olmec, it appears that the Maya were particularly concerned with accuracy, and theirs (along with later Aztec examples) are the best known. Colonial-period sources, and Late Classic and Post-Classic traditions, suggest that the god Itzamna brought the knowledge of calendars, along with writing, to
humanity. God D in the Dresden Codex and in Classical Mayan art can be identified with him. He is sometimes dressed as a high priest, and hieroglyphically identified as the god of rulers. Rulers and calendars have a very close relationship. In practical terms a Mayan ruler would have supported the priests who observed nature and compiled the calendars. As the ruler himself was an essential part of the system, it was an enlightened form of self-interest on his part to understand the cycle of the universe.

In Classical Mayan art the god Itzamna may be shown clinging to a peccary (a pig-like mammal) or a deer; he may be depicted in various stages of sacrifice; or he may be portrayed as a bird pursued by hunters. The variety of ways in which this deity can be represented makes it clear that a vast narrative tradition has been lost, but there may be a clue in his name. The Mayan root itz denotes all sorts of secretions, such as dew, sap, and semen, and also sorcery. So Itzamna may have had many qualities that befitted a powerful ruler.

The ancient Maya had several methods of measuring time. One calendar system is still used in modified form by highland communities in Mexico and Guatemala. This is now called the Tzolk'in (a neologism) and it is of 260 days. Regarded as the oldest, it is spread across the entire Mesoamerican region. Some calendrical glyphs appear on apparently early objects. This issue is still contentious among scholars; some suggest a first millennium BC date for these objects. But 260 days has no clear relationship to any earth-based or celestial cycle, and many other theories have been proposed. Perhaps it was based on the numbers 13 and 20, which were held to be significant; 260 days may relate to the agricultural cycle in highland Guatemala, or it could be based on the average time between the first missed period and a human birth. The modern New Age movement pioneered by José Argüelles uses the Dreamspell calendar, which incorporates some components of the 260-day calendar.

The Maya could give a date according to a ‘Calendar Round’ date. This date gives both the Tzolk’in and Haab’ systems (18 months of 20 days with five nameless days at the end). The Calendar Round date will repeat after 52 Haab’ years or 18,980 days. The Haab’ system was used to keep track of seasons, but was inaccurate. The Calendar Round cycle would last about a lifetime. In order to record longer cycles, another calendar was used.

Most popular attention has been devoted to the so-called Long Count calendar, which starts from a mythological starting point, and could be extended to refer to any date in the past or future. The Long Count (starting at 6 September 3114 BC according to the Julian calendar) is
not related to the solar year. Some Long Count inscriptions contain details of the relevant lunar phase or Venus cycle (of 584 days). Unlike western (decimal base 10) numbering, the Long Count used a modified base 20 system. Although the Maya had a linear calendar, they were more concerned with cycles. Monumental inscriptions typically included five digits of the Long Count, as well as two Tzolk’in characters and two Haab’ characters.

Not surprisingly, ritual was ruled by the calendar as a ritual performed at a certain time would be subject to a particular celestial influence.

It seems that the tradition of erecting calendars was first developed between 800-500 BC (the date of an uncarved stela and altar that may once have been painted). The first stone calendar dates from 36 BC and was found at the site of Chiapa de Corzo in Mexico. This is surprisingly late although it does refer back to much earlier dates.

It is clear that kingship was linked to conceptions of a cyclical universe. The Long Count Calendar had fallen out of use by the time the Spanish arrived, but ancient texts give 3114 BC as when the 13th Bak’tun ended.

So begins our current era. On 21 December 2012 the Bak’tun cycle will end 5,125 years after it began. The Maya did not make any predictions regarding what would happen during, or after, that date, and counts on many monuments show that the system would continue beyond 2012. For example, a text from Palenque in Mexico notes the completion of 1 Piktun, the next unit up from the Bak’tun, in 4772.

Part of the reason many assume that the Maya believed there would be a terrible realignment with dire consequences in 2012 is the cycle of destruction noted in the Popol Vuh (Book of Counsel), a text which was recorded by a Spanish priest in the 18th century. But the cycles of creation and destruction as recorded in this source might have more to do with Aztecs of the 14th-16th centuries than the Classical Maya. New discoveries may shed further light on the issue of continuity.

What has been billed as the earliest Mayan astronomical calendar was discovered by William Saturno and his colleagues from a structure in Xultun in northern Guatemala (as reported in the 11 May issue of Science). The 9th-century AD paintings on it relate to astronomical observations of Mars and Venus. Like their Old World counterparts, the Mayans were fascinated by the cycle of Venus, which is visible both morning and evening. It seems that
Venus was seen by the Maya as more powerful than either the sun or the moon, as it was visible during transitions between day and night.

While the symbols still need to be interpreted fully, it appears that the tables refer to dates far in the future. The fact that these inscriptions are from the Classical Mayan period (circa AD 200-900) does not come as a particular surprise. The few bark-paper books that survive, which were made just before the arrival of the Spanish, note dates from this period, and it has always been hypothesised that the Maya were keeping detailed calendars long before this time. Painting on a wall (as at Xultun) can survive to the present, whereas books perish.

It should be noted that many rulers are known from monuments commemorating, not the date when they ascended the throne, but calendrical events that occurred during their reign. An example can be found during the reign of Smoke Imix, thought to be the longest-reigning king of Copan, who ruled from AD 628-695. Little has been recovered from the first phase of his reign, but AD 652 marked an important date. The 260th parts (19.7 years) of the Long Count are called K’atuns, and two stelae were placed in the Great Plaza, and four more in important locations, to celebrate the ending of the K’atun. He also placed a stela at Santa Rita, about 12 kilometres away (a commemo-ration of the same event is noted in AD 652 on Altar L at Quiriguá). By doing this Smoke Imix was clearly announcing his authority, but it was also intimately related to the calendar. The rest of his reign is marked by the erection of more monuments.

One of the last kings of Copan, Yax Pasaj Chan Yopaat, was 16th in the dynasty founded by K’inch Yax K’uk’ Mo’. Apparently to bolster his position (he appears not to have been related to the founder), he erected the most famous monument in Copan, Altar Q. The altar shows each of the 16 rulers of the city seated on his name glyph. A text inscribed on the upper surface relates the founding of the dynasty in AD 426-427. The main theme is the transfer of power by K’inch Yax K’uk’ Mo’, founder of the dynasty, to Yax Pasaj. During this troubled period the local nobility also gained power, so much so that they erected their own monuments. Yax Pasaj’s K’atun-ending ceremony in AD 810 was celebrated by erecting a monument at Quiriguá, not at Copan. His tomb bears scenes of the king performing war dances with spear and shield. There is also a text that states ‘toppling of the Foundation House’ suggesting that the dynasty fell. The last known king of Copan was Ukit Took’ who took power on 6 February, AD 822. He commissioned Altar L in the style of Altar Q, but it was never finished.

Today there is argument over the nature of the collapse of the Mayan empire, and whether the word ‘col-lapse’ should even be used, but it is clear that by the time the Spanish arrived, high Mayan culture was merely a memory. The discovery of early cultures of Mesoamerica which left monumental architecture gave rise in the 19th century to a romantic view of them that has percolated into today’s startling New Age theories. Perhaps it is better to appreciate the ancient Maya on their own terms.
Today Milan is known as a thriving business centre and the home of some of the world’s greatest fashion houses. But in other ways it is like most other Italian cities filled with ancient churches, magnificent museums and beautiful palaces with elegant inner courtyards, all testifying to a rich and historically important past spanning many centuries. Milan actually ousted Rome when, after several centuries of Roman control, Emperor Diocletian (r. 284-305) declared Mediolanum (Milan) capital of the Western Roman Empire in AD 293. Diocletian, however, chose to stay in Nicomedia (now Izmit in Turkey) the then capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, while his colleague Maximian (r. AD 286-305) ruled the Western section. Maximian immediately built several important monuments in the new capital, including a large circus measuring 470 × 85 metres (1,540 × 279 feet), the baths known as the Thermae Herculeae, an imposing complex of imperial palaces and several administrative buildings. A new exhibition in the former royal palace celebrates the glory of ancient Milan under the rule of Constantine the Great (r. AD 306-337) and the anniversary of the revolutionary Edict of Milan (AD 313). The edict was jointly proclaimed by Constantine and Licinius (r. AD 308-324), respectively the emperors of the Western and the Eastern Roman empires – when the two Augusti were in Milan to celebrate the wedding of Constantine’s younger half-sister Constantia to Licinius.

