A history of magic
Do the spells and potions of Harry Potter have their roots in reality?

City of water, city of fire
Exploring the Pyramid of the Sun and of the Moon in Teotihuacan

The daily life of the Ancient Greeks
Philosophy in the agora where the epic and the prosaic were inseparable

The rich legacy of the Lombards
They left us intricate stone carving, gold cloisonné and fine glassware

The face of power
Although the pharaoh’s word was law, the influence of several Ancient Egyptian queens was considerable and, in some cases, supreme
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Features

8 Muggles, mandrakes and magic
The world of Harry Potter is full of witchcraft, potions, incantations and alchemy and much of it is based on historical evidence – as the spell-binding exhibition at the British Library reveals. Julian Harrison

14 The face of power
Pharaohs of Egypt chose a particular iconography to strengthen their image, establish their authority and safeguard their legacy, as can be seen at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen. Tine Bagh

22 When women ruled the world
American Egyptologist, archaeologist and author Dr Kara Cooney explains how some of the queens of the Nile managed to wield power in what was definitely a man’s world. Richard Marranca

28 City of water, city of fire
At the vast site of Teotihuacan there are remarkable temples and great pyramids, decorated by deeply carved sculpture and colourful murals, examples of which are on show in San Francisco. Murray Eiland

34 Shining a light on the Lombards
Little is known about this Germanic people, who ruled an extensive kingdom in Italy from AD 568 to 774; now, an exhibition in Naples puts the spotlight on their rich artistic and architectural legacy. Dalu Jones

40 The examined life
Philosophers, such as Socrates, often stopped to talk to craftsmen in the agora and this was not unusual in Ancient Greece – as can be seen in a new gallery in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Dominic Green

46 A sense of place
Archaeologists can act as today’s placemakers by creating sites that receive thousands of visitors every year – one such is Butrint in Albania, which tells a human story that echoes down the ages. Richard Hodges

Regulars

2 Editor’s letter
3 In the news
52 Book reviews and Quiz
56 Calendar
Who holds the power?

In Ancient Egypt the pharaoh was a god among men but what if a woman succeeded to the throne; how would she manage to fill this very masculine role?

As you will see when you look at the stunning image on our cover, such is the power of the gaze of the pharaoh that you are compelled to pay attention. This hypnotically handsome face belongs to Ammenhat III and this beautiful piece of sculpture can usually be seen in Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen. I have been haunted by it for many years, so I was delighted when I discovered it was one of the star exhibits in the Glyptotek’s latest exhibition, Pharaoh: The Face of Power, and I could feature it in Minerva. Tine Bagh, Curator of the Egyptian Collection there, describes how a specific iconography was used to reinforce the image of the pharaoh as godlike, all-powerful and all wise. You can read what she has to say on pages 14 to 20.

Then, if you turn to pages 22 to 26, you will meet another Egyptologist, Kara Cooney, who is a Professor at the University of California Los Angeles. Having written a book on Hatshepsut, she is currently working on another volume, this time about six of Ancient Egypt’s queens. I was interested to read how these clever women managed to occupy this very masculine role (it did involve occasionally putting on a false beard), to hold on to power and to rule this great kingdom with its vast temples and funerary monuments.

The Ancient Egyptians are not the only people to have built pyramids, though. At Teotihuacan, a huge archaeological site not far from Mexico City, there are colossal structures known as the Pyramid of the Sun and the Pyramid of the Moon and the mysterious Temple of the Feathered Serpent. In 2003 archaeologists found a tunnel under the Pyramid of the Sun, and this site is currently on show at the de Young Museum in San Francisco. But if you can’t visit this site, there is also the museum, you can read all of Fine Arts in San Francisco. But if you can’t visit this site, there is also the museum, you can read all of Fine Arts in San Francisco.

The Ancient Greeks and Romans saw themselves as highly civilised – unlike the Barbarians who came to attack their cities and disrupt their lives. But what exactly is a barbarian? When the Lombards invaded Italy in the 6th century they were tarred with this brush but, as you can see on pages 34 to 38, they were far from barbaric and their legacy is now much appreciated.

Finally, we come to the question of what constitutes a sense of place, and how archaeologists have become placemakers. Richard Hodges shows us an excellent example – the site of Butrint in Albania, which now receives thousands of visitors a year; see pages 46 to 51.

CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Marranca

Richard is Curator of the Ancient Egyptian Collection at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen and has published the archaeological finds from Egypt and Nubia held there. His PhD was in Near Eastern Archaeology, specialising in Egypt and the Levant. He taught Egyptian Archaeology at the University of Copenhagen and has excavated in Egypt.

Tine Bagh

is Curator of the Ancient Egyptian Collection at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen and has published several exhibitions on Egyptian and Nubian art. She has been Visiting Professor (at the University of Birmingham, 2016). He is also the editor of the British Library’s award-winning Medieval Manuscripts Blog (UK Arts and Culture Blog of the Year 2014).

Julian Harrison

is a medieval manuscripts specialist and the Lead Curator of Harry Potter: A History of Magic. He has previously curated exhibitions on Magna Carta (at the British Library, 2015) and William Shakespeare (at the Library of Birmingham, 2016). He is also the editor of the British Library’s award-winning Medieval Manuscripts Blog (UK Arts and Culture Blog of the Year 2014).

Richard Hodges

is President of The American University of Rome. He has been Director of the British School at Rome; Director of the Prince of Wales’ Institute of Architecture and Director of the University Museum in the University of Pennsylvania. He has published widely and has run excavations in Albania, Italy, Turkey and the UK.
In 2014, a dozen silver-gilt standing cups, known as the Aldobrandini Tazze, were reunited for the first time since the 1860s for a colloquium at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

Now the museum is displaying the complete set of ‘cups’, ‘dishes’ or ‘bowls’ until March 2018. The tazze will then travel to Waddesdon Manor, near Aylesbury, where they will be displayed with Renaissance objects from the Rothschild collection until June.

In 2014, Professor Mary Beard announced her discovery that the bowl known as the ‘Domitian bowl’ (now in the Victoria & Albert Museum) is really the Tiberius bowl.

‘At this point I was hooked,’ wrote Beard. ‘For a start, it was clear that if the Domitian bowl was really Tiberius, then the Tiberius bowl couldn’t be Tiberius. That one turned out to be Caligula, and the Caligula bowl turned out to be, of course, Domitian.’

Beard believes that eight of the 12 emperors now stand on top of the wrong bowls. As to how this happened, she points out that ‘the figures unscrewed’, and she suspects that the figures were removed for cleaning, then screwed back on to the wrong bases.

The exhibition and the accompanying catalogue essays trace the set from its creation to its dispersal.

The bowls were probably made in the Netherlands around 1570; some designs seem to draw on sources published at that date. By the end of the 16th century, they were in Italy, with the heirs of Ippoliti Aldobrandini the Elder, also known as Pope Clement VII. They remained in the Aldobrandini family until the early 1800s, when they appeared on the London market, possibly having been stolen by family retainers, and wrongly attributed to Cellini.

Around this time, the bowls were gilded. By the end of the 19th century, the fluted bases of six bowls had been replaced with decorative bases, perhaps taken from a 16th-century set of Spanish reliquaries, and possibly by the dealer Frédéric Spitzer.

They have not been reassembled correctly for The Silver Caesars exhibition, so visitors will have to do some sleuthing of their own.

• The Silver Caesars: A Renaissance Mystery is on show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2017/silver-caesars) until 11 March 2018, and then at Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury (www.waddesdon.org.uk), from 28 March to 3 June 2018.

• The catalogue, edited by Julia Siemon, is published by Yale University Press at £35/$50.

Dominic Green
London’s first men’s club

“We should remember this was just a cult for men. They all met underground, they were quite steamed up from the drinking that went on, and naked some of the time. One imagines the cult was, dare I say, quite a pungent experience,” said historian Bettany Hughes describing the cult of Mithras at the opening of the Walbrook Mithraeum in London.

The remains of the city’s only known Roman temple have returned to their original site beside the vanished River Walbrook, seven metres below the new Bloomberg European headquarters designed by architects Foster+Partners. Here, it evokes the atmosphere of the cult of Mithras practised in underground temples that served a creation myth in which the god slayed a bull in a cave.

Mithraism was Romano-Persian in origin. It had first attracted the troops of Alexander the Great as they headed towards India. Mithras is sometimes seen dining with the sun-god, Sol, and banqueting was part of the ritual practised by the celebrants, an all-male club of the military, merchants and even slaves. Rather like Freemasons, the initiates were called syndexioi, ‘united by the handshake’.

‘Sacrifice was almost certainly part of the ritual,’ says Sophie Jackson, the leading archaeologist consultant from the Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) which worked with the City of London on the 10-year project privately funded by Bloomberg. ‘But live bulls are unlikely to have been killed in such a confined space.’

The Walbrook Mithraeum, dating from around AD 240, was first revealed after wartime bomb damage was being cleared away in 1954. It proved a sensation, and a clamour from the press and public, who arrived to see it at the rate of around 30,000 a day, saved it from oblivion. However, to allow planned building work to go ahead, it had to be moved 100 yards away, where it became rather forgotten.

Visit www.londonmithraeum.com for further details of the London Mithraeum or to book a free visit.

Roger Williams
The shining bull

An abri (rock shelter) at the Roche de l’Impéatrice near Plougasstel-Daoulas in northwest France (1) concealed not only hundreds of 14,000-year-old lithic remains but, among them, the first example of one motif in European Palaeolithic art.

The Roche is part of a rock formation covered in thick vegetation; it is the tip of a 50m-high cliff, popular with hikers and rock-climbers. It is named Impéatrice after the Empress Eugénie, the wife of Napoleon III, who is said to have lost a ring there in 1859. Archaeologists first became interested in the site in 1987, when a hurricane uprooted a pine-tree to reveal 19th-century ceramic fragments. Michel Le Goffic, who was then in charge of the Finistère’s archaeology department, began to explore the area, but the site was on private land and work halted.

Then, 20 years later, Le Goffic showed some of the lithic pieces he had found to Nicolas Naudinot, a lecturer-researcher at the Nice-Côte d’Azur University-CNRS-Cepam, who attributed them to the little-known Early Azilian period. Two years later the land was acquired by the local authorities and the first real excavation, led by Naudinot, began in 2013. His team cleared the rock shelter, which is 10m long, 3m deep, 2m high, and unearthed hundreds of arrowheads and blades. Most of the arrowheads bear impact marks, and the flint blades are worn from being used to cut game meat and bones.

In those days, sea-level was 50m lower and the shelter was 50km from the coast, overlooking a vast steppe where aurochs (wild cattle), horses and deer roamed freely.

The most striking discovery was the rock art delicately engraved on schist slabs. First was a 15-cm long tablet bearing a realistic image of an auroch’s head emanating rays like an aura, a ‘shining bull’ (2). This is the first example of this kind of image in European Palaeolithic iconography. More stones with naturalistic engravings of horses and aurochs were found.

In all 45 engraved, sometimes charcoaled, fragments bearing animal figures and geometrical motifs were found among about 5000 lithic pieces.

Preliminary study show that the development of the Azilian culture in Western Europe was more gradual than had been thought before. The shelter contains tools showing the new stone tool technology that characterised the Azilian, and proof that figurative iconography had not yet been abandoned in favour of more abstract images. The aurochs and horses depicted here are strongly reminiscent of the earlier rock art at Altamira and Lascaux. But the ‘shining bull’ raises many questions.

This outstanding discovery was kept secret for fear of looting until March 2017, when a paper was published in the American scientific journal Plos One. An exhaustive analysis of the fragments, engraving techniques and pigments used is now underway at the Université Côte d’Azur in Nice.

Nicole Benazeth

One Roman’s day in the sun

The discovery by Cambridge archaeologists of a 1st-century AD sundial in southern Italy throws new light on the administration of small towns in the Roman Empire. Signed and dated, the 1st-century AD sundial discovered by Cambridge archaeologists in southern Italy was kept secret for fear of looting until March 2017, when a paper was published in the American scientific journal Plos One. An exhaustive analysis of the fragments, engraving techniques and pigments used is now underway at the Université Côte d’Azur in Nice.

Roger Williams

A 2000-year-old inscribed Roman sundial, found in a small town near Monte Cassino in Italy. © Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge.
Modern Classicisms

What is it about Ancient Greek and Roman art that still captivates the modern imagination? How can contemporary art help us to see the Classical legacy with new eyes? And what can such modern-day responses – situated against the backdrop of others over the last two millennia – reveal about our own cultural preoccupations in the 21st century?

These were some of the questions addressed in the opening workshop of Modern Classicisms held in the Great Hall at King's College London on 10 November 2017. The workshop launched the first phase of an exciting project bringing together art historians, collectors, critics and artists, to examine what the Classical artistic legacy means from the vantage-point of contemporary artistic practice.

The Great Hall at King’s College London was full, with over 250 delegates and 35 speakers. As there was a long waiting-list for tickets, all the sessions were filmed, and videos, plus a short documentary about the day, will be available in 2018 at www.modernclassicisms.com.

The workshop took the form of a series of dialogues and discussions, structured around five thematic sessions. Each one opened with an introduction, or interview, followed by a panel response and group discussion. There were also three separate ‘interventions’ – including film screenings, artist discussions and interviews. The 35 speakers and respondents included not only Classicists and art historians, but also curators, critics, journalists and, above all, artists themselves, including some of the most celebrated names in the contemporary art world. Other on-campus activities included guided ‘virtual tours’ of the Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins (MACM), and a temporary exhibition in the King’s Building on the receptions of the ‘HIS’ and ‘HERS’ of Classical sculpture. Each delegate received a copy of the latest issue of Minerva. Speakers and panelists included: Ruth Allen, Tiphaine Annabelle Besnard, Bruce Boucher, James Cahill, Léo Caillard, Sir Michael Craig Martin, Russell Goulbourne, Donatien Grau, Constanze Güthenke, Patrick Kelly, Charlotte Higgins, Brooke Holmes, Nick Hornby, Alexandre Singh, Michael Squire, Caroline Vour, Evelyn Welch, Sarah Wilson and Raphael Woolf.

Sponsored by Christian Levett, this event was organised by the Arts and Humanities Research Institute at King’s College London, in partnership with the Courtauld Institute of Art, the Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins and Minerva.

The next big event in the project is The Classical Now, a major exhibition of ancient, modern and contemporary art, that will be on show in London, at the Bush House Arcade and the Inigo Rooms (Somerset House East Wing), King’s College London from 2 March to 29 April 2018 (for further details see page 45).

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What do a garden gnome, a mummified mermaid, a Bezoar stone (3) and a real witch’s broomstick (2) have in common? They are all displayed in the British Library’s major exhibition, *Harry Potter: A History of Magic*. Timed to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the original (UK) publication of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* (1), the exhibition takes a deeper look into the history, myths and folklore that underpin JK Rowling’s magical stories. There are some stunning items here and we have made some startling discoveries whilst curating the show.