The edict encouraged tolerance of...
all religions throughout the empire and specified that Christianity was henceforth to be considered a lawful religion, thus ushering in a period of religious tolerance and great political and cultural renewal.

Whether Constantine himself had already sincerely embraced Christianity is a moot point. The emperor's policy went beyond tolerating this new faith, for he also allowed paganism and other religions; but he actively promoted Christianity as part of his overall imperial policy. The edict was a watershed: Christianity soon became the one and only state religion for Byzantium and the whole of Europe until the modern age.

Versions of the text of the edict were recorded by the Bishop of Caesarea, the historian Eusebius (AD 263-339), in his Historia Ecclesiastica (History of the Church) and, more accurately, in Lactantius' De Mortibus Persecutorum (On the Death of the Persecutors), written before AD 315. Lactantius (circa AD 240-300), known as the Christian Cicero, had himself survived Diocletian's persecutions and became Constantine's adviser on religious matters and tutor to the emperor's son Crispus.

A previous and similar Edict of Toleration had been issued by the co-emperor Galerius (r. AD 305-311) from Serdica (Sophia) and posted up at Nicomedia on 30 April 311. By its provisions, the Christians ‘…who had followed such a caprice and had fallen into such a folly that they would not obey the institutes of antiquity’, were granted an
indulgence, ‘wherefore, for this our indulgence, they ought to pray to their God for our safety, for that of the republic, and for their own, that the commonwealth may continue uninjured on every side, and that they may be able to live securely in their homes’.

Christians’ meeting places and other properties confiscated from them were to be returned. Their property was not restored to them, however, until the Edict of Milan was signed. The new edict, which according to the latest academic research is to be considered more of a letter of instruction to provincial governors than a proper edict like that made by Galerius, also directed the provincial magistrates to execute the new orders ‘at once, with all energy, so that public order may be restored and the continuance of the Divine favour may preserve and prosper our successes together with the good of the state’.

The development of Christianity in the 4th century from a private form of worship into a state religion can be assessed at this early stage when religious tolerance prevailed, from the fact that both pagan and Christian symbols were often present on the same object. Constantine encouraged both Christians and pagans alike to observe the Day of the Sun, an esoteric form of worship linked to Mithraism. He also chose the symbol of the sun for his coinage. However Constantine used the krismon or chi-rho, (the two initial letters of the name of Christ in Greek), as a graphic symbol of the new imperial policy on his military insignia at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in AD 312. It was there he defeated Maxentius (r. AD 306-312) son of the former emperor Maximian and son-in-law of Emperor Galerius, who vied with him for rulership of the Western Empire. Later legends ascribed Constantine’s choice of the chi-rho to a vision: he dreamt of a cross surrounded by blazing light and, shining above it, the words ‘In hoc signo vinces’, ‘in this sign you shall conquer’ (‘En touto nika’ in Greek).

But how serious and wholehearted he was about his new faith is debatable especially as when he dedicated Constantinople (formerly Byzantium, now Istanbul) as the new capital of the empire, no Christian symbols were displayed, and he wore an Apollonian sun-rayed diadem. The Arch of Constantine, built in Rome in AD 315 to celebrate his victory at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, is equally devoid of Christian symbols.

Nevertheless it is the krismon that holds pride of place in the Milan exhibition with some beautiful and interesting examples on show, including a ring on
loan from the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, and a rare 5th-century embroidered textile fragment from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

There are, of course, many other objects and coins documenting the new public representations of the emperor, his family and his court following the edict. Some of the most precious of these belonged to the new elite of the empire, the powerful Christian clergy, and their newly built churches and religious institutions. Among these leaders is one of the Church Fathers, Saint Ambrose (circa AD 330-397), the Archbishop of Milan.

More than 200 historical treasures are on display in the new exhibition, which is subdivided into six different sections. The themes range from Mediolanum as a capital to the role of the army, the decisive protagonist of the period. The results of recent archaeological investigation illustrate the evolution of Mediolanum from a rich provincial city into the administrative hub of the Western empire. Archaeological evidence also shows that the Palatium, the seat of the emperor, was a large complex made up of several buildings, courtyards and gardens for both his private and public life. Artefacts from the large public baths, private houses and necropolis are on show.

The exhibition ends with a special section devoted to Constantine’s mother, Helena, who may have been instrumental in her son’s conversion to Christianity. Little is known about her other than that she was from humble origins. A medieval tradition claims that she was a native of Britain, but it is more likely that she came from Bithynia in Asia Minor. While working as a stable-hand and serving girl in an inn, she attracted the Constantius Chlorus, then an army officer who later rose through the ranks to become emperor.

Constantine himself (AD 272-337) was born in Serbia at Naissus (now Nis), so Helena must have accompanied Constantius there and possibly married him. He divorced her in AD 289, no doubt for reasons of state, so he could to marry Theodora, Maximian’s daughter. Constantius died in Eburacum (York) in AD 306 and Constantine was proclaimed his successor.

From lowly stable-hand, serving girl and single mother, Helena was to become Dowager Empress – the divorced widow of Constantius Chlorus, mother of Constantine and grandmother to his offspring. She also became a saint in the process, notwithstanding rumours that she may have instigated the murder of her daughter-in-law Fausta, who suffocated in an overheated bathhouse in Pola in Croatia. Following Helena’s proclamation as Augusta, inscriptions appeared in the empire using her new title and she became the demure role model for later Roman and Byzantine empresses.

Her elevation to saithood comes from her association with the relics of the True Cross, on which Jesus was crucified, whose location on Golgotha in Jerusalem she identified and had excavated. The miraculous event took place during a two-year pilgrimage to the Holy Land in AD 327-328 that Helena undertook with the intention of travelling in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

Astonishingly, she did this at the age of 82, two years before she died. Yet despite her great age, the empress dowager had time to supervise the construction of many churches in Palestine, among them the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and to shower gifts and largesse on the population at large, the poor and sick especially.

The nails from the True Cross were incorporated into a helmet and a bridle, to give Constantine a form of divine protection. Pieces of the cross itself multiplied over the centuries to such an extent that Calvin wrote in his *Traité des Reliques*: ‘...if all the pieces that could be found were collected together, they would make a big ship-load. Yet the Gospel testifies that a single man was able to carry it.’

*Costantino 313 DC* is on show at Palazzo Reale, Piazza del Duomo, Milan (00 39 (0) 2 88448046; www.adartem.it) until 17 March 2013. The exhibition will then travel to Rome, where it will be on view at the Colosseum and the Curia Iulia from 27 March 2013. The catalogue is edited by Gemma Sena Chiesa and Paolo Biscottini, and published by Electa at €29.
When appointed director of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (MAA) at the University of Cambridge in 2006, I saw at once that refurbishment and a new entrance on to the street (as opposed to via a university courtyard – not public-friendly) was both necessary and long overdue. It took three years to secure the funding and two years for the work to be done; we reopened this year.

So what does MAA have to offer its visitors?

The museum holds world-class collections of indigenous art and artefacts from throughout the world. The archaeological discoveries range from early hominid tools through later Stone Age materials to Roman and Anglo-Saxon finds from Britain. Relative to the great London museums and to bigger city museums elsewhere in Britain, MAA is small – just four main galleries are spread over three floors of an evocative early 20th-century building, but this relative compactness belies the range and importance of the museum’s holdings.