Putting together any exhibition is a gargantuan task, and this one was complicated. On the one hand, we had to produce an experience that was engaging, entertaining and educational; at the same time, we had to find a way of presenting some extraordinary documents loaned by JK Rowling alongside items from the British Library’s own vast collections (the current estimate is in the region of 200 million separate items representing every age of written civilisation).

The answer, we soon discovered, was to present the exhibition in a series of rooms relating to the

**Exhibition**

**Muggles, mandrakes and magic**

Julian Harrison and his fellow curators have cast a spell over visitors of all ages in their enchanting exhibition *Harry Potter: A History of Magic* on show at the British Library.
subjects studied at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Transfiguration soon fell by the wayside (dancing pineapples proved too difficult to explain, let alone recreate) but the final line-up was soon set in stone: Potions, Alchemy, Herbology, Charms, Astronomy, Divination, Defence Against the Dark Arts and the Care of Magical Creatures. Visitors to Harry Potter: A History of Magic will find all kinds of wizard advice: instructions on how to create the Philosopher’s Stone and how to make themselves invisible (10); charms for turning someone into a lion, an eagle or a python and much other curious magical lore in a host of medieval manuscripts and rare printed books (9). The invisibility cloak is seen as one of our most popular exhibits.

Alongside some of the British Library’s most treasured exhibits, such as 13th-century bestiary (4) are a crystal ball, a cauldron, a broomstick and a not-so-genuine mermaid, all of which demonstrate that, across the centuries, magic has played a prominent role in trying to explain the mysteries of the world around us.

Take cauldrons, for instance. On display in the Potions room of the exhibition is the so-called Battersea
Cauldron (5), on loan from the British Museum, which was fished out of the River Thames at Battersea during the 19th century and can be dated to some time between 800 and 600 BC. In Defence Against the Dark Arts, we are showing another cauldron (borrowed from the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic at Boscastle, in Cornwall), which reportedly exploded when three modern-day witches were trying to make a potion on a beach.

Displayed in isolation, these objects could be considered mere curios, but they are given greater contextualisation by one of the printed books on display, Ulrich Molitor’s De laniis et phito-nicis mulieribus (On witches and female fortune-tellers), published in Cologne in 1489. Molitor had been commissioned to downplay the significance of witchcraft, but his illustrator had different ideas. One of the images in this book is the first printed picture of witches with a cauldron (8). They are shown dropping a cockerel and a snake into a flaming cauldron, in order to create a hailstorm. The two witches are represented not as youthful figures but as elderly women with haggard faces, engaged in some demonic practice.

It was images such as this, in combination with the invention of the Western printing press, which helped to fuel the persecution of witches in early modern Europe.

One historical figure featured in the Alchemy section of our exhibition is Nicolas Flamel. In Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone, a fictional character named Flamel is credited with having created the Stone, and, consequently, having...
achieved immortality. He is said to be an opera-lover aged 665, who is living happily in Devon with his wife, Perenelle. Whereas the real Nicolas Flamel lived in Paris during the late 14th and early 15th centuries. Although he has gained a posthumous reputation as an alchemist, he probably made his fortune (not from gold) but as a landlord – and by marrying a wealthy widow. After he died in 1418, a monument was erected in his memory at the church of Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie in Paris. The British Library has been delighted to borrow his 'tombstone' from the Musée de Cluny (Musée National du Moyen Âge) in Paris. The monument was reputedly found in the 19th century being used as a chopping-board in a Parisian grocery. One story has it that, when Flamel's tomb was opened, there was no trace of a body within… which may mean, of course, that he is indeed still living out his days somewhere on the English Riviera.

Researching the exhibition has also given us, as curators, new insights into wider magical traditions. You may have assumed, for instance, that the charm 'Abracadabra' was first used by modern stage magicians when pulling rabbits from hats. Not so. Its first recorded use is by Quintus Serenus Sammonicus, physician to the Roman emperor, Caracalla, towards the end of the 2nd century AD. Serenus prescribed this word as a prevention against catching malaria. He advised that one should repeatedly write out the word ‘Abracadabra’ on a piece of parchment or papyrus, dropping a single letter each time, until a triangular piece of text had been formed. This should then be worn as an amulet round the neck, as a
protection against this disease. The efficacy of the ‘Abracadabra’ charm remains open to question. Devising it did Serenus no good either, since he was reportedly killed in a purge ordered by Caracalla in AD 212.

An exhibition of this magnitude has also given us the opportunity to display British Library collection items that rarely see the light of day. One such is the magnificent Ripley Scroll (6 and 7) a six-metre (nearly 20-feet) long manuscript which explains how to make your very own Philosopher’s Stone. The scroll is named after George Ripley (circa 1415–90), a canon of Bridlington Priory in Yorkshire and a reputed alchemist. Ripley is credited with having written a text called The Compound of Alchemy.

In the following century, a number of scrolls were produced that describe pictorially the process behind making the Philosopher’s Stone, and with it the secret to gaining immortality. The manuscript is awash with symbolism, containing striking images of an alchemist, dragons and toads, and the ‘Bird of Hermes’, traditionally identified as a phoenix.

The length of the Ripley Scroll is so immense that the British Library’s curators have rarely been able to unfurl it to its fullest extent (a small section of another version of the scroll was recently displayed at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge). A special case has had to be made at the British Library so that the whole Ripley Scroll can be viewed for the very first time in Harry Potter: A History of Magic.

Watching the many visitors navigate their way round our exhibition is fascinating. Will they stop opposite the German-manufactured gnome, resembling a fat Father Christmas holding a fishing-rod, or will they pause in front of JK Rowling’s original synopsis of Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone? Will they play our make-a-potion game, or view Coronelli’s celestial globe using the latest Augmented Reality technology, developed in partnership with Google Arts and Culture (another first for the British Library)?

Sometimes, the reaction of our visitors suggests that they have learned something new along the way. That’s particularly so when they come face-to-face with the section of the exhibition that deals with the cultivation of mandrakes.

Using four judiciously chosen items – an Arabic manuscript from the 14th century, a 15th-century Italian herbal, a carved mandrake root on loan from the Science Museum, and Jim Kay’s evocative drawings of a baby and an adult mandrake – we have attempted to demonstrate the folklore associated with this peculiar plant.

In the Middle Ages, for instance, it was widely held that mandrakes had medicinal potential, but that they were also dangerous to cultivate, because their roots resembled tiny humans: the shrieks of an uprooted mandrake could drive one insane. The Italian herbal by Cadamosto contains an interesting depiction of the approved method of harvesting a mandrake (11). This involved stuffing your ears with earth (to drown out the noise), digging up the roots of the plant with an ivory stake, tying a rope round them, attaching the
other end to a dog, and blowing a horn to encourage the dog to bolt, dragging the mandrake out of the ground in the process. An unusual element of this illustration is that a severed pair of hands grows out of the mandrake’s leaves. This represents the use of mandrakes at this period as an anaesthetic during amputations.

What else can visitors to the exhibition expect to find? Working in partnership with publishers Bloomsbury enabled the British Library to borrow some of the original artwork of Jim Kay, the illustrator of the Harry Potter stories, the first three of which have now been published in beautiful new editions. We are also thrilled to be displaying two pieces by Olivia Lomenech Gill, from the new illustrated edition of Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them. These are shown alongside historical items from the British Library: for example, Jim Kay’s astonishingly graceful phoenix, which adorns the exhibition poster, complements three images, dating back to the 13th century, and made in India, England and France; and talking of birds, Harry Potter’s pet owl, Hedwig, is represented by a 19th-century print of a Snowy Owl by Audubon (14).

The loans by JK Rowling, herself, include some of her authorial drafts of Harry Potter and The Philosopher’s Stone, her carefully worked-out plans for writing The Order of the Phoenix, and her screenplay for the first Fantastic Beasts movie. At Bloomsbury, the curators also located a map of Hogwarts drawn by the author, when she was writing the early Harry Potter novels, and bearing the instruction that ‘the Whomping Willow must stand out’.

When JK Rowling first put pen to paper (or her fingers on to the keys of her manual typewriter) in 1990, no one could have imagined that the world she was about to create would take on a life all of its own. Today, the Harry Potter books have sold millions of copies worldwide and have been translated into some 80 languages. While you have been reading this article, it is likely that a child in Greenland, Mongolia or Iran has been clutching a copy of one of the Harry Potter books in their hands, as captivated by the stories as their British counterparts were in 1997. That is the undeniable charm of the Harry Potter books, encouraging readers of all ages to develop their imaginations.

It is in that spirit that we have curated the exhibition, and in which we hope visitors will think that we have succeeded.

• The show will move to the United States – opening at the New York Historical Society in October 2018 (www.nyhistory.org).
The Face of Power

A new exhibition in Copenhagen focuses on the pharaoh and how his influence was enhanced and strengthened by the iconography chosen to depict him, as its curator Tine Bagh explains.

Pharaoh: The Face of Power, on show at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen, highlights the dominant role of the Egyptian pharaoh during the period of the Middle Kingdom circa 2000–1700 BC. ‘The Face of Power’ refers in particular to the strongly lined faces of Sesostris III (1) (r 1874–1855 BC) and his son and successor, Amenemhat III (2) who ruled during the later part of the period (circa 1855–1808 BC). These two mighty pharaohs are set beside other kings, such as the smiling Sesostris I (r 1965–1920 BC) (10) from the early Middle Kingdom, and the benign-looking Sesostris II (3) (r 1880–1874 BC). In this exhibition, Ancient Egyptian society is seen from the point of view of the pharaoh, his queens and officials of various ranks, in the context of life and death along the Nile.

Egypt was unified as a state under one king just before 3000 BC; from then on, the pharaoh played the dominant role with absolute power, both as the political and religious leader. One of his important titles was ‘Lord of the Two Lands’, (Upper and Lower Egypt, the southern Nile Valley and the northern Nile Delta). He made the laws, received taxes and went to war to defend the country and maintain stability. Another of his titles was ‘Son of Ra’, son of the Sun-God; the pharaoh was the closest to the gods, he performed rituals and made offerings in temples that he had built to honour them.

A method used to show the power of the pharaoh was to portray him as a sphinx with the body of a mighty lion. In one example, the stern face of Sesostris III and the large ears, typical of the period, underline his royal authority. One image of Amenemhat III (r circa 1855–1808 BC) went even further; his face was adorned with the lion’s mane (5) which added to his ferocity and strength. Written in hieroglyphs...
The pharaoh’s most important task was to secure what the Egyptians called *Maat* (the ‘perfect balance’).
the title ‘pharaoh’ means ‘the great house’, that is the king’s palace. Although this is now a generic term that is used when we are talking about an Ancient Egyptian king, but it was not until circa 1200 BC that the people themselves began to employ this term for their ruler.

The pharaoh’s most important task was to secure what the Egyptians called Maat (the ‘perfect balance’). This would ensure that the people were safe and the country was bountiful. As long as Maat was maintained, then the sun would rise, ‘be born’, every morning, and the yearly Nile inundation would make the land fertile.

The Middle Kingdom is Ancient Egypt’s Golden Age when fine works of art, literature and architecture were produd. The previous period of greatness, the Old Kingdom, also known as the Pyramid Age,

broke down and underwent decentralisation around 2150 BC. We call this period of roughly 100 years the First Intermediate Period; at the end of it, the 9th and 10th Dynasties ruled in Northern Egypt. At the same time rulers in Thebes in the south formed a group known as the 11th Dynasty.

Menutuhotep II from Thebes fought against the north and succeeded in reunifying the kingdom slightly before 2000 BC. The absolute peak of the Middle Kingdom is the 12th Dynasty circa 1985–1795 BC. During the 12th Dynasty Egypt was ruled by seven kings alternately named Amenemhat and Sesostris. After 180 years it ended in 1795 BC with a female pharaoh called Sobeknofru (or Neferusobek), probably the daughter of Amenemhat III.

During the 12th Dynasty the country’s boundaries and spheres of interest were extended through military campaigns and expeditions to obtain raw materials. In Nubia, south of Egypt, fortresses were built to control the trade in exotic African products and access to important gold deposits. Sesostris III set up stelae at the furthest limit to the south in Semna and established this as the border. From the north came cedar-wood from Lebanon and Minoan luxury products from Crete.

Since the rulers came from Thebes, the local god from that area, Amon-Ra, was given greater importance. Religious writings give an account of the subterranean realm of Osiris, the God of the Dead. His abode was in Abydos, north of Thebes, and many people built small chapels or set up stelae there to be united with him.

Amenemhat III built a magnificent temple complex next to his pyramid tomb at Hawara in the fertile Fayyum district in the north. It was constructed with numerous chapels and open courtyards and, in later times, it became known as the...
‘Labyrinth’. Amenemhat III was here united with the gods and the temple was adorned with statues of himself and various deities, particularly Sobek, the popular local crocodile god. In the exhibition two fragments of one of the Sobek statues from the Labyrinth have been reunited after nearly 4000 years of separation: a limestone bust of Sobek from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, has been joined by its crown of horns and feathers from the collection of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. Both fragments were found during the excavations Flinders Petrie made between 1910 and 1911.

A pharaoh had several queens (8), who bore titles such as ‘King’s Wife’, while the mother of the pharaoh’s heir known as ‘King’s Mother’. During the Middle Kingdom they were buried next to their husbands’ tombs, often in small pyramids. The burial chambers were usually cut under the king’s pyramid. In the Middle Kingdom queens played a greater role than they had before as an integrated part of the royal cult. This can be inferred from examples of independent statues of queens and queen sphinxes, which are unknown during earlier periods.

Ancient Egyptian society can be compared to a pyramid with the pharaoh at its apex. The highest officials below him were the Vizier and the Royal Seal-Bearer, literally translated as ‘the one who deals with the sealed matters of the king’. It goes without saying that this was a position of considerable trust. The highest officials at the treasury, in the military and the priesthood, were the next in the hierarchy and they had deputies and subordinates at various levels. The first step in the hierarchy was to become a scribe and to master hieroglyphs.

The pharaoh selected his own officials and bestowed on them various favours, such as the right to build a fine tomb close to his own. Another major privilege was the right to have a statue of oneself installed in the temple so one could benefit from the offerings made to the gods. The inscription on the statue of the Royal Seal-bearer Gebu (4) says that the pharaoh bestowed on him the honour of installing his statue in the Karnak Temple in Thebes (Luxor) dedicated to the god Amon-Ra.

Several wooden figures have been found, mainly in tombs – a nice example is a small...
statue of a bald man (9) with a short offering formula on his long loincloth: ‘1000 loaves of bread and jugs of beer for Kemen, the venerated’. At the base is written the traditional longer version mentioning first the pharaoh and then the god Osiris, Lord of the Underworld, who, in turn, represented the power of the pharaoh. It is made of electrum, which is a natural alloy of gold and silver that resembles silver.

Necklaces often contained one or more amulets and could be worn as adornment and for protection in life and in death, as they were common grave goods. The materials were important and thought to be life-giving; turquoise was associated with the sky and the colour of the Nile, while cornelians were red, like the sun.

Many dangerous animals lurked along the Nile, with hippopotami and crocodiles lying in wait, and lions living on the desert edge. Faience hippopotami, decorated with plant motifs from the river landscape (16) were linked to the Nile and fertility.

It was important to be protected against the dangers of life and death through what we today would call magic. There were magic formulae, amulets and figures, and during the Middle Kingdom also the so-called magic rods (15) and knives with motifs consisting of a combination of dangerous animals, such as lions and crocodiles and other creatures from the Nile valley, such as frogs and cats. Also popular were protective symbols, such as the udjat-eye (meaning ‘intact, complete, healthy’), that the god Horus lost in the fight against his evil uncle Seth. Horus later retrieved his eye, so it symbolises completeness, something that is healed.

For people of means in the Middle Kingdom it was customary to be buried in one or preferably two wooden coffins. On these we find the udjat eyes painted on the outside at the head end (12). Here the deceased would lie on his side, ‘looking out’ at the offerings and able to receive them. Offering formulae are written on the outside and the inside of the coffins; the Coffin Texts are found only on the inside. Before the Middle Kingdom these texts were reserved for the important provincial governors, the so-called nomarchs, are found; the woman may have been one of their wives.

Elegant jewellery belonging to royal and elite women were made of precious metals and semi-precious stones. They were often in the shape of pharaohs’ names, with titles and royal symbols. A good example is a falcon wearing the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt (6) representing the god Horus, who, in turn, represented the power of the pharaoh. It is made of electrum, which is a natural alloy of gold and silver that resembles silver.

Women in the Middle Kingdom are most often represented in a long, close-fitting garment with two broad shoulder straps. This style, which dates back to the Old Kingdom, could hardly have been practical everyday wear. The same applies to the wigs: the women of the Middle Kingdom often wear variations of the long, tripartite wig that falls down over the shoulders and back.

One carved wooden figure represents a woman with a fine wig with long spiral curls (7) falling thickly on her shoulders. This is not an actual portrait, but her commanding gaze gives the clear impression that she is a lady of some importance. The figure is said to be from Assiut in Middle Egypt where decorated rock-cut tombs belonging to the so-called nomarchs, are found; the woman may have been one of their wives.

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royal family, but by now non-royals could also be helped on their way in the afterlife. The offering gifts of food and drink for the deceased were painted on stelae (14), placed next to the coffin and also shown inside it (11). There were also ‘tomb models’ to guarantee that food and drink would be produced forever; a granary and a kitchen, with men brewing and making bread (13) were customary.

Before the burial, the deceased was mummified. First, the internal organs were removed from the body and placed in canopic jars. A complete set consisted of four jars (11), each one dedicated to one of the Sons of Horus who protected the viscera of the deceased: Amset protected the liver, Hapi guarded the lungs, Kebsemuef, the intestines and Duamutef, the stomach.

The tombs of the local elite in Upper Egypt were cut into the rocks lining the Nile Valley. The rock-cut tomb of the nomarch Djehutyhotep in el-Bersha is decorated with scenes from his life, in which he watches the making of bread, the brewing of beer, the butchering of cattle, pottery workshops, weaving, animal herding and much more. The most famous scene (on the left wall) is the depiction of the transport of a colossal statue of Djehutyhotep, said to have been seven metres tall and made of alabaster from the quarries of nearby Hatnub. The statue was hauled by a team of 172 men in four rows to Djehutyhotep’s...
mortuary chapel in the Nile Valley. Here, far from the royal court, Djehutyhotep had a statue of royal proportions made and was buried under the pharaoh Sesostris III. But he was the last nomarch to have an imposing rock-cut tomb in el-Bersha, as it was the pharaoh Sesostris III who curtailed the power of these local nomarchs, showing who really had the ultimate power in the land of Egypt.

**Pharaoh: The Face of Power** is on show at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen (www.glyptoteket.com) till 25 February 2018. The exhibition catalogue, edited by Tine Bagh, is published in Danish and English by Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek at 150DKK.


15. Magic rod, glazed steatite, 12th Dynasty, circa 1874–1855 BC. Various animals are depicted including lions, crocodiles, frogs, a turtle, a cat, two baboons and also two udjat eye symbols. W. 2.3cm. L. 27.5cm. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
When Women Ruled the World

Egyptologist Kara Cooney talks to Richard Marranca about her research into Ancient Egyptian queens and into funerary practice.

1. Kara Cooney filming Out of Egypt for Discovery Channel. She is on the edge of the desert with the three Pyramids of Giza in the background. © Discovery Communications.

2. A face for television with eyes on the past. Photograph by Mikel Healey.

When women were in power in Ancient Egypt, did they have to behave like male rulers? The masculinisation part is interesting. I think that women know that their femininity is a threat. They know it in terms of power situations. They know it inherently. They know that they can't get credit for things. They know that they can't show ambition for its own sake or display that ambition. They know that they have to downplay their attempts to get power. Today, at a workplace meeting, they might allow men to take credit for some of their ideas or would present some of those ideas not necessarily with certainty, but with more circumspection. I know a biologist (and there are studies that have borne this out) who says that women...
are less dualistic in their thinking. They are more nuanced. They are more uncertain in their decision-making. I count that as an asset rather than not, but many cultures feel safer with an authority figure who is decisive, not nuanced. I think that women know they have to present their power, their rules, in a particular way. They also have to present themselves in a particular way, trying to remove the perceived threats of emotionality or nuance.

Ancient Egyptian queens sometimes even appear in a masculine guise; Hatshepsut, for example, has been depicted with a false beard, and Cleopatra was more than a match for most of the men around her. Egypt presents us with the most stark examples because women are masculinised in statues or in relief form to fit a prescribed model of rule that is very old, archaic and very male, in images such as the lion or bull... That kind of a kingly model is something that a queen, such as Hatshepsut or Cleopatra, tried to inhabit not just for a few years, but for a couple of decades. We see different reactions to that.

Queen Hatshepsut ruled alongside her young nephew. As he was maturing, she too was growing older and realised that she had to masculinise. And you can see that evolution in her statuary; she made a half-hearted attempt where she was shirtless and yet still had that beautiful face and hint of breasts. But the result was this strange androgynous statue. Hatshepsut realised that this androgyny was unsuccessful and her next statue attempt was a full masculinisation with pecs, biceps and the strong musculature of masculinity that you would expect to see in a male leader.

Cleopatra VII took a very different path, even though she also ruled for a couple of decades, like Hatshepsut. She maintained her femininity throughout, maybe because she was able to have children. She linked herself to Roman warlords [Julius Caesar and Mark Antony] by having children with them. She retains her feminising aspects as a form of Isis herself, in opposition to the masculinising all around her. Why those decisions were made is unclear.

I would say that Hatshepsut left Egypt better than she found it by fitting the role, by being a traditionalist whereas Cleopatra lost everything in one disastrous battle.

Hatshepsut left Egypt better than she found it by fitting the role, by being a traditionalist whereas Cleopatra lost everything in one disastrous battle.
Did women have more freedom in Egypt than in other ancient civilisations? They seemed to have had a lot more rights than Athenian women, for example.

Yes, if you’re talking about rich women, then Ancient Egyptian women definitely had more power in terms of their household and their economy than in other parts of the Mediterranean – and perhaps in the Levant and Mesopotamia as well. They had legal rights that stunned people when they look at their legal codes today. They’re like ‘Wow! Look at what Egyptian women have. Private property! The ability to divorce!’ And while that’s true, it doesn’t necessarily translate into real political power. That’s a pattern that I have to follow more carefully because Ancient Egyptian women did have more legal power than Greek and Roman women. They also do end up taking more power systematically in government. So you just have to wonder how much the daily life system actually reflects what kinds of power women were able to create in government.

But in my new book, I’m looking at six queens, and it’s very interesting to see the Egyptians themselves pushing back against female power. After Hatshepsut, there was a mighty pushback by Thutmose III and Amenhotep II. They even hamstrung the office of ‘God’s Wife of Amun’ and you didn’t see [female] power coming to the fore again until the ideology itself had taken a dramatic shift under Akhenaten. That is when you see real female power; Nefertiti acts as the co-regent with her husband and, then, possibly, as a king in her own right after his death – but it’s only because of a dynastic crisis.

Then, in the 19th Dynasty, there was another female kingship with Queen Tawosret, and then another pushback, so we didn’t see female power again until Cleopatra VII. It seems that there is no female power in Egypt when the centrality of kingship is not strong. So, if you move through the 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th Dynasties, most of which were compromised in some way in their power over Egypt, you see that female power was also compromised. The stronger the kingship was, the stronger the female power could be to protect that patriarchy. The Ptolemaic dynasty allowed women to rise to power. There was Arsinoe and Berenike before Cleopatra VII, and they all exercised great power as members of the Ptolemaic family. They go together: the stronger and more unified the dynasty, the more female power there is.

Was this female power linked to a divine source, to Isis, for example? The Egyptians celebrated feminine power, both divine and human, with all of its hormonal craziness. That female, mercurial nature was celebrated, honoured. It included Isis, Hathor, Tefnut, Sekhmet – they are all...
painted with the same brush. They are interchangeable. They are essentially the same goddess, the same feminine divinity.

I could compare them with Hindu goddesses like Kali and Durga – the feminine divinities that can take the evil in humanity and just utterly destroy it and rip it apart, with the bloody images shown. This is not something that’s bad. It’s something that’s good, so it must be appeased. What India doesn’t have for the most part, though, is the feminine power aspect in real life society, but that is something that Ancient Egypt did have.

Your research work has focused on mummies and coffins; does it make you think a lot about mortality?

I did field work in graduate school clearing Theban Tomb 92, the tomb of Suemniwet. For a couple of seasons we were clearing out the human and funerary debris within the tomb complex. Tomb robbers had already visited these tombs many times and so we were in a set of burial chambers that were filled with the detritus of humanity that had been pulled apart. Bandages had been pulled off, coffins broken up into bits, figurines were scattered all over and there were pieces of funerary debris everywhere.

We cleared out this material from the grid or square, and found a hand here, a head there, a torso here. The body parts were smelly usually; we put those over to one side for the forensic archaeologists to go through and to try to reconstruct those individuals. We were trying to process and understand all of this material while understanding that whole context.

I found a human hand but I didn’t know if it was male or female. It was a mummified hand with the skin and the nails and the cuticles visible and intact. I found a human hand but I didn’t know if it was male or female. It was a mummified hand with the skin and the nails and the cuticles visible and intact. And it looked more human to me than the skull that I found moments before. A skull, when it’s poorly mummified is a gruesome thing that doesn’t look that human. It looks like a monster, something horrific… but this hand had humanity, a softness to it.

I could imagine this hand lovingly stroking a child or a lover. I could imagine this hand hitting somebody or being used in self-defence. I could imagine this hand doing all of those things that my parents’ hands had done for me and, then, I realised that I could see my own parents’ hands in my mind’s eye. I didn’t have to look up what their hands looked like; I could just see them. And then I realised that the hand is like a face. It is a part of the person that we, as human beings, pull into our memory, our family memory, our cultural memory. It is a part of our connection with the mother, the father, the lover, the child. It is something that is so incredibly intimate in terms of human interaction.

Of course, we can all worry about dying, but you know, I see my son, He’s going to live forever! He’s going live for 100 years. Maybe
global warming will get him. I don’t know, maybe I’ll get to live for 100 years, too.

You have examined around 300 Ancient Egyptian coffins and one of your interests is coffin re-use. Could you explain that please?

In ancient Egypt, during times of crisis, people took over other people’s coffins – coffin re-use became the norm rather than the exception. The coffin is just a vehicle, and so a coffin is a social document. It can tell you about the gender of a person, their spending ability, their religious understanding and where they fit into society. You can gain so much social information from a coffin. And then after that, the coffins from a period of government collapse or trade route disruption shows the very clever adaptations that people make so that they don’t have to relinquish their dearly held religious beliefs or rituals. What happened, for example, is that they took a body from a coffin, updated the coffin (like you’d update your bathroom or your kitchen) and then put a new person, who is freshly dead, into it.

Today, more people are cremated now than ever before, but we are still mummifying and that is because of display. Generally, when you mummify a body it is because you are going to have the open casket displayed in the funeral home. And so the display is essential and mummification is part of the display – it’s no different from the Ancient Egyptians. They needed to show that body to an audience.

Most Egyptologists and, I dare say, most archaeologists have been inclined to look at this ritual of display through a religious lens, thinking people did this because they believed that this would happen, and that would happen. And they forget that people had rituals because they wanted to compete with other families. They wanted to have a certain socio-economic status. They wanted to show off. And they wanted to have a display in front of a large audience that gave their family a tremendous amount of power. I always hold to the old adage: the dead do not bury themselves.

This is a reflection of the families who are doing the burials rather than the dead. And I’m working on that in my next book. The first chapter includes a queen who benefited from sacrificial burials, people killed to accompany her in death. And I could just talk about that, or I could talk about the fact that she also buried her dead husband with sacrificial victims. She was there when her son was too young to rule on his own, ordering who would die and who would live, standing there watching as the courtiers that she grew up with were dispatched before her very eyes.

Yet, in contrast, Ancient Egyptian literature is a celebration of life. Oh, yes, I love their stories and myths. They’re bawdy. They’re funny and, if you go to Egypt today, you find that the people who live there are bawdy and funny and in-your-face and intense. In Egypt today, everyone is your family member. Everyone is there to tell you what to do. Everyone is an interfering in-law. That’s just the way it is. It’s very disconcerting for somebody from Britain, for example, where people mind their own business, more or less, because to have everyone in your business all the time, it’s like your whole town is your in-laws. It takes a while to figure out that’s just the way Egyptian culture works.

You can imagine the Ancient Egyptians playing jokes on each other. The practical jokes you see among Egyptian workmen would have happened all the time. It was also a very sexual place. Sex was not something hidden; it was accepted. When people talk about their love poems, I call them sex or infatuation poems. You see everything in them. People can’t forget about their love; they’re obsessed, they’re stalking. So that hasn’t changed much either. They’re very true to life and true to form in terms of their intensity of emotions, passion and human connection.

• When Women Ruled the World by Kara Cooney will be published in autumn this year (2018) by National Geographic Press.
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Teotihuacan (the ‘birthplace of the gods’, according to the Aztecs) is one of the most important archaeological sites in the New World. Only 50 kilometres north-east of Mexico City, it has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1987 and is the most visited archaeological site in the country.

In the first half of the 1st millennium AD, Teotihuacan was the largest city in the Americas and covered about 20 square kilometres. With a population of 100,000 or more, it is thought to have been the sixth largest city in the world, with a series of temple-topped pyramids and elite family compounds, some of which were decorated with striking large-scale murals.

The site is dominated by what the Aztecs called the ‘Avenue of the Dead,’ with the Pyramids of the Moon to the north and of the Sun at the centre. These pyramids have a core of sun-dried mud-brick encased in volcanic stone. Along the Avenue of the Dead are many small platforms once thought to be tombs, but modern investigation has now determined that these were topped by temples.