The collections consist of some 800,000 artefacts, 200,000 historic photographs and an archive of letters, fieldworkers’ research notes, and associated documents. They include many artefacts representing the cultures of peoples who have since suffered great upheavals and great losses, and pieces of unique historical significance – the very first Aboriginal objects collected from Australia by any European, for example. Collections of this kind reached the museum through networks linking explorers, travellers, colonial officials and Cambridge scholars and scientists. The sheer reach of these relationships – in the context of European expansion in general and the British Empire specifically – brought, over time, an extraordinary range of exceptional art works and artefacts.

The Museum was established in 1884, but older collections already existed in Cambridge, that in due course were transferred. Trinity College’s famous Wren Library incorporated, until the end of the 19th century, a display of curiosities that came together in much the same way as the founding collections of the older London and Oxford museums. The College held 15 stones bearing Roman inscriptions that had belonged to the prominent antiquarian Sir Robert Cotton (1571-1613). He was a friend of William Camden, whose book, Britannia, published in 1586, had been of tremendous importance in advancing interest in the sites and antiquities of Roman Britain; some
of the pieces were obtained during a tour through England’s northern counties that the two men undertook in 1599.

The Trinity collection also included some 120 artefacts gathered during Captain James Cook’s first voyage to the Pacific. In many cases these were the first objects obtained from the indigenous peoples of the various islands and coasts visited. Hence, while Cotton’s collection reflected the inauguration of serious inquiry into Roman Britain, the Cook collection marked the beginnings of European interest in the arts and peoples of the Pacific.

It was not, however, the accumulation of collections in the colleges that eventually gave rise to a museum. The campaign to establish an institution was driven by members of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, which had been established in 1840. The CAS was one of many local, typically county-based, historical, architectural, or archaeological societies created in the period. Members attended meetings, read papers and presented gifts of books and specimens, which began to accumulate, and there was ongoing anxiety about appropriate space for the growing collection. Membership too grew dramatically in the 1870s and 1880s, and it was over this period that the university was successfully lobbied to establish a museum for the CAS’s collections.

At the same time, Sir Arthur Hamilton Gordon sought to present to the university a collection he had made as Governor of Fiji from 1875 to 1880. Gordon was a Trinity man, the son of a Prime Minister, a former President of the Cambridge Union, and governor of several other colonies before Fiji. One of his private secretaries, Alfred Maudslay, later a pioneer of Central American archaeology, also wished to donate a considerable number of Fijian artefacts.

Not only these collections, but the nomination of a prospective curator, were pressed upon the university. Anatole von Hügel, of English and aristocratic Austrian parentage, had arrived in Fiji just before Gordon and Maudslay. Young, enthusiastic, and open-minded, he quickly became passionately interested in Fijian culture, got on well with the local people he encountered, and collected avidly.

Von Hügel’s appointment would prove fortuitous. He worked enormously hard to build the collections. He was dedicated, charming, and persuasive, and won friends for the new institution, among them Sir James Frazer, author of The Golden Bough, the famous early study of magic and religion, and AA Bevan, the wealthy Professor of Arabic, who funded many purchases. He corresponded extensively with travellers and others with ethnological interests, encouraged them to make collections for Cambridge, and bought pieces and collections from dealers and auctions, very often with his own money.

Initially the museum was linked with no department or faculty. Though a Disney Professorship in Archaeology had been established in 1851, the position was held by Classicists and until the late 1920s affiliated with the Faculty of Classics. A few scholars, however, were excited by the emerging field
of prehistoric archaeology, and by the study of native peoples' customs, institutions, and technologies. Alfred Cort Haddon trained in zoology before turning to anthropology and followed up TH Huxley's studies in the Torres Strait, between the tip of Australia's Cape York and New Guinea.

It is easily assumed that anthropological and archaeological collections created during the colonial age consist primarily of loot, indeed that most museum objects were stolen, illegally excavated, or otherwise illegitimately acquired. The Cambridge collections, like those of all similar museums, include considerable numbers of artefacts acquired through dealers, or under circumstances that make it impossible to know their precise histories. But MAAs most important collections were generated through fieldwork by researchers who spent extended periods with communities and in many cases documented interactions and exchanges in considerable detail. Haddon was firmly opposed to looting, and censured researchers whom he knew had acquired objects without proper return.

The museum had initially been established in a new building on land leased from Peterhouse, a college that still bears the inscription, ‘Museum of Archaeology’ across its lintel. But Von Hügel’s vigorous efforts, and the major collections brought back from the Torres Strait, resulted in a great expansion of holdings by the end of the 19th century. It was clear that a new building was needed. The university made space available on a substantial site purchased to house teaching departments; an architect, TJ Jackson, was commissioned, and his plans approved. Von Hügel struggled to raise funds, and construction eventually began in 1910.

Internally, Jackson’s design was inspired; it renders the museum’s upper galleries, especially, enduringly evocative. Motivated possibly by the hope that a major totem pole might be acquired, the first and second floors were opened up by a magnificent light-filled atrium – which indeed did feature a spectacular totem pole from 1922 onwards. The space also incorporated the central section of Inigo Jones’ 1638 choir screen from Winchester Cathedral. This had been removed in the 1870s but was discovered by Jackson, also architectural adviser to the Dean of the Cathedral, who worked the disproportionately grand neoclassical arch into the end wall of the upper gallery. The combination of a sample of great church architecture, Haida monumental sculpture, and Oceanic and African art may seem bizarre, but in truth is strangely appropriate. The interests of scientists and collectors were at the time eclectic; they might be stimulated as readily by British as by Egyptian, Indian or Papuan things, and they did not in general have reservations about removing artefacts or edifices from their places of origin, to draw them into a universal collection.

Von Hügel was succeeded as Curator of the museum by Louis Clarke, a wealthy connoisseur and collector who later took up the directorship of the Fitzwilliam Museum. Like von Hügel, he put great energy into expanding the collections, and spent a lot of his own money acquiring both archaeological and anthropological pieces from dealers and auction rooms. Clarke
had strong interests in the Americas and purchased major Plains Indian and Amazonian collections; early on he also acquired material from Widdicombe House, a stately home in Devon, which included a further group of artefacts from Captain Cook’s voyages. In 1923 he participated in major excavations at Kechebawa in New Mexico and brought back important archaeological and ethnographic collections. Succeeding curators, such as TT Patterson and Geoffrey Bushnell, both also archaeologists, worked primarily in the Arctic and Central America respectively. Bushnell was succeeded by Peter Gathercole, renowned for his work in Pacific archaeology and on early voyage collections in 1971; then David Phillipson, the distinguished archaeologist of Africa, was Director from 1981 to 2006.

Much more could be said about the many expeditions and field trips that Cambridge lecturers and curators undertook over the years, and the relationships that linked the MAA with anthropologists and archaeologists, and with local peoples, elsewhere in the world. These were relationships that not only produced collections, but also produced knowledge, of the human past in particular regions, and topics such as language, kinship, religion, and politics. They also generated visual records – ranging from engaging sketches of people and places to photographic archives of thousands of images documenting the lives of societies in great detail. All of this knowledge depended upon collaboration – with local guides and workers, in the case of archaeological investigations, and communities, elders, experts and artists in the case of ethnographic work. In many cases the cultures represented through this work have suffered profound and destructive change. Early fieldworkers’ studies and collections provide, in some cases, vital records of the way things were among certain communities.

Over the past 20 years research at the museum has reactivated the connections that brought collections to Cambridge in the first place. Projects with communities ranging from Torres Strait Islanders to the Sami of northern Scandinavia and the Zuni of New Mexico have brought indigenous experts to the Museum. What we know about artefacts and their social and cultural meanings has been enhanced dramatically by new dialogue, and also by the fieldwork now being conducted by students, curators, and academics. These projects have taken images and information back to source communities and, in some cases, important objects have been loaned to local or national museums in their countries of origin.

Our collaborations often also involve contemporary artists, some from indigenous communities, others interested in creating work that reflects upon the MAA and its history. So, the collections have come to incorporate not only great historical artefacts, but new works that comment on culture and history, and express the contemporary concerns of peoples who have suffered dispossession and ongoing marginalisation. The old stereotype of the museum implies a dusty cultural mortuary; in contrast, the artworks and artefacts at MAA are very much alive, reinvigorated by new questions, provoking argument, and stimulating all of us to think about the extraordinary range of past and present human experience.

• The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3DZ (www.maa.cam.ac.uk) is open from 10.30am to 4.30pm, Tuesday to Sunday. Admission is free.
• Gifts and Discoveries: The Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, edited by Mark Elliott and Nicholas Thomas, is published by Scala at £12.95.
It was on 13 January 27 BC, when the Civil War among the Romans had just been settled by a complex act of state. Octavianus had assumed the honorary title of Augustus and, in addition, a range of functions securing his retention of power. His major problem was the army. After the battle of Actium, 70 legions were under arms and, although not all these legions had their official combat strength of 6,000 men each, the Roman army, including the cavalry and navy, now totalled a colossal 250,000 men. Every one of these soldiers expected a piece of land big enough to sustain his family at the end of his military career, but there was simply not enough to go round.

A huge, idle army might become a cradle of rebellion, and Augustus had no choice but to put his soldiers to use. This he did by conquering areas he had previously avoided because of their difficult terrain. So, when the campaigning season of 27 BC began, Augustus left Rome and personally took command of the conquest of northern Spain.

The roads across this barren, rough countryside have improved beyond measure since Augustus’ day. But when we cross the border between France and Spain around 2,000 years later, we notice that one thing has remained the same. You can only drive along the north coast, or into the heart of the country on the famous Way of St James, and there are still few connections between these two routes. The northern and southern parts of the area are separated by the Cantabrian Range, which runs east-west about 15 kilometres inland from the coast, and whose peaks can reach 2,500 metres.

We decide to cross ‘Green Spain’ by driving along the coast and soon learn why it is so called – because it rains so much here that everything green flourishes. The most popular souvenir is not, as you might assume, the scallop shell of St James but a strong umbrella that...
can be put to good use rather often.

We travel through Cantabria until we reach Asturias. Both regions take their names from tribes Augustus planned to subdue in 26 BC. The inhabitants, however, put up a fight. They withdrew into numerous mountain passes, waited for the marching Roman columns to approach, then attacked them by triggering rockfalls.

Initially Augustus stayed with his army but, when a thunderbolt struck one of his torch-bearers standing nearby, he interpreted it as divine advice that he should withdraw immediately to his headquarters. So he left his army with the order that they should smoke out the enemy forces. The local resistance fighters retreated to Mons Vindius, a peak in the Picos de Europa, where they were surrounded by the Roman troops and starved out.

Today the Picos de Europa is a national park whose snowy heights overlook idyllic lakes – an area much favoured by hikers. After a stroll, we move on to Covadonga, where Pelagius, one of the last surviving Visigoths, entrenched himself after being chased by Muslim troops in 722. Luckily, the Virgin Mary sent him a cedar cross decorated with gold and jewels (you can still see a replica of it in the treasure-room of the cathedral of Oviedo) as a sign that he would triumph – so Pelagius prevailed and began the Reconquista (Reconquest) of land seized by the Muslims.

Around Covadonga we discover traces that lead you back to the beginning of Spanish history. In the small hamlet of Villanueva, for example, is the church of a monastery built in memory of Pelagius’ son Fávila. He reigned for only two years and died during a bear hunt as pictured on a carved stone we see on the portal of the monastery of San Pedro de Villanueva. Although you will be unlikely to meet any yourself, brown bears still live in the Picos de Europa. Only a few kilometres away is the small modern town of Cangas de Onís, the first capital of Asturias. On a hill visible in the distance stood the church constructed by Fávila (of which only the foundation stone now remains) probably the first to be constructed after the Islamic conquest of Spain in AD 711. In 1630 under Philip IV while a search was being made for the tomb of Pelagius, Spain’s first king,
a prehistoric dolmen constructed around 3000 BC was discovered. On the mound above this ancient tomb Fávila erected his church. Today, a modern chapel stands on this patch of ground that is steeped in history. The foundation stone of the original church is immured in a wall and visitors can glimpse the prehistoric tomb through a hole in the floor.

To return to the Romans, despite their success in 26 BC they did not succeed in subduing all the mountain people of this region. This happened only after Augustus had returned to Rome. Officially it took until 19 BC to break the last resistance movement and northern Spain did not see peace until 14 BC. They chose Mons Medullinus in the heart of the country that, today, some scholars believe to be near to the region of Las Médulas.

This is one of the places you must see if travelling through northern Spain. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1977, it is a vast area of gold mines in the hinterland of Ponferrada. Las Médulas was the reason for Rome’s interest in this part of northern Spain – the empire struck its aurei from gold mined here. According to Pliny the Elder (Naturalis Historia, XXXIII, 78), these gold mines were believed to yield 20,000 Roman pounds (approximately 6.5 tons) per year — enough to mint 1.2 million aurei.

Today in Las Médulas the Spanish government has developed an archaeological park in which you can enjoy walks lasting for several hours. Extensive charts explain how the mining was carried out – to obtain the gold-bearing rock whole mountains were cracked open.

Pliny’s description (Naturalis Historia, XXXIII, 70) is probably quite precise, since he took the opportunity of visiting the place personally when he was procurator of Hispania Tarraconensis in AD 74: ‘The third way of mining gold is far beyond the work of giants. The mountains are bored with corridors and galleries made by lamp-light with a duration that is used to measure the shifts. For months, the miners cannot see the sunlight and many of them die inside the tunnels. This type of mine has been given the name of arrugiae; often they suddenly collapse burying thus the workers. It would seem less audacious to find pearls at the bottom of the sea than make these scars in the rock.’

Actually the impressive, ragged orange-red-coloured rock you see today are the remains of the mountains that were, in part, broken down. Long paths, rather ambiguously signposted lead through the area and even with a map from the tourist office you can easily get lost. The sweet chestnut trees growing in this valley are evidence of the fact that the gold-mining had to be done cost-efficiently. These trees were imported and planted to provide sweet chestnuts as cheap nourishment for the slaves who worked in the gold mines.

Lugo, the administrative centre of Las Médulas, named by the Romans Lucus Augusti, was founded in 13 BC on a Celtic settlement conquered by Paulus Fabius Maximus. The town came into life in the course of Augustus’ extensive administrative reforms between 16 BC and 13 BC. Then northern Spain became a part of the province Hispania Citerior, later known also under the name of Hispania Tarraconensis, taken from the governor’s residence in Tarraco, (modern Tarragona). In such a huge province there were also smaller administration units with their local centres and one of these was Lugo, place of a conventus, which offered the population the possibility of consulting a Roman court while not being constrained to undertake a trip to Tarraco.

Lugo was made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2000 because of its thick, well-preserved Roman city wall. The awesome construction is
2.17 kilometres long, has an average height of 11 metres and is 3 to 4.5 metres thick. Subdivided by seven gates and 85 semi-towers, it was extensively repaired in the Middle Ages. The walk along this wall is a delight and, understandably, the citizens of Lugo have integrated it into their daily life. This is where they go for a morning jog, take their dogs for a walk or enjoy a romantic rendezvous in the evening. Lugo is not the only town in Spain with a Roman city wall; there are around 50 examples – we saw very impressive remains at Leon and Astorga.

Castro Viladonga, an archaeological site nearby, shows how the conquered people lived. There were many of these small, fortified settlements in Roman Spain whose collective cultures are known as Castro culture. Archaeologists believe that Castro Viladonga originated around 50 BC and was occupied until around the middle of the 5th century AD. This is further corroborated by coins found there dating from the fourth and fifth centuries. The settlement consisted of thatched and brick-covered circular houses enclosed by a high earthen wall.