At the southern end of the Avenue are the ruins of the Temple of the Feathered Serpent and a vast square that could accommodate...
the entire population. It has been suggested that this square could have been flooded to re-create the rise of land, represented by the pyramid, emerging from a primordial sea, as described some of the Creation Myths.

Unlike the two larger pyramids, the six-level, stepped Feathered Serpent pyramid was built in a single phase during the early 3rd century AD. On the outside edges of each level a feathered serpent is depicted, as well as a figure that is seen by some as like Chaac, the rain-god of the Maya. The eyes of these once brightly painted figures would have held obsidian lenses that would have glinted in the sunlight. Under each row of serpent heads there is a representation of water. There have been many theories about this (some of which are better suited to the realm of science fiction) that endeavour to explain the design of the pyramid. One suggestion is that there were originally 260 feathered serpent heads and they acted as a kind of ritual calendar, with their open mouths holding a symbol...
indicating the day of the year. By the 4th century AD the facade of the pyramid was obscured by the construction of what is today known as the Adosada (or ‘leaning’) platform. At the same time the facade of the pyramid was removed and used in the construction of the platform, and it is likely that many of the graves associated with it were looted. This might indicate that the cult of the Feathered Serpent had declined, or that there was a shift in leadership.

The Feathered Serpent temple complex may very well embody a Creation Myth, but which deities were involved? These are some of the earliest-known Feathered Serpents, which might be linked to the much later Aztec god Quetzalcoatl. However, as several scholars have pointed out, the serpent might have been a god of war, or fire, and so not comparable to the Aztec deity.

More than 200 burials are associated with this pyramid. Two main pits were found on the north and south sides of the structure. Each contained 18 young men with their hands apparently tied behind their backs. They wore necklaces of human jaw-bones. Separate pits also contained the bodies of young women. There were other graves along the east–west axis, and a single victim was found at each of the building’s four corners.

The centre of the structure contained 20 skeletons buried with lavish offerings. One interesting question is: were they captives or local people? Perhaps this can be answered by scientific techniques that reconstruct ancient diet, but current evidence suggests that they were local people. The temple complex, with fearsome deities and sacrificial victims, might have been the centre of a war cult.

Most of the city’s inhabitants lived in large apartments spread across the city. Many other buildings housed workshops that produced a variety of goods for trade. The basis for the city’s wealth rested on the obsidian deposits at nearby Pachuca. These were used to manufacture spear and dart heads, some of which were made to impress. The surrounding land supported large-scale agriculture and included crops of corn, beans, squash, tomato, amaranth (a grain), avocado, prickly pear cactus, and chilli peppers.

The construction of the city probably began in about 100 BC, and many of the larger monuments took several generations to build. The culture had its own writing system, similar to, but more rudimentary than, the Maya system. As to what was written at Teotihuacan, it seems to be limited to dates and names.

The elite areas of the city were sacked and burned in about AD 550, perhaps caused by an internal revolt. One theory suggests that extensive deforestation was caused by burning lime for use in the making of plaster and stucco. This put pressure on the food production and supply, which led to displacement of population

2. Two of the leaning greenstone figures (perhaps ancestors of the city’s founders) found near the end of the tunnel beneath the Ciudadela and the Feathered Serpent Pyramid. Photograph by Sergio Gómez Chávez.
and the city was largely abandoned by the 8th century. Teotihuacan was roughly contemporary with the early classic Maya civilisation (AD 250–900). Later the Aztecs (AD 1300–1521) adopted many aspects of the culture of Teotihuacan, but there may have been little or no direct ethnic affiliation. By the time that the Aztecs arrived in Mexico, Teotihuacan was a ruin. Enthralled by what they found, they named the largest structure the Pyramid of the Sun, and it became a site of pilgrimage for the Aztecs who venerated it as the birthplace of the sun god. But whether the pyramid was built for a specific deity or not remains unclear.

The temple at the top of the structure was destroyed, and few solid clues have been found to show who was worshipped there. Jaguar heads and paws, stars and snake-rattles are among the images associated with the pyramids, and some scholars suggest that the patron deity was the Spider Goddess, so named.
because of her distinctive fanged mouth. Many of the same gods were worshiped here as in other Mesoamerican sites. These include: the Feathered Serpent, the Aztec rain-god (Tlaloc), an agricultural god (Xipe Totec), associated with maize by the Aztecs, and a creator god known as the Old Fire God.

After the final phase of construction, the Pyramid of the Sun stood 75 metres (246 feet) high, making it the third largest pyramid in the world.

This site has been explored since the late 17th century when the Spaniards investigated it, and it was the subject of major archaeological excavations in 1905. The site of Teotihuacan was the first to be expropriated for the national patrimony under the Law of Monuments in 1897 and the pyramid itself was restored for the centennial of the Mexican War of Independence in 1910.

Many of the objects now on display in the San Francisco exhibition, *Teotihuacan: City of Water, City of Fire* were made for the elite, and they required the highest level of skill to make. There are elaborately chipped obsidian blades, which were made to impress rather than for any function. A variety of figures and masks made of semi-precious stone are also on display.

There are also new finds. In 2003, after a heavy rainstorm caused an area of subsidence near the Temple of the Feathered Serpent, archaeologists from the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) discovered a tunnel (like the one found in 1974 under the Pyramid of the Sun). Six years later the entrance of this new tunnel was explored.

The work proceeded very slowly and carefully because of the rich array of objects that were being discovered. These included wooden masks, covered with inlaid rock jade and quartz, necklaces, rings, greenstone crocodile teeth, and figures of humans and animals, such as jaguars, as well as crystals shaped into eyes.

Hundreds of unusual spheres, or discs, were also found in both the north and south chambers. Ranging from 40mm to 130mm in diameter, the spheres have a core of clay and are covered with yellow jarosite (formed by the oxidation of pyrite). The walls and ceiling of the tunnel were decorated with pyrite (fool’s gold) and red hematite, which represented the sky at night. Perhaps the tunnel was lit by torches for ceremonial purposes, and it may have been built to venerate powerful deities.

At the end of the passage there were four greenstone statues. Two
of the figurines were still in their original positions, leaning back and apparently looking up at the axis where the three planes of the universe met.

San Francisco has a special connection to Teotihuacan through the bequest of Harald Wagner (1902–76). While in Mexico he purchased a number of murals, which he brought back to San Francisco in the 1960s, but he did not know from which site they came. Over 20 years later the anthropologist René Millon of the University of Rochester discovered the specific location – they were hacked out of palaces near the Pyramid of the Moon, which may have been built for descendants of an old reigning dynasty. The mural fragments were three to five inches thick and made of a mixture of volcanic ash, clay and pottery shards. This base is covered with a very thin, 2mm coating of lime. The most dominant colour was red (hematite) with white (calcite), green (malachite), yellow (limonite), black (charcoal) and blue (of an unknown origin).

The Fine Art Museums of San Francisco could legally keep the murals, in accordance with a 1971 bilateral treaty with Mexico. However, after the general location of the looted murals was determined, it was decided to return around half of them in exchange for co-operation with Mexican museums. In the end, about 70 percent were returned in 1986. Many of the most visually stunning objects in the show are murals, which had been painted on fresh plaster. Less important parts of the fresco – such as background foliage – could have been painted using stencils for repeat designs. These stand in contrast to ornate central designs, such as for deities. Some images appear to depict glyphs, but because the spoken language is unclear the exact meaning cannot be attempted.

This is the first major American exhibition on Teotihuacan for more than 20 years and it is dominated by large murals and sculpture, many clearly originally made for an elite audience, and now lit with raking light that dramatically accentuates their features.

This show points the way for the next generation of archaeologists – for example, the interior of the Pyramid of the Sun has not yet been fully excavated – so perhaps the best is yet to come.

• Teotihuacan: City of Water, City of Fire is on show at de Young, Fine Art Museums of San Francisco (deyoung.famsf.org) until 11 February 2018. The large accompanying catalogue, published in hardback by the University of California Press, costs $75.
‘Drink merrily from your father’s skull,’ said Alboin, king of the Lombards, to his new wife Rosamund, the daughter of his slain enemy, the Gepid king Cunimund, during a royal banquet in Verona circa AD 572. Alboin took the gruesome drinking vessel that hung from his belt (as was his tribe’s custom) and Rosamund drank (1) but, later, she took her revenge. Attempting to usurp the throne and gain the king’s treasure, she had her husband killed by her paramour, Helmichis – then she, too, was murdered by him after having tried, in turn, to replace him with the help of her new lover, Longinus, the Byzantine exarch of Ravenna. Helmichis forced her to drink the poison that she had handed to him and she died instead.

So, rather than being the languid Pre-Raphaelite heroine of the verse drama, Rosamund Queen of the Lombards, as imagined by Victorian poet Algernon Swinburne (1837–1909), she was, in fact, more like a character from the television drama series Game of Thrones. But this real-life story was played out in Italy, at a time when Scandinavian and Germanic tribes, with harsh-sounding names and uncouth manners, invaded the peninsula in successive waves and then ruled the rich lands south of the Alps, after the collapse of the Western Roman empire.

Rosamund’s story is told by Paulus Diaconus, or Paul the Deacon (AD 720–99) in his Historia Langobardorum, the main source of information on Lombard, or Longobard, rule in Italy between AD 568 and 774. Paulus Diaconus was born into a high-ranking Lombard family and given the name of Winfred. He was educated in the Classics at the court of King Ratchis (r AD 744–49) in the Lombard capital, Pavia, and became secretary to King Desiderius (r AD 756–74) whose daughter Adelperga was Diaconus’ pupil. Paul’s brilliant career as a scholar continued under Charlemagne (r AD 768–814) after the Frankish emperor had routed the Lombards of Northern Italy and captured Pavia in AD 774. He died a monk at the Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino, a Lombard foundation. His life encapsulates the complex cultural strains coexisting in Italy at the time and, above all, the transformation of a pillaging pagan tribe into a political Christian entity inspired by Classical models.

Paulus was born at Forum Julii, now Cividale del Friuli, the first important city conquered by the Lombards, in present-day Veneto. Here, one of the few Lombard monuments to survive in Italy can still be seen almost as it was originally conceived as a royal chapel. This is the 8th-century Tempietto (3) in the oratory of Santa Maria in Valle, Cividale del Friuli. Paulus was born at Forum Julii, now Cividale del Friuli, the first important city conquered by the Lombards, in present-day Veneto. Here, one of the few Lombard monuments to survive in Italy can still be seen almost as it was originally conceived as a royal chapel. This is the 8th-century Tempietto (3) in the oratory of Santa Maria in Valle, Cividale del Friuli. It is a hybrid building with elegant arches and naturalistic vine branches carved in openwork on the capitals in Late Antique and Byzantine style.
the east wall are six elegant, haloed female saints and martyrs, three on each side of the central window. Slightly taller than life-size they are beautifully rendered in stucco. Four are richly dressed and wear gem-studded diadems in the fashion of the time (2). The Tempietto also contained an oblong marble altar (4), bequeathed by King Ratchis, with panels carved with religious scenes looking more as if they are made of bone or ivory than stone. It was originally painted with vivid colours and studded with precious stones to look like a large and imposing relicary.

Over time most of the royal or religious buildings that were Lombard foundations were transformed. Lombards in Italy, Places of Power (AD 568–774) is the official name given in 2011, by UNESCO World Heritage Sites to seven groups of historic buildings, including the Tempietto, that sum up their architectural achievements. The group includes monasteries, churches and fortresses that together testify ‘...to the Lombards’ major role in the spiritual and cultural development of Medieval European Christianity’.

As a result of this official endorsement, surviving Lombard buildings in Italy have been restored and reopened. New excavations have yielded splendid funerary objects: weapons, gold ornaments (13), buckles and fibulae (5) in the international style developed by itinerant goldsmiths during the Migration Period in Europe, circa AD 300–900. These are as similar in style to objects made in Anglo-Saxon England as much as to those made in Lombard Italy.

Bones of horses, dogs and deer, sacrificed to accompany the deceased and buried with them in their graves, according to pagan rituals, were also found. How all pervasive was the zoomorphic and interwoven imagery of the Celts
and later nomadic tribes, is revealed even in remote and isolated Italian pievi (rural churches with baptistries), especially in Tuscany. In the countryside far from the main cities, these churches served as gathering points for the religious rituals of the farming populations. The use of barbaric motifs, such as dragons, serpents and sirens in their sculpted decoration shows how deeply rooted were pagan beliefs, and how these survived embedded among more orthodox Christian images (10).

The Lombards are now the subject of a large exhibition that originated in their ancient capital of Pavia. The Lombards: The People Who Changed History is intended to acquaint the general public with a period of Italian history and artistic flourishing, little known but fascinating for its complexity and impact on later Italian art and political life.

Pavia, an important garrison town built along the river Ticenum, controlled the trade and military routes of northern Italy. Here, the Western Roman Empire ended when Romulus Augustus, a youth ironically named after the first Roman king and the first Roman emperor, was ousted in AD 476 after just one year as emperor, by one of his officers, Odoacer, who made himself king of the new regnum Italae. But Odoacer was later assassinated at a banquet in AD 493 by Theodoric (r AD 493–526), king of the invading Ostrogoths who were, in turn, conquered by the Lombards.

Some 80 international and Italian museums have lent more than 300 objects: gold jewellery inlaid with precious stones, marble reliefs, glass and ceramic wares, a bone and wood casket (6), weapons and objects of everyday use, proof of the variety and richness of the artefacts crafted under Longobard patronage. There are among them the funerary goods shown in their entirety from 58 excavated tombs. In pride of place are an exquisite glass drinking-horn (9), a gold ring (8), gold earrings with intricate patterns (7), and a beautiful sword hilt (11).

Many of the gold artefacts are decorated using the cloisonné...
technique with gemstones, especially garnets, but also glass, glass paste and enamel inserted into gold wire cloisons, or thin walled cells. This technique seems to have originated in the Late Antique Eastern Roman Empire and went on to reach the Northern tribes migrating across Europe through diplomatic gifts or plunder. The technique was then copied by nomadic goldsmiths.

Rare manuscripts are also on display. Some of them are written in the Beneventan script, derived from Roman cursive script or cursive lettering elaborated in the great monasteries of Monte Cassino and San Vincenzo al Volturno in the Duchy of Benevento, at a time when the shift from papyrus to parchment as a writing material became paramount. This script is notable for its elegant connecting strokes and punctuation forms, the basis for such modern symbols as the question mark. The first written compilation of Lombard custom law, which applied to Lombards and foreigners alike, was the Edictum Rothari (12), Edict of Rothari, codified in AD 643 in Vulgar Latin by order of King Rothari (r AD 636–52).