A small but attractive museum exhibits local archaeological finds and gives a very clear impression of how the indigenous inhabitants lived under Roman rule. There were, of course, bigger settlements, such as Santa Tegra, a vast Celtiberian town with the remains of around 1,000 houses situated on the border with Portugal. Today it has become a tourist attraction and its two reconstructed houses impress visitors holidaying along the coast between Baiona and A Garda. There is also a small museum showing objects excavated at the settlement.

Moving on we arrive in La Coruna, founded, according to the legend, by the Galician Celtic king Breogan. At *Ardobicom Corunium*, as it was renamed by the Romans, stands their only remaining lighthouse, which was known as the *Farum Brigantium* until the 20th century. Now called the Tower of Hercules (made a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2009) it acted as a light, a signal, and a landmark and was also, probably, used for storage and as a military safe haven.

The exact date when it was built is still open to debate. It may have been erected immediately after the Roman conquest of the region, or later under Trajan, a theory corroborated by an inscription that has been cited ever since.

The original tower would, of course, have looked very different to how it does today, since, between 1788-91, the Roman core was clad in stone in a Neoclassical style. Images on coins show that it probably had a flat platform on top where the beacon was lit. The firewood needed for that purpose was carried via broad ramps which spiralled around the outside of the tower.

With our arrival in La Coruna we had finally crossed Green Spain; for our return, we chose to travel along the Way of St James, wearing our scallop shells as is the custom.
Kirsten Amor looks how iPads, tablet screens and apps can help archaeologists and Classicists

With computer technology growing at an ever-increasing speed, enabling users to complete mundane and long-winded tasks more efficiently, it is hardly surprising that professionals in the archaeological and Classics sectors are now using these new devices to ease their workload and organise their data. The University of Cincinnati recently recorded all their excavation reports at Porta Stabia in Pompeii using the iPad, whilst Liverpool University tested the versatility of the iPad as an recording tool at sites in Bulgaria, Wales, England, and Greece this past summer.

But, although not everyone is willing to invest in an iPad or tablet screen, there are also a number of apps available for smart phones and even PCs that can improve your studies of the ancient world.

**Evernote**

This app allows users to take cloud-based text, audio, and picture notes with a geo-reference. It enables archaeologists and Classicists to better-organise their information without spending hours rifling through paperwork.

**Theodolite Pro**

An app that functions as a compass, rangefinder, and GPS, that can be used in conjunction with a camera. It allows archaeologists to fill out fieldwork sheets without rifling through toolboxes for lost kit.

**Tap Forms HD**

This allows users to import data from their Macs or PCs using FTP and web-based servers. In essence, the app acts as a portable paperwork carrier device, and enables Classicists and archaeologists to store many types of data on one source.

**TouchDraw**

With this app users can create illustrations and drawings, export and import them to other devices, and create libraries that they can share with friends and co-workers. Archaeologists can create technical drawings in the field, and insert scales, graphs, and layers into the document as well. Classicists can use it as an aid for creating sketches.
of Classical sculpture and layouts of cities. Archaeological service team Studiebureau Archeologie BVBA found this app particularly helpful when drawing plans of heritage sites.

ArchaeoBox
This international archaeology web-referencing project was created for, and by, archaeologists. It offers users the latest news in archaeology, fieldwork positions, events listings, and archaeology travel reviews.

Librarium II Latin Text Reader
This resource provides a selection of Latin texts all in one app, and allows users to tap a word on the screen for a definition. It is a useful tool for professors and amateurs alike wanting access to texts without lengthy searches in a library, or as a study tool for students.

Virtual History Roma
This app presents a three-dimensional digital reconstruction of the city of Rome, complete with well-known structures, like the Colosseum, and also buildings that have been destroyed, such as Nero’s Golden House, all of which can be explored. It also shows how famous buildings would have looked at different stages in the Empire’s history. Other features of this app include 3D tours of other major cities of the Roman Empire, such as Pompeii, with information sheets, maps, and photographs to provide an in-depth history of the Empire, and how it changed over time. This app is an informative aid for visualising the monuments and buildings famed throughout Roman history, and understanding the changes to the city over time. It also saves time taken by searching through maps and books.

Ancient Greek
This combines a copy of Liddell, Scott, and Jones’ Greek-English Lexicon with a large collection of works by Ancient Greek scholars and writers. It is easy to use – just tap a word on the screen and you get an instant definition. It is a handy resource for those wanting a quick translation of words, or who wish to read a Greek text without the hassle of finding it at the library.

Greek mythology, Socratica
An app that acts as an information resource about all the gods and goddesses of Greek religion, it also provides an extensive database of representations of these deities in ancient and post-ancient art. In addition it offers an audio tool to aid in the pronunciation of their more tricky names.

Greece: History and Culture
Overall, this app is like a portable encyclopaedia of Greek civilization, divided into historical periods, with information on the history and culture of that period listed beneath each heading, accompanied by an extensive catalogue of photographs and archaeological and historical maps of Greece. There is also a timeline, searchable lists of prominent ancient Greeks’ biographies, a year search engine, and stories about events in Greek history.
Those that have always wanted to explore the art galleries of Italy, or discover the rock drawings of Western Australia but have neither the time nor funds, can now do so without leaving home. The Google Art Project, a collaboration between the Google Cultural Institute and 151 museums and research centres all over the world, allows users to view over 32,000 works of art all on one website. Bringing together some of the best examples of sculpture, painting, drawing, historic and religious artefacts, photographs, and important manuscripts, the Google Art Project was created to promote the use and preservation of culture online.

When it was launched on 1 February, 2011, the Google Art Project collaborated with 17 museums but, this year, it rapidly expanded its collection, improved the quality of the images, and added new tools and interactive elements. Amit Sood, Head of the Google Art Project, stated: ‘The Art Project is going global, thanks to our new partners from around the entire world. It’s no longer just about the Indian student wanting to visit Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. It is now also about the American student wanting to visit the National Gallery of Modern Art in Delhi.’ Using Google’s Street View technology, users can also take virtual tours of museums and iconic centres, such as the Palace of Versailles or the Musée d’Orsay.

All of the artwork on the Project can be viewed at high resolution, and particularly famous works of art can be viewed using Gigapixel technology, which allows users to view canvases in brushstroke and patina detail. Google Art Project’s database also allows visitors to search through all the collections online to view works by a certain artist or from a particular period. By employing the tools to explore and discover, users can explore the website’s archive by title of artwork, genre, museum, country, city, or collection.

Google has also incorporated interactive elements within the Project, by allowing users to choose their favourite work of art and details to create their own ‘User Galleries’ across the site. Within their personal galleries, you can add comments beside each work, and share galleries online with social media outlets Google Plus and Hangout. The personal gallery also allows users to upload Youtube videos pertaining to the artwork featured in their personally chosen collection.

There is a separate educational section on the website, featuring videos and content to help users understand certain themes in art.

The Google Art Project is currently planning to expand into more countries and collections to increase its online database. There are also plans underway to include an experimental section, highlighting how artists are using new technologies to display their art.

For now though, users can immerse themselves in art from all over the world, ranging from the street graffiti of Brazil to the cave art of South Africa.

Kirsten Amor
What was it like to be one of the most powerful rulers of the ancient world? How did someone become king of Egypt? What did a pharaoh do in his leisure time? These are some of the many questions tackled by Garry J Shaw, whose research focuses on the daily lives of the pharaohs, in his lively and colourful new book.

Shaw, who teaches at the Egypt Exploration Society, follows the great rulers from the bedchamber to the battlefield. As well as exploring the evolution and ideology of kingship and what it was like to be regarded as a god, he also investigates the personal life of the pharaoh—his recreational pursuits, family life, diet and health problems. Pets were not unknown in the royal palaces of Egypt—cats and dogs were popular and some were so beloved that they were buried in their own tombs.