Although Naples was never conquered by the Lombards, its choice as a second venue for the exhibition underlines the importance of the too-often forgotten impact the Lombards had on the economy and the arts of the southern regions of Italy, where they became the forerunners of the extraordinary enterprise achieved by the Normans in Southern Italy and Sicily. Here, especially in their magnificent capital Palermo, the Viking descendants from northern France were able to create a medieval oasis of ethnic and religious tolerance, multiculturalism and artistic splendour unrivalled and never to be repeated. Together with the output from archaeological sites excavated in the last 15 years, the exhibition also displays medieval artefacts from the storerooms of the National Archaeological Museum in Naples, where they have lain untouched since their discovery.

Exhibition

‘They were, those people, a kind of solution’


The Lombards probably originated in Scandinavia and the etymology of the word ‘Lombard’ is still a subject of debate among scholars. Some maintain it comes from ‘long beards’ and refers to Langbarðr, ‘the Long-bearded’ god Odin, whom Lombards worshipped before converting to Christianity. Alternatively the name may derive from a High German root, barta, meaning ‘axe’, or from Börde (or Börd), ‘a fertile plain by the side of a river’. Such names as Bardengau and Bardewick in the neighbourhood of the Elbe would support this interpretation, since it was here that the Lombards lived before migrating to Italy under the leadership of King Alboin in AD 568. His conquest was made easy by the disastrous aftermath of the long Gothic War (AD 535–54) between the Byzantine empire and the Ostrogoth kingdom (AD 493–553) that ravaged the peninsula. By late AD 569 they had taken the principal cities north of the Po River and occupied vast areas in central and southern Italy. The Lombard kingdom was then conquered by the Franks and integrated into their Carolingian empire. Lombard nobles, however, continued to rule over the southern regions of the Italian peninsula until well into the 11th century, when they were overpowered by the Normans and added to their County of Sicily. Once there were independent Lombard southern capitals, beacons of culture and far reaching trade, in Capua, Benevento and Salerno.


half-forgotten for many years. They provide fascinating evidence of the importance of the far-reaching contacts the Lombards had with North Africa, Coptic and Islamic Egypt, Byzantium and, even, Central Asia. Missionaries, pilgrims, slave-traders, merchants and craftsmen dealing with different kinds of sumptuary goods, were all to be seen in Salerno exchanging ideas, know-how and exotic wares. Lombards: The People Who Changed History is a reminder at a time of increasing separatist and narrowly nationalistic movements against a unified Europe, that there once existed the opportunity for a commonwealth made of different peoples – migrants as well as long-settled and local people – where the emphasis was on integration rather than on division on ethnic lines.

• Lombards: The People Who Changed History is at the National Archaeological Museum, Naples (www.museoarcheologiconapoli.it/en/) until 26 March 2018 and then on show at The Hermitage, Saint Petersburg, from April to July 2018. The catalogue (in Italian only) is edited by GP Brogiolo, F Marazzi and C Giostra and published by Skira at €45.
The 2018 Rumble Fund Lecture in Classical Art, delivered by Professor Mary Beard, will explore some of the ways that modern artists have reimagined ancient Roman emperors: it will uncover some ‘missing persons’, and reveal some unexpected misidentifications. The lecture marks the fifth anniversary of the Jamie Rumble Memorial Fund in the Department of Classics at King’s, and forms part of the programme of events accompanying our major exhibition, *The Classical Now* (www.modernclassicisms.com).

**Bush House Auditorium, 30 Aldwych, London WC2R 4BG**

6.30pm Wednesday 14 March 2018

Booking is essential as places are limited

Exhibition

The examined life

Dominic Green explores the daily existence of Ancient Greek citizens in a new permanent gallery dedicated to the subject in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
In Plato’s Ion, Socrates applies his eponymous method to the singer Ion of Ephesus. Ion has just arrived in Athens from Epidauros, where he won first prize in the ‘contests of rhapsodes’ (rhapsodes were people who recited epic poems) at the festival of Asclepius. His work, Socrates says, puts him ‘continually in the company of many good poets, and especially of Homer’, the ‘best and most divine’ of them all. ‘And no man can be a rhapsode who does not understand the meaning of the poet,’ says Socrates. ‘For the rhapsode ought to interpret the mind of the poet to his hearers, but how can he interpret him well, unless he knows what he means?’ We can interpret the intellectual life of Socrates’ Athens through the works of Plato, but we cannot interpret the daily lives of their fellow Athenians unless, like the rhapsode to Homer, we know what life meant to those who lived it. Athenian society was defined by the ideals of the polis (city state), but those ideals excluded most Athenians from participation in them. What could the philosophical ideal of sophrosyne (moderation) mean to the slave tasked with immoderate labour? What did arete (excellence) mean for the craftsman whose field of expression was that of his work? How could the idea of kalakogathia (the gentlemanly ideal of noble conduct) apply to a woman restricted to the domestic sphere? Both Socrates and Plato urged their fellow Athenians to live ‘the examined life’; Daily Life in Ancient Greece, a new gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston, examines the lives and values of ordinary Athenians through their art and artefacts, from a ceramic vessel used to carry bathwater for prenuptial purification to the needles that once stitched fishing-nets. Curated by Christine Kondoleon, the George D Behrakis Senior Curator of Greek and Roman Art; and Phoebe Segal, the Mary Beine Comstock Curator of Greek and Roman Art, the exhibition presents more than 250 recently conserved exhibits from the MFA’s extensive collection. Most of these objects date from the 6th and 5th centuries BC and a third of them have never been exhibited before.

“We want to make the ancient world accessible through shared experiences of daily life,’ explains Christine Kondoleon, ‘but at the same time to create a sense of the distant and the alien. Some of these people lived over 2,500 years ago. We want to make them familiar and immediate to visitors, by creating vignettes of their actions and daily episodes. But we also want to point out the unfamiliar aspects of their lives, the aspects that don’t relate to our age.’

On the black-figure hydria, Water jar with women at the fountain house (1), circa 520 BC, five well-dressed ladies are depicted fetching water from a columned fountain-house. Their fine clothes and long hair suggest they are not slaves, yet elite Athenian women rarely left their households. Are the women collecting water from a sacred spring for ritual purposes? Or are they designed to appeal to the men who used similar vessels at another rite, namely the symposium, or ‘drinking party’?

Other groupings of exhibits create interest by placing, alongside warriors’ helmets (4), The bronze Statuette of a Discus Thrower (2), circa 480 BC, depicts a discobolos, with his left arm raised and his left foot off the ground, as he begins to transfer his weight from his right side to his left and to swing the discus, now low on his right hip, across his body before casting it skyward. Nearby, we see a Discus (3), from 500 BC, one of only three stone discuses to survive from Antiquity. There is also a selection of hoplite helmets, and another image of agon (struggle), the Grave stele of Stratokles (5), 390–380 BC, in which a soldier is about to bring down his sword on the enemy at his feet.

Socrates asks of Homer in Plato’s Ion: ‘Is not war his great argument and does he not speak of human society and intercourse of men, good and bad, skilled and unskilled, and of the gods conversing with one another and with mankind, and about what happens in the world below, and the generations of gods and heroes? Are these not the themes of which Homer sings?’

In the Iliad, Odysseus must choose between kleos and nostos, between the immortality of ‘glory’ and a safe ‘homecoming’. While Daily
Life in Ancient Greece describes the centrality of mythic and heroic masculinity to public life, the paths of the lives in this exhibition are closer to home. We see wool-working tools, jars for cosmetics and perfume, mirrors and children's toys (9) that furnished their homes, as well as depictions of death and mourning (11, 12, 13, 14). Small clay sculptures show ordinary life in miniature, with scenes of baking, a school and a barber at work (10).

'We have what I affectionately call a geriatric collection,' Christine Kondoleon explains. 'It has been here for a long time, and it is extremely precious and unassailable. That makes it extremely rare for an American collection. However, that also means that it has received certain treatments that are now out of date. For instance, some of the animal glues that were used are now coming apart. Some of the vases had to be unstacked and, like jigsaw puzzles, the dozens of pieces had to be put back together.'

In the restored Two-handled vase (6), a neck-amphora by the Plousios Painter, circa 500–490 BC, a young female customer stands on a table, ready for a fitting of shoes. A white-bearded older man, perhaps her father, leans on his cane and points at the cobbler, as though saying: 'Yes, those ones'. The cobbler leans forward in his seat and offers the shoes, the head down and, focusing on the work in hand, carries on cutting another sandal. Here, the vase painter invites his contemporaries to examine a familiar scene. In the agora (gathering place), we know that at least one Athenian shoemaker's shop was a place where quotidian craftsmanship and commerce co-existed with philosophy. Socrates frequented the shops on the edge of the agora in order to converse with the traders. In Diogenes Laertius' Lives and Opinions of the Eminent Philosophers, we read of a less eminent thinker, Simon the Shoemaker, who recorded his 'dialogues' with Socrates. Curiously, archaeologists recently found a shoemaker's shop in the agora, along with a fragment of pottery marked with the name 'Simon'.

In Plato's Apology, Socrates links genuine knowledge to practical arete (excellence). In the Socratic scheme, a shoemaker who is a fine craftsman has the ability to attain the heights of lived philosophy. Later, some Cynic philosophers idealised Simon as their precursor. In a spurious Socratic letter, dating from the 3rd or 2nd century BC, Simon advises Socrates' pupil Aristippus to 'remember hunger and thirst, for these are worth much to those who pursue self-control'.

On the other side (7) of the Plousios Painter's Two-handled vase a visit to a blacksmith's shop is shown. The tongs, mallets, saws, chisels and rasps of the trade hang on the back wall of the shop. A muscular blacksmith hammers a piece of metal on an anvil, which his young assistant holds with a pair of tongs, crouching beside the furnace. We cannot know if the two seated spectators are the owners of the shop, or the blacksmith's customers, or even passers-by who have stopped to watch, and find themselves reflecting on the Socratic definition of arete, and the Cynic virtues of self-sufficiency and simplicity.

In Oil flask (lekythos) with an oil shop, circa 510–490 BC, the Geta Painter shows three bearded men in an oil shop. We see four large amphorae, and another six hanging on the back wall. The man on the left holds up a flower, perhaps to illustrate the scent of the oil that he wishes to purchase. The man in the middle holds up a narrow stick, perhaps a siphon that allowed merchants to give customers a taste of the oil. The third man holds a round object, perhaps a coin to make the purchase.

The philosophers may have esteemed craft and honest work more highly than both the workers and many of their customers. The oil merchant uses a stick or siphon to persuade his customers to buy his oil but, Hesiod said, once Prometheus has stolen fire from Zeus and carried it away in a hollow reed, Zeus no longer permits people to live 'without ills, sickness and painful drudgery'. Ponein (toil) for subsistence was onerous, and a dependent position was undignified.

The literature of Greek pessimism is another place where popular experience meets philosophical reflection. Even the shortest journey and the most familiar of homecomings could disappoint. 'Storms are not only met with at sea,' complained the poet Philemon, 'but even when you are walking...'

Minerva January/February 2018
under porticoes in the street, and at home in the house too; seafarers are rewarded after a gale with a favourable wind, or get safe into harbour, while I suffer storms not just for a day, but all my life long.’

The epic and the prosaic are inseparable. In the *Iliad*, Homer compares a battle first to a civilian struggle, two men fighting over the corner of a field, and then to a domestic scene. The balance between the contending Trojans and the Achaeans is described: ‘as when an honest weaving woman holds the balance and draws out the weight and wool on both sides to make them equal so she might earn some wretched wage for her children’.

While Odysseus is unavoidably detained on his journey back to Ithaca, Penelope staves off her...
suitors by making sure she never finishes her weaving. In *Oil flask with a woman working wool* (8), *circa* 480–470 BC, the Brygos Painter shows a woman pulling a skein of wool from her kalathos (basket) as if preparing for spinning. Her elegance belies the physical effort of her task.

‘The gifts which you possess of speaking excellently about Homer is not an art,’ suggests Socrates in Plato’s *Ion*, ‘but an inspiration.’ Socrates proposes that a series of ‘rings’ carry a ‘magnetic’ charge from the realm of divinity to the life of the *polis*, down from the ghostly shade of Homer to Ion the poet, and then to ‘the last of the rings’, the living spectator.

Ancient scholars proposed two etymologies for Ion of Ephesus’s job description of *rhapsoidos* (or singer). One traced *rhapsoidos* to the *rhabdos*, a staff on which a singer leant as he recited in public. The other, often endorsed by modern scholars, is attested in a fragment of Hesiod. Here, the *rhapsoidos* is sewing (*rhaptein*) the poem (*oide*). The ‘singer with a staff’ is defined by the visual image of his performance. But the ‘sewing of the poem’ is a more complex image. Public acts are also private experiences – in the imaginations of the audience and in the mind of the *rhapsode*. And private acts, such as the spinning of wool or the thoughts of a shoemaker, can be both woven into the literature and philosophy of Ancient Greece and also into the design of exceptional objects.

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Exhibition

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*Daily Life in Ancient Greece* is on permanent display in a new gallery at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (www.mfa.org).
In spring 2018 King’s College London is hosting a major exhibition of ancient, modern and contemporary art. *The Classical Now* forms part of a King’s research project on ‘Modern Classicisms’: featured artists include Christopher Le Brun, Léo Caillard, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Damien Hirst, Yves Klein, Louise Lawler, Christodoulos Panayiotou, Giulio Paolini, Grayson Perry, Pablo Picasso, Marc Quinn and Mary Reid Kelley. *The Classical Now* is presented by the Department of Classics, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and Cultural Programming at King’s College London, in partnership with the Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins.

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*The Severed Head of Medusa*, 2013 © Damien Hirst and Science Ltd. All rights reserved. DACS/Artimage 2017. Photograph: Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd.
A sense of place
Using the unlikely site of Butrint in Albania as a prime example, Richard Hodges explains how the work of archaeologists defines them as placemakers.

It was on 1 September 1997 that I accompanied the Director of the Butrint Foundation and the British Ambassador to Albania to meet the country’s newly elected Prime Minister, Fatos Nano. Nano had won a handsome majority following a period of civil unrest created by pyramid scheme speculation. The Prime Minister greeted us, and my colleague pitched the plan for an archaeological park at Butrint, ancient Butrintum.

Our foundation had a model in mind, taken from innovative Italian sites. We assumed that Nano would listen and push back against the idea of transforming his country’s premier Graeco-Roman site into another institutional entity. After four years of working in post-Communist Albania, it was clear that change in cultural sectors was not easy.

The Prime Minister listened and nodded and said ‘Good’. How should we proceed? He was laconic, even gnomic. Then, to our astonishment, he turned to the British Ambassador and offered his condolences for the death of Princess Diana. For the following 15 minutes, scarcely taking a breath, he held forth on her, as though he knew her well. On that September day I doubt that as many as 10 visitors came to Butrint.

Today, 20 years after this meeting with Prime Minister Nano, much has changed. When I visited Butrint last August, approximately 3000 to 5000 tourists were ambling around the site. Now, it is Albania’s premier destination and, in the cultural heritage law before the new Albanian parliament, it is about to take a new direction, which it claims will be every bit as revolutionary as was taken in Nano’s office in 1997.

This is placemaking in archaeology: the practice of either creating or lending a place, ancient or modern, an identity that, with strategic management of the conservation and presentation, attracts visitors whose support helps sustain it, ideally to international standards. Archaeologists (and architects) over the last century have become aware that change in cultural sectors was not easy.

Archaeologists discover, excavate selectively and transform the ruins of the past, lending them an identity, and, above all, giving them a contemporary context, meaning or branding. Think only of the role of Heinrich Schliemann (1822–90) in making Mycenae, or the gargantuan excavations of Giacomo Boni (1859–1925) in the Roman Forum to help shape the new capital of a unified Italy. Placemaking is not new, although the concept is borrowed from late 20th-century postmodern philosophy.

The French philosopher, Marc Augé defines a place as ‘an invention: it has been discovered by those who claim it as their own’. Foundation narratives, he argues, ‘bring the spirits of the place together with the first inhabitants in the common adventure of the group… A place is relational, historical and concerned with identity, whereas a non-place is a space which cannot be defined by these criteria’.

Places are given further value by complex periodic events. These are usually removed in some culturally well-defined way from the routines of economic life. Temple cults and, later, the Church, commonly legitimised cultural activities at places.

Supermodernity, on the other hand, produces ‘non-place’ that, according to Augé, are ‘spaces which are not themselves anthropological places and which… do not integrate the earlier places’ (which are listed, classified, promoted to the status of ‘places of memory’, and assigned to ‘a circumscribed and specific position’). Airports, shopping malls, cinema complexes, hospitals and hotel resorts are fundamentally non-places (although there is a new effort to market them as places). In the concrete reality of today’s world, places and non-places are intertwined.

Place and non-place are polarities, together ‘the scrambled game of identity and relations’ that is ceaselessly being rewritten. Place, Augé concludes, becomes a refuge to the habitué of non-places. The polarity is not new: place and non-place have existed since prehistory.

The needs of placemaking change with each generation: historical interests, visitor demands and the global market, conservation strategies and administrative strategies alter continuously. Placemaking in archaeology, by necessity, means confronting not only the characteristics of the place today, but...
involves strategic investment in shaping a narrative through excavations, conservation and interpretation of its particular pasts (at Butrint the Greek and Roman have been often favoured over the Medieval and Ottoman) as well as the construction of essential amenities as different as museums and loos. The narrative is not fixed in aspic, nor is it some readily definable off-the-shelf asset. It cannot be reduced to a formula. The idiosyncracy of past places is why authentic archaeological remains, viewed from different cultural and historical backgrounds, hold infinite interest for the curious, irrespective of education or background.

Not surprisingly, inhabitants of non-places are attracted to places as if they were engaged in pilgrimage. UNESCO World Heritage Sites as a brand connote a social and spatial separation from a normal place of residence or vacation and, invariably, conventional social ties. In such a place, out of time, conventionality is suspended, and there is an assumed relationship with the authentic. Such places and the pilgrimage to them are a rite of passage not just to filling a lifetime bucket list but also to a certain social status. The UNESCO brand has successfully embraced this rite of passage, marketing its sites as globally authentic, essentially meaningful as pilgrimage places that are safe and relevant to the world today.

Placemaking at Butrint is a good example. The site sits at the crossroads of the Mediterranean, commanding the sea-routes up the Adriatic Sea to the north, across the Mediterranean to the west, and south through the Ionian islands. Like ancient Dyrrachium (modern Durrës) some 300km to the north, it also controlled a land-route into the mountainous Balkan interior. The abandoned ancient and medieval port lies 3km inland from the Straits of Corfu in southern Albania (8). At the south of a narrow plain, formerly a marsh, it is separated by the Vivari Channel (1) from a band of hills further south, along which runs the frontier between Albania and Greece established in 1913. The channel leads to Lake Butrint, an inland salt lagoon, and above it mountains

**2. Excavations in 1928 of the Hellenistic and Roman theatre, under Italian archaeologist Luigi Maria Ugolini (1895–1936).**

**3. A sketch of Ugolini by his friend and Butrint colleague, Igeno Epicoco.**
rise to nearly 1000 metres, effectively creating a basin around the ancient city and lake.

The walled city covers an area of about 16 hectares, but surveys on the eastern side of the channel show that in antiquity Butrint covered as much as 25 hectares. The walled city comprises two parts: the acropolis and the lower city. Amongst the urban monuments is a Hellenistic theatre (5), a Roman forum, Roman town houses, a fine cathedral, an exceptional baptistery and a castle, all dotted within thick woodland. The most obvious monument outside the city walls, on the opposite side of the channel, is the well-preserved Triangular Castle, which after 1572 became the nucleus of the early modern settlement. Few places match a range of monuments and natural setting so well.

Butrint is eternal. It owes a priceless debt to Virgil who in his epic poem, *Aeneid*, had his exiled hero from Troy, Aeneas, pause here on the way to found Rome. At a stroke Butrint belonged to a Mediterranean foundation myth. Virgil’s choice of Butrint – ‘a Troy in miniature’ – was no accident. A member of Augustus’s new imperial court in Rome, Virgil was paying personal tribute to the emperor’s right-hand man, Agrippa (4), whose first wife, Caecilia Attica, came from Butrint. With such serendipity the port was forever sealed as aspic, at least until our era. Instinctively, the post-war Albanian dictator, Enver Hoxha, appreciated this to attract hard currency from controlled tourism, even though he eschewed Virgil’s connection with Butrint in favour of his own historical myths.

For most visitors today Butrint conjures up a different experience. It is the Other, a Mediterranean paradise, a place in a timeless landscape. In a postmodern age it is a shrine to historicism within an exceptional park environment. It is not Disneyesque. Quite the contrary, it is a journey through a
natural oasis that challenges the homogenisation (non-places) of social space and experience of modern capitalism.

Like Homer and Shakespeare, Virgil has had infinite reach thanks to countless others who have mined his work for one reason or another. Thanks to Virgil’s stanzas (he never ventured to this corner of the Mediterranean), Butrint has prospered out of proportion to its importance. Numerous medieval and modern authors briefly described and visited Butrint because of its associations with the epic. Over the centuries visitors have included Casanova, Edward Lear and Lawrence Durrell. None found it came up to their expectations, nor did it impress the Italian archaeologist, Luigi Maria Ugolini (1895–1936) (3).

The ruins of later Roman and medieval monuments rather than Greek ones from the age of the Trojan wars were all that could be readily seen in 1924 when Ugolini landed by boat here. He does not record his disappointment, but this can be tacitly gauged because he decided to devote his archaeological ambitions to another site until 1928. That year Ugolini shrewdly recognised that the 2000-year anniversary of Virgil’s birth in 1930 was an opportunity to find Italian government funding for major excavations. He assessed that the promise of funds and Virgil’s description made the risk of digging Butrint worthwhile, and so he began excavations (2) without any clear expectations. Ugolini discovered mostly later Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine remains, not traces that had any Bronze Age resonance with the world of Virgil’s Trojan wars. Finding neither remains of the Mycenaean world, nor great monuments belonging to the epoch of Virgil’s patron, the Emperor Augustus, Ugolini nonetheless spun a narrative, tacitly involving Aeneas.

Ugolini and Virgil collaborated, so to speak, to create the identity of an authentic place in a striking landscape setting. No wonder a statue was erected to the Italian archaeologist outside Butrint’s first museum in 1938, two years after his death aged 41. Ugolini marketed his results instinctively, and, with little alteration during 50 years of Communist rule (7), his legacy constituted the place granted UNESCO World Heritage status in 1992.

When the Butrint Foundation was established the following year, post-Communist Albania looked set to be overwhelmed by tourist hotel developers eager to seize its coastline and appropriate internationally known places like Butrint.
Minerva January/February 2018

For five years this threat menaced the Virgil-Ugolini legacy. The Butrint Foundation was created by Lord Rothschild and Lord Sainsbury (9) in 1993 to protect and preserve Butrint and that same year I joined them. Our simple aim, perhaps presumptuous, was to sustain the genius loci – spirit of place, for future visitors, generations to come. Many other elements were also put in place to bring international and national tourists to this far corner of Albania.

The modern tourist industry is very different from the Virgilian cruise of 1930. Today’s tourism begins some fundamental questions. Do modern tourists care about ancient texts, ancient art and architecture? Not at all. Indeed, should they care? Archaeology has slavishly followed the Classical (or historical) tradition in making places, but with the huge boom in global tourism western (Classical) traditions belong to another age. Cultural heritage tourism has moved on, driven by ever-changing popular values, and so has its management. Then there is the issue of identity. Whose identity? For foreign visitors we become alien tourists of a kind in 1993. Our first experiences – our first ‘gaze’ – shaped the (neo-liberal) purposes of the Butrint Foundation. Furthermore, we were visitors to the Other – Balkan and ex-communist in culture – carrying our European idea of heritage, with its elitist roots. For sure we were burdened with a kind of colonialism, and yet we created a park that now functions so successfully – bringing nearly 200,000 tourists in 2016 – that its institutions need overhauling to protect its precious ruins and environment.

As a brand, this place remains special in Albania, a flagship in the forthcoming cultural heritage legislation. As such, as post-Communist Albania looks forward, taking the Butrint model of placemaking in terms of management and practice, has become axiomatic to the newly elected government’s economic planning. Virgil might be astonished and he would certainly be very proud.


All the images are the property of the Butrint Foundation.

9. The Archaeology of Mediterranean Placemaking and Travels with an Archaeologist: Finding a Sense of Place by Richard Hodges are published by Bloomsbury Academic in hardback at £85 and £20 respectively.

Minerva January/February 2018
When the British Museum opened its doors in 1759, it became the first free national museum in the world. *Collecting the World* is the first comprehensive biography of Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753), the collector whose 71,000 objects became the founding collection of the British Museum. It is a detailed and illuminating reconstruction of life in Enlightenment London, and an affectionate though sometimes critical insight into the mentality of the collector.

Born in Killyleagh, Ireland, Sloane studied medicine in London and France. In 1689, he established himself as a society physician in Bloomsbury Place, close to the eventual site of the British Museum. That was also the year in which Parliament settled the constitutional outcomes of the Glorious Revolution. Sloane, who was to treat Queen Anne and George I, became an intimate part of the 18th-century establishment, both socially and intellectually. In 1719, he was elected President of the Royal College of Physicians, and in 1727, he succeeded Isaac Newton as President of the Royal Society.

Sloane had already begun his collection. In 1687, the year in which Newton published *Principia Mathematica*, Sloane travelled to Jamaica as physician to the island's new governor, the 2nd Duke of Albemarle. Prone to ‘epic debauches’, at one reception in Jamaica Albemarle drank so much that blood ‘leaped out in a small stream’ from his nose, while Sloane struggled to staunch it. Meanwhile, Sloane botanised among the slaves and sugar, built up a naturalist's cabinet, and collected medical case histories from among the settlers for his *Natural History of Jamaica*.

Sloane, writes Delbourgo, ‘responded solicitously to white patients’ complaints’, but he ‘repeatedly challenged slaves’ statements about their health’. It was ‘very ordinary’, Sloane claimed, for ‘servants, both whites and blacks, to pretend, or disguise sickness’. He seems to have believed that Africans were constitutionally different: there was, he thought, a flesh-eating affliction that was ‘peculiar to blacks’, and he attributed this not to the appalling conditions of their slavery, but to ‘some peculiar indisposition of their skin’.

Back in London, Sloane’s career took off. He was one of Daniel Defoe’s ‘amphibious’ types, as comfortable conversing in grand houses as he was at negotiating in business. His rise helped to elevate the medical profession; in 1716, he became the first doctor to receive an hereditary baronetcy. Meanwhile, his ‘cabinet of curiosities’ expanded with the wholesale purchase of the complete collections of William Courtten and James Petiver, forcing Sloane first to buy the house next door, and then to move to larger premises in Cheapside. When he died in 1753, the 93-year-old Sloane pulled off a final business coup, bequeathing his collection to George II on the condition that a grateful nation pay £20,000 to his heirs.

Sloane's early collecting reflected Britain's struggle for imperial expansion and the effort of dispersion that spread the nation's influence and scienter method around the world. It also mirrors the multiple processes by which European empires ingested the materials and ideas of the non-European world.

The origins of Sloane's collection in Jamaica, and his wrongful application of the scientific method to justify slavery, are part of that story, in what Delbourgo calls both its ‘troubling’ and ‘enlightening’ aspects. The British Museum is a monument to liberal civilisation, but its founder was very much a man of his time. Delbourgo, who is a professor at Rutgers University, artfully draws the global map of Sloane's imagination, showing us the world that made Sloane, and how he accumulated a world of objects in its image.

Dominic Green

**On the Ocean: The Mediterranean and the Atlantic from Prehistory to AD 1500**

*Barry Cunliffe*

Oxford University Press

632pp, 223 colour and black-and-white illustrations and 131 maps

Hardback, £30

‘Go West, young man!’ may sound like advice from the 19th-century, but American settlers were at the end of a long line of pioneers and adventurers who had been chasing the western sun since, well, just about the dawn of time. Barry Cunliffe takes this idea as a main theme of his book, which explores the history of the Mediterranean and Atlantic from the Last Glacial Maximum to the first European steps in the New World. To emphasise the direction he is taking, an abundance of specially drawn maps put west (rather than north) at the top of the page, tilting the world as Europeans knew it clockwise through 90 degrees.

The westward march has been long, from Neolithic and Beaker cultures to monks heading for western Ireland to find the isolation earlier generations had known in the deserts of the Middle East. But although the subject of *On the Ocean* is broad, it stresses that it is ‘connectivity’ that links movements in trade and populations. Winds and currents are a driving force, but there are other elements at play. The Mediterranean lands of southern Europe are mountainous and sailors like to keep in sight of land, so they became adventurous, travelling further out to sea than people from the flatter North African coast.

Professor of Archaeology at Oxford University from 1972 to 2007 and author of many books including *Facing the Ocean* and *By Steppe, Desert and Ocean*, Cunliffe believes that, in the absence of evidence, archaeologists of the past have tended to underestimate the ability of our prehistoric ancestors to engage with the sea. As an example, he cites the recent discoveries of palaeolithic tools on Crete made by people who must have arrived by boat 130,000 to 100,000 years ago, far earlier than had been thought that sea voyaging began.

The Strait of Gibraltar, connecting the two great bodies of water, was a barrier to early seamen, as unfavourable currents and winds could prevent Mediterranean ships from entering the Atlantic for weeks on end. But the Phoenicians, master mariners from the Levant, sailed through, seeking flint and ores in Brittany and Cornwall, and in the 4th century BC Pytheas, a Greek from Marseille, reached Britain, reporting on the tides that were related, he said, to ‘the fullness and fastness of the moon’.