Quotations from original texts enliven the narrative, as in the chapter describing ancient and medieval publications: ‘...the noble ladies of Memphis sit at leisure, hands bowed down with [festive] foliage and greenery’.

All this is set within a clear historical framework, well described in Chapter Two, ‘The Story of Two Lands’, and, at the end of the book, there is a useful check-list of all the pharaohs, from Predynastic times to the Roman period, giving biographies of the most important.

Aided by plans, maps and good illustrations, this chunky, well-written cultural guidebook not only takes the traveller on a thorough and informative tour of Egypt’s ancient monuments, but also gives a concise insight into the long history of the country. The author does not confine himself to the Pharaonic past, Christian, Coptic and Islamic sites are included, as is the development of archaeology: ‘...the freewheeling days of exploration – of unsupervised digs and the gifted dilettante floating down the Nile on his houseboat; the specialist has replaced the gentleman at large...’

Furthermore this is no traditional grammar book or primer as he explains: ‘...the approach here has been organized around a sequence of monuments, which you are invited to examine and read right from the start’. So, off you go, starting with a stela invited to examine and read right from the start'.

The epilogue includes useful lists of names of kings and gods and hieroglyphic signs. I am sure that Champollion would approve, although perhaps through gritted teeth.

Lindsay Fulcher
Women in the Ancient World
Jenifer Neils
British Museum Press, 2011
216pp, 200 colour photographs and one map
Paperback, £18.99

Jenifer Neils has taught Classical Art and Archaeology at Case Western Reserve University since 1980. She has also guest-curated two major international loan exhibitions, *Goddess and Polis: The Panathenic Festival in Ancient Athens and Coming of Age in Greece: Images of Childhood from the Classical Past*.

Her latest book, a handsome volume, lavishly illustrated throughout with colour photographs of objects largely drawn from the collections of the British Museum, focuses on both the role and perception of women in the past.

Small details like a map of the ancient world, a list of goddesses across different cultures and a potted history of each in the opening chapter, make this a self-contained primer on the topic for those who incline towards the aesthetic.

Neils does broach the awkward truth that the vast majority of what we know about women in the ancient world is filtered through representations left to us by men, and makes some effort to navigate round this by touching on the clues that can be drawn from biological remains, for example, preserved bodies. This is, however, clearly not the raison d’être of this book, as more space is filled by beautiful images of well photographed objects than by CAT scans.

Having accepted that male-authored accounts concerning the female members of the population are heavily biased, the book unashamedly focuses on a visual celebration of women while at the same time placing them in a socio-historic context.

The cultures under scrutiny are Ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt, and the Near East. But, by examining the subject thematically, rather than geographically, Neils allows for interesting comparisons to be drawn between the different cultures, for instance views and laws concerning the legal rights of women and approaches to marriage.

This book ambitiously covers a vast period, stretching from 4000 BC to AD 600 and involving a range of religions and cultures – particularly from the Ancient Near East. But the chapter headings: ‘Female Stereotypes’, ‘Mothers and Mourners’, ‘Working Women’, ‘The Body Beautiful’, ‘Women and Religion’ and ‘Royal Women’ allow these introductory studies to be presented in accessible portions.

The chapters are peppered throughout with comparative and supporting accounts, from myths and old textual sources, which add to our understanding of the imagery on the objects (eg. black figure pots). A few surprising examples of biased ancient thought include the fact that Aristotle thought women were no more than mutilated men.

At its close Neils concedes once more that most of what we know about women in the ancient world is seen through male eyes, but as the remit of her book is to show how art celebrates the female form, it succeeds in being an engaging, informative and beautifully presented book.

**Minerva** November/December 2012

Greek Prostitutes in the Ancient Mediterranean 800 BCE–200 CE
Allison Glazebrook and Madeleine M. Henry [eds.]
University of Wisconsin Press, 2011
360pp, 14 black and white photos and 12 drawings
Paperback, £23.30

If, on finishing Jenifer Neils’ *Women in the Ancient World* (reviewed left), you wanted to study in greater depth one of the more taboo aspects of feminine life, what is commonly referred to as ‘the oldest profession in the world’, then *Greek Prostitutes in the Ancient Mediterranean 800 BCE–200 CE* provides the ideal scholarly assessment of the sex workers of Ancient Greece.

Glazebrook and Henry have edited contributions from 11 academics (including themselves) on this subject, and the 10 essays within this book, along with appropriate referencing glossary and indices, are very much aimed at those studying the Classical world at degree or higher level.

This is not to say, though, that the book is unapproachable or unengaging, quite the contrary in fact, as it covers such fascinating subject matter. On the other hand, this is not to say it is a vicarious peepshow into ancient sexual practices.

Much of the book focuses on the importance of Ancient Greek prostitutes to society. Among the ideas discussed are the socio-political power that prostitutes came to wield and how this sat with the lay (for want of a better term) community, the social status of women, civic endorsement of the profession and a philological study of the language associated with sex.

Architectural and archaeological evidence is also examined, with particular reference to the brothels on Delos. Coupled with liberal citations of ancient writings and fragments this makes for a pleasingly multi-disciplinary approach to the subject.

Greek vase painting is a great resource for this type of study and Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz’s chapter, ‘Sex for Sale?’, analyses the representations of women seen (predominantly) on drinking vessels. By drawing attention to body language, rendering, attributes, and how these relate to written accounts, Rabinowitz explains that previous interpretations of rites of passage, courtship scenes, companionship and love scenes, may have been erroneous.

Many of the examples cited throughout this book create small vignettes of life in Ancient Greece and show how prostitution was fundamentally and vitally linked to many aspects of the social and economic position of the city-states.

What can be learnt from the prostitutes of Ancient Greece is evidently far more than might be expected and in many instances quite surprising – one good example of this is the madam who wrote out the rules of her brothel in 237 stanzas of high oratorical language.

Overall this highly engaging book demonstrates the need to use all the available ancient resources to build up an accurate cultural picture of the times.

As Glazebrook and Henry acknowledge, the academic study of the oldest profession is far more acceptable today than it once was.

Geoff Loussley
In the saleroom Gerhard Hirsch Nachfolger

PRE-COLUMBIAN ART SALE

Collections of pre-Columbian art do not often come on the market in Europe. This is probably due to the distances involved in travel between Europe and the New World. It is also because ancient pre-Columbian cultures left few written records, and these cannot be studied as literature. The result is that artefacts from the Classical world hold pride of place in countries most directly influenced by Greece and Rome.

The collection assembled by Dr Claus Maria (and others) and sold at the auction house Gerhard Hirsch Nachfolger on 24 September was an exception. The sale totalled some 400 objects, 125 of which were from Dr Claus Maria's collection. Born in 1940 in Danzig, Dr Maria grew up in the vicinity of Munich. Even though he was employed as an engineer, he devoted his free time to artistic pursuits including collecting. His collection was assembled in the 1980s and 1990s. It was a long-standing love of dogs that led him to buy his first artefact, a dog from the Colima culture (circa 200-300 BC). Figurines of these dogs are relatively common, and a variety of different pre-Columbian cultures buried their dead with dogs. Skeletons as well as figurines are recovered today. That being said, this is a particularly fine example with a finely burnished surface (Lot 5).

These canine figures, along with the so-called ‘sex-pots’, are some of the most popular replicas now sold to tourists. For those with an interest in collecting ancient art that depicts animals, artefacts from Peru and Mexico are particularly popular. But another reason must be that these ancient cultures produced many high quality ceramics. The fact that they used moulds and other techniques to make many of them does not detract from their artistry, and it is notable that there are few examples of exactly the same pot known today. To start to the north of the pre-Columbian culture zone however, there are several vessels of the ‘Casa Grande’ type that are from the southwestern USA or northern Mexico. These people of the Sonoran Desert had a large population supported by irrigated agriculture, as well as wide-ranging trade contacts. However, they were clearly a very different

From Chimu pots to Celtic coins

Murray Eiland reports on two sales of New World artefacts and coins in Munich
cultural zone from that encountered further south (Lot 1).

This auction was a showcase for vessels from the Moche culture. A star of the auction, as far as ceramics were concerned, was a Moche I-II vessel of a fantastic animal (Lot 276). It appears to be something like a dragon with human (as well as reptile and feline) features. While these composite creatures have an uncertain interpretation, artistically they meld human and animal together in very interesting ways.

The straight depiction of the natural world is in comparison more commonly seen in pre-Columbian art. Good examples were three Moche vessels (dating to AD 450-600) that depict birds: two parrots, and a waterbird (Lots 58, 59, 60). To the modern eye it appears that these birds have personalities. While it is difficult to compare different cultures, the European Classical world usually reserved such treatment for dogs and perhaps horses.

The Chimu culture on the north coast of Peru, which arose around AD 900, is well-known for a burnished black ceramic tradition. In style they clearly follow the Moche in design. The Inca conquered the Chimu around AD 1470, shortly before the Spanish arrived. Their animals are of a similar but different style. For instance, birds are represented, as are others, such as felines (Lot 72) as well as monkeys (Lot 77). The Inca encompassed a wide-ranging empire, and produced ceramics in a variety of styles. Birds are well known to them as well (Lot 121).

The Veracruz, or Gulf Coast Culture of Mexico, encompassed the central and northern areas of the present-day state of the same name and existed from AD 100-1000. The architecture of this culture is known for being ornate, and a major theme is human sacrifice and the sacred ball-game. Minor arts such as ceramics can also have a more sinister aspect, such as this jaguar-headed whistle (Lot 162). While the architecture of this culture has been known for some time, their ceramics have only been recovered in quantity since the 1950s, and much important material has ended up on the market.

The Aztecs were also known for animals, and given their fierce reputation, it is no surprise that battling creatures are not uncommonly depicted, such as this stone sculpture of a bird battling a snake (Lot 169).

An elite sculpture with a man’s head of the Classic Mayan culture (AD 450-650) was probably used as a trophy given to the winner of the sacred ball game (Lot 175).

The auction was for those whose particular interest was artefacts of the New World which are worthy of wider appreciation and should receive much more attention.
Held in Munich, between 26-29 September, Auctions 284-285 featured a number of extremely interesting coins, such as a *stater* (Lot 2015) from Bruttium (Terina) signed with a *phi* and dated to 430-420 BC. The die-carver was identified as Phyrgillos, reputed to have been a gem carver as well. This seems evident from this coin’s fine artistic execution. The letter *phi*, for example, is rarely seen so clearly.

Also from Bruttium, this time the city of Kaulonia, was a well-known type of *stater* (Lot 2137), dating from 530-475 BC. ‘Apollo’ stands with a branch in his right hand and a little figure with a branch on his outstretched left arm, beside him is a deer.

Greek Sicily is also famous for stunning coins, such as this *tetradrachm* (Lot 2174) from Messina (461-430 BC). It is believed that rabbits were brought to the island shortly before the coin was struck by Anaxilas the conquering tyrant of Rhegium. In 484, or 480 BC, Anaxilas won the mule *biga* event at the Olympic Games. After his expulsion, his successors used variants of his designs but which replaced the male mule driver by a nymph.

A *stater* (Lot 2060) from Melos, one of the Cycladic Islands, presents something of an enigma. It is said to have an apple on the obverse (*melon* in Greek) but it could be a pomegranate, or possibly even a quince. The reverse bears an *ethnikon* in a quadrisection round incuse.

From Asia (Ionia, Herakleia) is a *tetradrachm* (Lot 2067) dating from 190-100 BC. The condition of the coin is exquisite, hence the relatively high estimate of €2500 but it only sold for €600.

Celtic coins were also represented in the sale, by a particularly fine one half *stater* from Gaul (Lot 2110). Attributed, perhaps uncertainly, to the Durocasses (‘the warriors of the strengthened hill’) it dates to the 1st century BC. This is an extremely rare coin, and may be the best preserved example.

Roman rarities included a *denarius* of Domitilla, the first wife of Vespasian although struck posthumously under Titus and Domitian (Lot 2765). It shows a bust of Domitilla and, unusually, on the reverse a peacock, an exotic species from India.

From the former Nelson Bunker Hunt collection there was an *aureus* (Lot 2842) of Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161). Issued posthumously, the decorative funerary pyre on the reverse commemorates his cremation. This was a sale with a few surprises.

**Trading for four generations**

In 1953, Gerhard Hirsch founded a coin trading company under his own name. The current owner, Dr Francisca Bernheimer, who is his niece of Hirsch, took over the running of the company after his death in 1982 and retained the company name.

In 1878, Otto Helbing, who was a great-grand-uncle of Dr Bernheimer’s, founded his own company dealing in coins. A decade later he held his first auction. Both her father, Dr Ludwig Bernheimer, and grandfather, Consul Otto Bernheimer, managed Haus Bernheimer (an art institution founded in 1864).

Growing up in a family involved for four generations in art, coins and collecting kindled her interest in these subjects and she went on to study art history, archaeology, and numismatics.

After becoming head of the company Dr Francisca Bernheimer decided that, in addition to coins, she would add ancient art to the company’s portfolio.

She and her family have been holding auctions for over the past 125 years, and numerous important collections have passed through their hands.

- **Gerhard Hirsch Nachfolger**, Promenadeplatz 10/II, 80333 Munich, Germany (+49 89 29 21 50; www.coinhirsch.de) holds four auctions per year – in February, May, September, and November.
Rental and Revelry: The Art of Drinking in Asia
This free exhibition looks at the religious and secular importance of drinking, with a focus on water, alcohol and, of course, tea. The exhibition covers 2,500 years of history and includes drinking vessels, paintings and prints, in the context of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, as well as traditional Chinese and Japanese practices.


Doctors, Dissection and Resurrection Men
This fascinating, if macabre, show was prompted by the excavation of 262 burials, dating from the 1830s, in 2006. The anatomical trade in body parts for dissection is placed in context by human and animal remains, original documents, drawings, models and artefacts. The Anatomy Act of 1832, which regulated the supply of cadavers for medical research and anatomical teaching, is scrutinised and awkward ethical questions are posed.


Bronze
A stunning exhibition celebrating the art of bronze over 5,000 years shows over 150 of the finest objects from around the world (including the remarkable Garett Crosby helmet shown below). They are grouped thematically into Human Figures, Animals, Groups, Objects, Reliefs, Gods, Heads and Busts. This means that Ancient Greek, Roman and Etruscan works sit alongside masterpieces of the Renaissance, by Donatello, Cellini and others, with the last 200 years represented by works by Rodin, Moore, Picasso, Brancusi and others. It will be a long time before a comparable show will be seen again.

The Royal Academy +44 (0) 207 300 8000 (www.royalacademy.org.uk) Until 9 December 2012.

Death: A Self Portrait
Again the Wellcome Collection confounds and surprises us, this time with over 300 items celebrating the iconography and attitudes towards death. Drawn from the collection of Richard Harris, former antiques dealer, ancient Incan skulls, human remains and war art, are exhibited alongside rare prints by Rembrandt, Goya and Dürer.

The Wellcome Collection +44 (0) 207 611 2222 (www.wellcomecollection.org) From 15 November until 28 February 2013.

UNITED STATES.

MALIBU, California
The Last Days of Pompeii: Decadence, Apocalypse, Resurrection
Edward Bulwer-Lytton's novel The Last Days of Pompeii (1834) has shaped our interpretation of the destruction of this, and surrounding Vesuvian cities. This show examines how artists – from Piranesi to Duchamp and Warhol – have used themes of the nature of art, sexual identity, and even nuclear threat, in association with Pompeii, to create their own work.

The Getty Villa +1 (0) 310 40 73 00 (www.getty.edu). Until 7 January 2013.