‘The western ocean has always had a supernatural aura,’ says Cunliffe. ‘It was the place where paradise lay and where the imagination could run wild.’ The first to arrive in Madeira and the Canary islands...
may have been 80 Arab *mughrarun* (‘intrepid explorers’) who set out from Lisbon in the 11th or 12th centuries ‘to sail the sea of Perpetual Gloom, to discover what it was and where it ended’. Columbus headed west, thinking the Canaries were on route and on the same latitude as Cipangu (Japan). Archaeologists refer to the maritime zone from Iberia to the Shetlands as the Atlantic Bronze Age Community. The substantial rivers flowing into the Atlantic here provided havens, says Cunliffe, and were the prime reason for the Atlantic zone being a focus of energy and innovation.

Descriptions of boats from earliest times sort out cogs from hulls, carracks from caravels, helped by a glossary of nautical terms, while a 36-page guide to further reading seems more than adequate. Most of the information in this well produced and highly readable book is not new, but its approach, and the connecting links it explores, help to give a greater understanding of the sea as fundamental to the passage of Western history.

*Roger Williams*

**Fishing: How the Sea Fed Civilisation**
Brian Fagan
Yale University Press
346pp, 20 black-and-white illustrations and 16 maps
Hardback, £23

If Barry Cunliffe believes archaeologists underestimated our prehistoric ancestors’ ability to engage with the sea, they have also, according to Brian Fagan, only in recent years turned their attention to the sea’s bounty and the oldest means of subsistence.

Confessing that he is no fisherman himself, the Emeritus Professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and author of *Fish on Friday* and *The Great Warming*, presents an extensive view of fishing communities in all corners of the earth from the earliest peoples who survived on fish, shellfish and molluscs, and they built homes on mounds of arrivals in the Baltic after the last Ice Age.

1.75 million years ago, while the earliest peoples who survived on fish, shellfish and molluscs, and they built homes on mounds of arrivals in the Baltic after the last Ice Age.

The book shows how they led to the development of cities and empires. While agriculture promoted stability, fishing needed travel, trade and mobility, and the hunt for fishing grounds helped to develop vessels, while salting and curing fish was an ideal and necessary provision for the voyages.

This book claims to present the first history of humans and fishing as a sustainable food, and the fact that interest is being shown in the subject is in part due to new developing technologies. Not only can fish bone samples now reveal the age of a fish and the season it was caught, but human bone samples can show how much of a diet came from maritime rather than terrestrial food.

This is the story of the world’s great aquatic larder, of the full bounty of the sea that Man expected to last forever. But, of course, the bounty is in danger of running out, and in the last chapter Fagan, who has written many books on archaeology and climate change, looks at the sustainability of our last major source from the wild.

*Roger Williams*

**The Fate of Rome: Climate, Disease & the End of an Empire**
Kyle Harper
Princeton University Press
440pp, 25 black-and-white illustrations and 26 maps
Hardback, £27.95/$33.00

Historians have adduced more than 200 explanations for the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The avenues of approach have changed according to the intellectual climate of the day. The anticonformism of Gibbon led to the dismal race theories of the 19th century. While we contend with the post-2008 economy, some of the most interesting recent work on the fall of the Roman Empire examines weaknesses in imperial finance.

Kyle Harper, a professor at the University of Oklahoma, here takes another contemporary approach. Rome, he writes, is ‘a mirror and a measure’ of our age. Using fresh scientific evidence, he supplies an environmental history of the decline and fall, by tracing two intertwined factors, familiar to us from the news: climate change and pandemics of disease. The fate of Rome, he argues, was not just decided by ‘emperors and barbarians, senators and generals, soldiers and slaves’. It was equally determined by ‘bacteria and viruses, volcanoes and solar cycles’.

The Romans built an ‘interconnected, urbanised empire on the fringe of the tropics’. Their empire prospered through a ‘charmed cycle’ of ‘economic and demographic increase’, and a consensual balance between the metropolis and its cities. If population was rising, then taxes could be kept low, and the army could be paid. If population fell, then taxes had to rise. Soldiers would be harder to find, and so would the money to pay them. This ‘favourable equilibrium’, Harper argues, rested on ignorance, quite understandable but nevertheless fatal, of the environmental context.

The Romans established their empire at the end of the climatic epoch known as the Holocene Era, ‘in a moment suspended on the edge of tremendous natural climate change’. Though they claimed to have tamed nature through a rite at the heart of their culture, the staged animal hunt, their empire set in train the opposite process. In an ‘unintended conspiracy with nature’, the Romans had created ‘a disease ecology, which unleashed the latent power of pathogen evolution’.

Gibbon thought that the period in which ‘the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous’ was that between the death of Domitian (AD 96) and the accession of Commodus (AD 180). But this, Harper shows, was when the Roman Empire started...
BOOKREVIEWS

to reach ‘the very limits of what was possible in the organic conditions of a pre-modern society’. Towards the end of that period, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius (AD 161–80), economic and demographic growth were interrupted by the epidemic known as Antonine Plague. In a skilled piece of historical and veterinary detective work, Harper analyses the plague as smallpox, and traces it to the Naked-Sole Gerbil which, like many of Rome’s luxury imports and some of its wheat, came from Africa.

The empire recovered from the Antonine Plague, but disintegrated in the 3rd century AD through a ‘concatenation of drought, pestilence and political challenge’.

Rebuilt, the empire surged forward with a new capital and a new religion, but migratory pressures from the Eurasian steppe, themselves reflecting environmental changes, caused the collapse of the Western Empire. The Eastern Empire enjoyed rising power and population, but at the end of the 4th century AD it was struck by ‘one of the worst environmental catastrophes in recorded history – the double blow of bubonic plague and a little ice age’. The resulting demographic shock played out as a ‘slow-motion failure’, culminating in loss of territory to the armies of Islam.

Deeply learned and clearly written, The Fate of Rome synthesizes scientific research and ancient sources to advance a thesis with profound implications for our understanding of the causes of Roman decline. Dominic Green

The Plight of Rome in the Fifth Century AD
Mark Merrony
Routledge
218pp, 25 black-and-white illustrations and two maps
Hardback, £103

In his new book on ancient Rome, how does Dr Mark Merrony (a former editor of Minerva) handle the legacy of Edward Gibbon (1737–94), who is regarded as the premier historian of the period? Gibbon’s Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, published in six volumes between 1776 and 1788, changed how people saw ancient history.

Like any history, it was as much a reflection of the society of the author’s time as a commentary on ancient times. According to Gibbon, Rome lost its way. It was besieged by the new faith of Christianity that brought new values. Barbarians were both streaming through the gates and defending the Empire. Rome was so powerful that it took centuries to collapse, but its demise was inevitable. Some countries banned the book but, then as now, this might have boosted sales. Gibbon’s views were clearly influenced by the Enlightenment, but the question remains – is his central thesis still relevant? It is here that Merrony’s work fills a void. Since Gibbon, many writers have reassessed the decline of the Roman Empire (27 BC–AD 476), but The Plight of Rome in the Fifth Century AD does so by using material culture.

The title of the book is, however, somewhat misleading. For although the 5th century AD is covered in greater detail, it starts in the 1st century BC with Julius Caesar. Emphasis is paid to building inscriptions and coins, while large-scale archaeological surveys and the sources of mineral wealth are also covered.

Gibbon’s foici, using primary literary sources to explore the Roman state, the rise of Christianity, and the fall of the Roman West and then the Roman East, are distinct from those of Merrony, but, in many ways, the two works complement each other.

Merrony suggests that in order to support such a grand military machine, Rome had to provide vast amounts of wealth through conquest in order to pay the troops. It is estimated that state expenditure on the military was 60–70 per cent of total revenue. When Rome was lacking a war, it had to dip into other revenue streams, such as agriculture, to pay the military. With the Empire splitting in the 5th century, the shrinking military acted as less of a buffer to invasions. Territory was lost and, over time, the downward spiral accelerated. Merrony summarises decades of large-scale surveys. Objects of everyday life, such as evidence of olive oil production or pottery scatters, convey the truth on the ground, which might be hidden by official sources. When barbarians seize agricultural land and take over gold and silver mines to mint their own coins, power can rightly be said to have shifted.

It is a common refrain that the historians of previous ages were so skilled that there is little left for moderns to do other than perhaps fill in some of the blanks. While veneration of former literary titans is admirable in some cases, it can obscure the fact that every generation needs to define the past on its own terms. This is where this book excels, for it considers the material evidence for the ancient Roman economy and uses the information to gauge the state of the military. While the idea that winning wars was necessary for the economic system to work is simple, synthesising the evidence is not, and Merrony constructs a solid thesis to explain the decline and fall of the Western Empire. Murray Eland

The Barbarians: Lost Civilizations
Peter Bogucki
Reaktion
248pp, 65 illustrations, 44 in colour
Hardback, £15

The Vandals did vandalise Rome, but were the barbarians truly barbarous? This is the question asked by Peter Bogucki of Princeton University in his new book The Barbarians, a thought-provoking, highly readable addition to Reaktion’s always interesting Lost Civilizations series. This question, Bogucki admits, may be ‘an oxymoron’, because ‘the people we call barbarians were not civilized’. They embodied everything that the Greeks and Romans did not wish to be. To Gibbon, this clash of civilisation and barbarism was a permanent historical condition.

The English ‘barbarian’ is attributed to the Greek barbaros, an onomatopoeic word for the speech of the neighbouring Anatolians, who sounded as if they were saying ‘bar-bar’. In describing the barbarian within, Homer describes poorly spoken Greek as barbarophonos (barbaric-sounding). The Romans adopted barbaros, and applied it as indiscriminately as they applied their laws. All non-Romans, from the Picts on the wrong side of Hadrian’s Wall to the Scythians on the banks of the Black Sea, from the Germanic tribes of the northern woods to the Berbers of the Saharan Desert, were gentes barbaricae, ‘barbarian peoples’.

St Paul used the word non-judgmentally, to describe non-Romans, but he came from a people whose monotheism the Romans considered barbarous, and he was trying to win converts. The more common Roman attitude is preserved in a Late Antique false etymology, combining barba and rus (‘beard’ and ‘country’): the clean-shaven city-dweller faces off the bearded rural herdsman. Although etymologically false, it reflects the historic antagonism between town and country, the ‘civilised’ and the ‘barbarous’.

The idea of a barbarian was not unique to the Graeco-Roman world, either. The Chinese had strong opinions about the barbarousness of the non-Chinese while the Mahabharata of the ancient Hindus uses the Sanskrit barbara to mean ‘foreigner’, ‘low’ and ‘stammering’. The Sanskrit term raises the possibility that the Greek etymology was a post-hoc rationalisation, rather than a spontaneous description of communication problems in Anatolia.

Bogucki reconstructs how the ‘Barbarian World’ of Stone Age Europe developed by

Minerva January/February 2018
CLASSICAL CONUNDRUMS

Adam Jacot de Boinod poses a vocabulary quiz from Latin and Ancient Greek

Can you guess the correct definition from the following three options for:

1) zamia (Latin)
A) anything badly formed or out of shape
B) hurt, damage, loss
C) the second swarm of bees in the same season

2) limnourgos (Ancient Greek)
A) rough, blunt, unceremonious
B) a fisherman
C) an inquisitive person

3) sumen (Latin)
A) a breast, teat, udder
B) a loathing
C) a thirst

4) steibo (Ancient Greek)
A) to tread on, to tread underfoot
B) to eat voraciously
C) to weep

5) prothumia (Latin)
A) a prediction
B) good health
C) readiness, willingness

6) madza (Ancient Greek)
A) a pole slung across a stream to stop cattle passing
B) the socket of a precious stone
C) a father or mother’s sister, an aunt

7) zonula (Latin)
A) a little girdle
B) foul air, poisonous gas
C) the swampy surface of a wet ploughed field

8) stalao (Ancient Greek)
A) to bray like a donkey
B) to drop, let fall
C) to laugh loudly

9) vitta (Latin)
A) a ribbon, a band
B) envy, jealousy
C) a booming roar

10) steignophues (Ancient Greek)
A) without thought, headlong
B) suddenly angry, depressed in spirits
C) of thick nature

11) virgatus (Latin)
A) quarrelsome, contentious
B) made of twigs
C) pure, clean, untainted

12) tethis (Ancient Greek)
A) a pole slung across a stream to stop cattle passing
B) the socket of a precious stone
C) a father or mother’s sister, an aunt

• Adam Jacot de Boinod has worked as a researcher on the BBC television quiz programme QI. He is the author of The Meaning of Tingo and creator of the iPhone App Tingo.

ANSWERS

1) B) hurt, damage, loss
2) A) a fisherman
3) A) a breast, teat, udder
4) C) to weep
5) C) readiness, willingness
6) C) a father or mother’s sister, an aunt
7) B) foul air, poisonous gas
8) A) to bray like a donkey
9) A) a ribbon, a band
10) C) of thick nature
11) B) made of twigs
12) B) the socket of a precious stone

Errata: We apologise for errors in the review of Roman Portraits by Paul Zanker in the last issue. On two occasions AD appeared next to a date when it should have been BC. This occurred in the editing process and was not the fault of the reviewer. The wrong date was also given for the founding of the Metropolitan Museum: it was 1870, not 1879.
As the museum is known for its ancient and modern collections, let us consider the relationship between conflict and art in the British Museum’s new Ashali Shimbum Display. The oldest object, an Ancient Egyptian battlefield palette from circa 3300–3100 BC, captures a general wish to conquer both chaos and the enemy. An Assyrian relief shows a battle with the Elamite army, and a 6th-century BC Greek amphora depicts the death of the Amazon queen Penthesilea at the hands of Achilles (below). These ancient representations, with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with a video installation by Iranian artist Farideh Lashai with a video installation and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and contrast with their focus on heroism and contrast with their focus on heroism and contrast with their focus on heroism and contrast with their focus on heroism and contrast with their focus on heroism. From the late 19th century Pointillists, such as Georges Seurat, were preoccupied with scientific colour theories. In the 20th century, the perception and depiction of movement that was on the minds of Vorticists, Op Artists and Kinetic Artists, like Victor Vasarely, Bridget Riley, Jeffrey Steele and Peter Sedgley – some of whom are still working today. The colourful work of contemporary artists, such as Jim Lambie and ceramicist Sara Moorhouse, are also featured in this exhibition.

**BATH**

*Seurat to Riley: The Art of Perception*

Perception is a key to most art, and it has been a subject of intense interest among many practitioners. In the late 19th century Pointillists, such as Georges Seurat, were preoccupied with scientific colour theories. In the 20th century, the perception and depiction of movement that was on the minds of Vorticists, Op Artists and Kinetic Artists, like Victor Vasarely, Bridget Riley, Jeffrey Steele and Peter Sedgley – some of whom are still working today. The colourful work of contemporary artists, such as Jim Lambie and ceramicist Sara Moorhouse, are also featured in this exhibition.

**Holburne Museum**

+44 (0)1225 388 569 (www.holburne.org)

Until 21 January 2018.