CHICAGO, Illinois
Between Heaven and Earth: Birds in Ancient Egypt
In collaboration with other major US institutes, this exhibition brings together numerous examples of depictions of the birds of Ancient Egypt – with a particular focus on religion and the afterlife. Highlights include a coffin for an ibis mummy, decorated with gold, silver, and rock crystal, an eagle mummy with the remains of gilding and wall paintings showing the hoopen like the one below. The Oriental Institute +1 (0) 773 702 95 94 (www.oi.uchicago.edu) From 16 October until 28 July 2013.

City of Gold: Tomb and Temple in Ancient Cyprus
With loans from the Cypriot Department of Antiquities, the British Museum, and the Musée du Louvre, this exhibition celebrates the conclusion of two decades of archaeological excavations at Polis Chrysochous, an ancient town in the Republic of Cyprus. Highlights include fine gold jewellery and a rare marble kouros.

Princeton Art Museum +1 (0) 8544 609 258 3788 (www.princetonartmuseum.org) From 20 October until 20 January 2013.

NEW YORK, New York
Echoes of the Past: The Buddhist Cave Temples of Xiangtangshan
The group of 6th-century Buddhist sculptures found within caves in north China are on display here within a full scale, 3D reconstruction of the Buddhist cave complex at Xiangtangshan. Well preserved and exceptionally well rendered, these figures are seminal to our
to our understanding of Chinese Buddhist iconography. 


Objects from the Kharga Oasis 

In 1907 the Egyptian Government granted the Met permission to dig at Kharga Oasis which is 400 miles south-west of Cairo. The digs went on into the 1930s yielding evidence of various periods of occupation, as far back as the Middle Paleolithic Period. This exhibition draws on the time when most of the artefacts were found: the Late Roman and Byzantine age. With grave goods, ceramics and textiles on display alongside facsimiles of painted interiors and excavation photography, this is a rich source of information on past archaeology. 

Metropolitan Museum of Art +01 (0) 21 25 35 77 10 (www.metmuseum.org). Until 4 August 2013.

Turkmen Jewelry from the Marshall and Marilyn R Wolf Collection

To celebrate this collector’s recent gift to the Met (and the promise of 250 more items) 43 objects from the 19th and 20th century (such as the ornate teapot, above) have been put on show. Made of gold, silver, carnelian and other precious stones, these items demonstrate the fine craftsmanship involved.


Bernini: Sculpting in Clay

With loans from some of the foremost institutions around the globe, including the Louvre and the Victoria and Albert Museum, this display features 40 of the famous Baroque sculptor’s clay sketches for colossal marble pieces, together with 30 drawings on paper on show for the first time.


WASHINGTON DC

Enlightened Beings: Buddhism in Chinese Painting

Through 27 works, the four stages of enlightened being, as described by Buddha, are illustrated. The paintings cover nearly a millennium, from the Song, Yuan, and early Ming dynasties (AD 1000–1400) up to the later Ming and Qing.

The Smithsonian Institute +1 (0) 20 26 33 10 00 (www.si.edu). Until 24 February 2013.

CHINA

HONG KONG

Enlightening Elegance: Porcelain of the Mid Ming Period

This exhibition covers 400 years of Chinese Imperial history, with many items from the Imperial Ceramics Factory that reflect each emperor’s individual taste. Religious beliefs, including Taoism and Buddhism and Muslim influences, can be seen in the decorated porcelain. This show follows on the heels of Enlightening Elegance: Porcelain Vases of the Imperial Qing, in 2007, which was also drawn from enthusiast Anthony Cheung’s collection.

Art Museum Chinese University of Hong Kong +00 852 394 374 16 (www.cuhk.edu.hk). From 1 December 2012 until 1 April 2013.

Enlightening Elegance: Porcelain of the Mid Ming Period

This exhibition covers 400 years of Chinese Imperial history, with many items from the Imperial Ceramics Factory that reflect each emperor’s individual taste. Religious beliefs, including Taoism and Buddhism and Muslim influences, can be seen in the decorated porcelain. This show follows on the heels of Enlightening Elegance: Porcelain Vases of the Imperial Qing, in 2007, which was also drawn from enthusiast Anthony Cheung’s collection.

Art Museum Chinese University of Hong Kong +00 852 394 374 16 (www.cuhk.edu.hk). From 1 December 2012 until 1 April 2013.
MUNICH, Bavaria
The Immortal Gods of Greece
With loans from abroad and objects from the museum’s own collection, this exhibition showcases depictions of the gods, focusing on their stories, attributes and cult images. One highlight is a reconstructed Greek temple and a display exploring its ritual use.

Netherlands
Heerlen
Nuggets
5000 years of the history of Heerlen are represented here with a wide range of exhibits. Each month a new collection highlight will become the centrepiece of the show, including historic coins, gold and ceramics. See website for the accompanying educational programme, workshops and city walks.

Thermenmuseum
+31 (0) 45 56 05 100
(www.thermenmuseum.nl).
Until 3 February 2013.

Leiden
Hollywood’s Egypt
This show tackles an interesting subject by looking at how films, from 1898 to the present day, have depicted Ancient Egypt, and how this, in turn, has shaped public opinion for good or ill. Mostly pharaohs are seen as egomaniacs with millions of slaves, while blood-thirsty mummies are grisly monsters that rise up and chase hapless archaeologists to the ends of the earth. It also takes a look at how the film industry was influenced by activity in the archaeological world.

There is a series of film evenings and talks in conjunction with this show.
National Museum of Antiquities +31 (0) 71 5163 163 (www.rmo.nl).
Until 17 March 2013.

Qatar
Doha
The Intelligence of Tradition: Antiquity and Early Islamic Glass and Illuminations: the Mosque Lamp as Iconographic Image
The Museum of Islamic Art is presenting two sparkling exhibitions focussing on glass in various forms – from ancient times to the current day. Intelligence and Tradition features Ancient Egyptian, Hellenistic and Roman glass displayed to demonstrate the various production techniques. Illuminations on the other hand focusses on the iconography and symbolism found in Islamic glass decoration from the medieval period onwards.

Until 7 January 2013.

Archaeological Journal
SPAIN
Barcelona
The Museum Explores: Works of Art Under Examination
An interesting look at the restoration and study of exhibits in the museum environment. Drawing on MNAC’s own collection, this exhibition shows a range of different artefacts and tries to demonstrate the different techniques used by curators and restorers to expose forgeries and learn more about genuine items.

Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya +34 93 622 03 60 (www.mnac.cat).
From 23 November 2012 until 17 February 2013.

Switzerland
Zurich
Merchants in Venice and Amsterdam
The foundations of our economic system are explored through the social development of Europe, by focussing on Venice and Amsterdam from the 13th to 17th centuries. Through an age of opulence, where trade, architecture, furniture and luxury goods were in vogue, to the decline and collapse of empires, this display traces how the fortunes of merchants waxed and waned.

The Swiss National Museum +41 (0) 44 218 5 11 (www.nationalmuseum.ch).
Until 17 February 2013.

Events
London
Winter Fine Art and Antiques Fair Olympia
The fine art institution returns with another vast array of some of the finest and most interesting pieces on the art market. Collectors and interested enthusiasts alike will find much of interest among the 140 exhibitor stalls that cover a whole range of arts styles from across the globe and throughout history.

Olympia Exhibition Centre (+44) (0)871 620 7062 (www.olympia-antiques.com).
From 12-18 November 2012.

A Call for Papers
Archaeological Journal
The editor of the Archaeological Journal seeks high quality papers for publication in Vol 169, Spring 2014. Articles are invited that fall into one of the three principal categories: 1. Fieldwork Reports and Major Studies: usually under 30,000 words 2. Research Articles: under 10,000 words 3. Notes, under 4,000 words Submissions will be subject to rigorous peer review. For further information contact: howard.williams@chester.ac.uk by 1 February 2013.