**CAMBRIDGE**

*Currencies of Conflict: Siege and Emergency Money from Antiquity to WWII*

Many conflicts across the world and throughout history have involved sieges in which the people with no access to the outside have had to produce emergency currency in the form of coins or paper money. Examples of this fascinating emergency currency, dating from Ancient Greece to the Second World War, are on show and tell the little-known story of its invention and use.

**Fitzwilliam Museum**

+44 (0) 1223 332900 (www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)

Until 23 February 2018.

**LONDON**

*On violence and beauty: reflections on war*

A selection of objects, ancient and modern, lets us consider the relationship between conflict and art in the British Museum’s new Ashali Shimbum Display. The oldest object, an Ancient Egyptian battlefield palette from circa 3300–3100 BC, captures a general wish to conquer both chaos and the enemy. An Assyrian relief shows a battle with the Elamite army, and a 6th-century BC Greek amphora depicts the death of the Amazon queen Penthesilea at the hands of Achilles (below). These ancient representations, with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with a video installation by Iranian artist Farideh Lashai with a video installation and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and conquest, contrast with their focus on heroism and contrast with their focus on heroism and contrast with their focus on heroism and contrast with their focus on heroism and contrast with their focus on heroism and contrast with their focus on heroism. From the late 19th century Pointillists, such as Georges Seurat, were preoccupied with scientific colour theories. In the 20th century, the perception and depiction of movement that was on the minds of Vorticists, Op Artists and Kinetic Artists, like Victor Vasarely, Bridget Riley, Jeffrey Steele and Peter Sedgley – some of whom are still working today. The colourful work of contemporary artists, such as Jim Lambie and ceramicist Sara Moorhouse, are also featured in this exhibition.

**EDINBURGH**

*A New Era: Scottish Modern Art 1900–1950*

The traditional view of modern Scottish art is that it was dominated by the Scottish Colourists of the 1920s and 1930s, heavily influenced by French artists. By putting progressive works by leading artists and their lesser-known counterparts in the spotlight, this show challenges previous thinking. More than 80 works by 50 artists reveal Scotland’s contributions to Expressionism, Surrealism, Fauvism, Cubism and Abstraction.

**Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art**

+44 (0)131 624 6200 (www.nationalgalleries.org)

Until 10 June 2018.

**DERBY**

*Marion Adnams: A Singular Woman*

Born in 1898 in Derby, where she spent most of her long life, Marion Adnams was an art teacher who painted in a distinctive, Surrealistic style. Her art was informed by her interest in the natural world, particularly the Derbyshire landscape and White Peak. Now Adnams’ hometown is staging the first exhibition in decades devoted to the artist, who died in 1998, including drawings, prints, personal objects and paintings, such as For Lo, Winter is Past, from 1963 (above).

**Derby Museum and Art Gallery**

+44 (0)1332 641901 (www.derbymuseums.org)

Until 4 March 2018.

**UNIVERSITY OF ULM**

*Beliefs from Across the Globe: Living with Gods*

Beliefs from across the globe are brought together in this exhibition, which was the subject of the recent BBC Radio 4 series by the museum’s former director, Neil Macgregor. A selection of objects, such as pilgrimage, co-existence and conflict, and public celebrations. Among the many highlights are the Lion Man (above) from Baden-Württemberg, Germany, a hybrid creature from 40,000 BC, the end of the last ice age. Other artefacts include: a miniature prayer-book that may have belonged to Queen Elizabeth I; a Tibetan New Year dance mask; and Soviet scientific atheist posters.

**British Museum**

+44 (0)20 7323 8181 (www.britishmuseum.org)

Until 8 April 2018.

**Lake Keitele: A Vision of Finland**

The first UK exhibition on Finnish artist Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865–1931) focuses on his exquisite 1905 work Lake Keitele (above right), which was acquired by the National Gallery in 1999. All four versions of this subject are shown in chronological order which reveals the artist’s progress from a naturalistic landscape to a more abstract painting. Also on show are his earlier landscapes and a stained-glass piece of a lakeshore view, showing the continued importance of Finland’s natural environment to the artist who helped to define the country’s national identity.

**National Gallery**

+44 (0)20 7747 2885 (www.nationalgallery.org.uk)

Until 4 February 2018.

**Minerva**

January/February 2018
Ocean Liners: Speed & Style
The glitz and glamour of the golden age of ocean travel are recreated in this exhibition, which explores all aspects of design of some of the most luxurious vessels of the 19th and 20th centuries, and considers the wider cultural impact and lasting appeal of ocean liners. More than 100 years of high-end engineering, architecture, interior design, onboard lifestyle and fashion are set out, from Brunel’s 1859 Atlantic steamship The Great Eastern to the 1969 launch of the QE2. With more than 250 artefacts, including paintings, ship models, furniture,

Charles I: King and Collector
Charles I was one of the great art collectors and patrons of his day. After his execution in 1649, his acquisitions of works by Titian, Dürer, Mantegna and Holbein, and contemporary commissions by Rubens, Van Dyck (whose 1635 Triple Portrait of the king is shown below) and others, were sold. His son, Charles II, recovered many pieces during the Restoration, but others remained scattered across Europe. More than 100 works, including Classical sculptures, tapestries and miniatures, as well as studio paintings, are at last reunited and their impact on England’s visual culture is explored.

All Too Human: Bacon, Freud and a Century of Painting Life
Focusing on the visceral work of Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud, this exhibition examines how artists in the 20th century have responded to the challenge of capturing their personal experiences of life in paint, imbuing their creations with both sensuality and intimacy – Study for Portrait of Lucian Freud, 1964 (above right) by his friend Bacon, is one example. Figurative paintings by other artists, such as Stanley Spencer, Walter Sickert, Frank Auerbach and RB Kitaj, are also on show and connections are made with different generations of artists. Women artists and their role in an world of male-dominated figurative painting are put in the spotlight in works by Paula Rego, Cecily Brown, Celia Paul, Jenny Saville and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye.

Cézanne Portraits
Some of the nearly 200 portraits painted by Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) are on display here revealing a chronological development in his style and method, and his ideas about identity. The works include examples of Cézanne’s characteristic complementary pairs and multiple versions of the same subject. Self-portraits, portraits of his wife Hortense Fiquet, his uncle Dominique Aubert, and his gardener and his odd-job man, Vallier, are brought together and used to examine the influence of particular sitters over the artist’s portraiture. His Self-Portrait, oil on canvas dating from circa 1885, is shown below.

National Portrait Gallery
+44 (0) 20 7306 0055
(www.npg.org.uk)
Until 11 February 2018.

Royal Academy of Arts
+44 (0) 20 7300 8000
(www.royalacademy.org.uk)
From 27 January to 15 April 2018.

Tate Britain
+44 (0) 20 7877 8888
(www.tate.org.uk)
From 28 February to 27 August 2018.
Ayurvedic Man: Encounters with Indian Medicine

Inspired by an 18th-century Nepalese painting of male anatomy made according to classical Ayurveda, this exhibition looks at this long-practised system of medicine. Newly discovered letters from Henry Wellcome’s archive are on show alongside manuscripts, paintings and artefacts, such as animal-shaped surgical tools. The exhibits reveal the relationship between colonial and indigenous medicine, the use of plants in healing, and the role of gender in Indian medicine, visualised in a 19th-century watercolour entitled Woman swinging below an aubergine plant (below left).

The Wellcome Collection
+44 (0)20 7611 2222
(wellcomecollection.org)
Until 8 April 2018.

MANCHESTER
The Reformation

Marking the 500th anniversary of a truly world-changing event, this exhibition explores the role of printing in the turbulent times surrounding the Reformation. In October 1517, Martin Luther questioned the Catholic Church, sharing his thoughts far and wide. He expressed his persistent belief that art should be experienced rather than merely viewed, and this exhibition sets out to give visitors the opportunity to do just that, to experience the immenseness of his iconic large-scale work. The entire span of Rothko’s career is represented, starting with his early Surrealist works. The show also explores his admiration for the Old Masters and the long-held tradition that artists continually refer to the past. This is exemplified by the juxtaposition of two portraits of artists, Rothko’s Tete a Tete the Window, 1938–39, and Rembrandt’s Artist in his Studio, circa 1628.

Museum of Fine Arts
+1 617 267 9300
(www.mfa.org)
Until 22 April 2018.

UNITED STATES

CHICAGO, Illinois
Ancient Mediterranean Cultures in Contact

A rich display of nearly 100 ancient Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan and Roman objects from the Field Museum’s own collections sheds light on the interactions and exchanges between Mediterranean cultures. Although occupied by Greeks and Romans, Egypt held on to many of its long-standing customs, such as its burial rituals, and even exported its religious ideas and practices. Among the highlights are: Etruscan gold jewellery; a tetradrachm of Alexander the Great’s general Ptolemy I demonstrating the use of Greek currency in Egypt; a falcon amulet associated with Horus (above) and a bronze bathtub from Boscoreale, a villa near Pompeii, which hints at the ownership of slaves from distant, conquered lands by a wealthy elite.

Field Museum
+1 312 922 9410
(www.fieldmuseum.org)
Until 29 April 2017.

LOS ANGELES, California
Giovanni Bellini: Landscapes of Faith in Renaissance Venice

Celebrated for his religious scenes, mythological compositions, and portraits, the Venetian artist Giovanni Bellini (circa 1435–1516) was also able to capture exquisite landscapes in paint. Twelve of his paintings and one drawing show how one of the most illustrious artists of the Italian Renaissance set his religious subjects against powerful backdrops of the natural

Minerva January/February 2018
Bellini painted religious compositions from the start of his career, beginning with small pieces for private devotion and moving on to altarpieces. One of his earliest surviving works, *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness*, circa 1455, places the saint and lion in a cave in the foreground, but the scenery in the background is akin to the Venetian mainland (a familiar feature in Bellini’s work), rather than the Syrian desert. Later in his career, Bellini worked on sacred allegories. One of these, *The Sacred Allegory* (above), dating from circa 1500–04, is a complex and mysterious scene depicting what may be the Christ child, the Tree of Life and the Virgin Mary in an unusual landscape.

**J Paul Getty Museum**
+1 310 440 7300
(www.getty.edu)
Until 14 January 2018.

**Finding Form**
Artists employ different techniques and media – white chalk highlights, hatched ink lines and differences in the density of wash – when trying to recreate the three-dimensional world on paper, a two-dimensional surface. Thus, form and depth can be achieved, as in *Saint John the Baptist*, circa 1500, in red chalk, by Giovanni Agostino da Lodi (below left). This show has work from the 16th to the 19th centuries, that use these techniques.

**J Paul Getty Museum**
+1 310 440 7300
(www.getty.edu)
Until 11 February 2018.

**NEW YORK, New York**

**Provocations: Anselm Kiefer at The Met Breuer**

While still a student at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Karlsruhe in 1969, the highly successful German artist Anselm Kiefer (born 1945) took photographs of himself in his father’s Wehrmacht uniform doing the illegal Nazi salute at historic monuments. This was because the artist found the silence about Germany’s past unbearable. These images, some of which he selected for a photo essay six years later, outraged the public. With one painting and 34 works on paper that span Kiefer’s career and are all from the Met’s own collection, this exhibition shows the artist has not ceased to provoke and continues to examine and confront our conflicted past, time and existence, working with old photographs and using new materials such as lead, hay and earth.

**The Met Breuer**
+1 212 535 7710
(www.metmuseum.org)
Until 8 April 2018.

**VERO BEACH, Florida**

**Grayson Perry: Making Meaning**

A new curatorial partnership between the Royal Academy of Arts and The Gallery at Windsor will see the Florida venue stage shows by three Royal Academicians over the next three years. First off is Grayson Perry, with his bold take on subjects such as identity, Britishness, craftsmanship and the art establishment through ceramics, sculpture, etchings and tapestries, including the 8m-long *Comfort Blanket*, 2014.

**The Gallery at Windsor**
+1 772 388 4071
(www.windsorflorida.com)
From 15 January to 27 April 2018.

**WASHINGTON DC**

**Heavenly Earth: Images of Saint Francis at La Verna**

In September 1224, Francis of Assisi spent 40 days fasting and praying in the wilderness of La Verna, Tuscany, in order to share in Christ’s suffering. As the story goes, a seraph in the form of a crucified man appeared and left Francis imprinted with Christ’s wounds until the end of his life two years later. The stigmatisation of St Francis is the

**Minerva January/February 2018**
first recorded incident of this kind in the Christian tradition. It was an important moment for monasticism (La Verna is an active monastery to this day) and this exhibition looks at images of St Francis, in print and paint, from the late 15th to mid-18th centuries. These include a German woodcut (above) from circa 1500–10, showing St Francis receiving the stigmata, National Gallery of Art +1 20 27 37 42 157 15 (www.nga.gov) From 25 February to 8 July 2018.

INDIA
MUMBAI
India and the World: A History in Nine Stories
As part of UK/India 2017, a year of cultural exchanges that celebrated 70 years of Indian Independence, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS), Mumbai and the National Museum, Delhi, teamed up with the British Museum to launch an exhibition of art and artefacts from India and abroad that highlight the country’s important place in the history of the world. Prehistoric hand-axes, coins from early empires, religious art, and more, tell a long and fascinating story that stretches to the present day and will continue into the future. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) +91 22 2284 4484 (www.csmvs.in) Until 18 February 2018.

SPAIN
BILBAO
David Hockney: 82 portraits and 1 still-life
Recent works by David Hockney offer an intimate glimpse of his life in Los Angeles. Organised with the Royal Academy of Arts, where the show first ran in 2016, this exhibition features portraits of friends, family and fellow artists. The portraits are all the same size, painted in three days, and feature the same chair and blue background. This allows Hockney’s skill in capturing the personality of each sitter to shine through. The blue background is also used in the solitary still life. Guggenheim Museum +34 944 35 90 80 (www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus) Until 25 February 2018.

AUSTRALIA
SYDNEY
Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Medium
The ever-stylish work of the celebrated photographer Robert Mapplethorpe (1946–89) covers a wide range of subjects. Over 200 of the images he captured in his pursuit of ‘perfection in form’ are in this comprehensive survey of his career. Mapplethorpe’s floral still lifes, erotic images from New York’s gay scene and portraits of cultural figures of the 1970s and 1980s, such as Patti Smith, Debbie Harry, Philip Glass, Isabella Rossellini and Louise Bourgeois, made him a celebrity in his own right. Art Gallery of New South Wales +61 1800 679 278 (www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au) Until 4 March 2018.
EVENTS

UNITED KINGDOM

London
Medieval Seminar Series 2017–2018
UCL Institute of Archaeology and British Museum

Norwich Castle Keep: A 12th-Century Building Reinterpreted for the 21st Century
Tim Petts
23 January

Current work on the Anglo-Saxon monastery of Lindisfarne
David Petts
20 February

Discovering the Northern Picts:
Kingship and Society in Northeast Scotland circa AD 500–1000
Gordon Noble
20 March

Seminars are held at 6pm in Room 612
UCL Institute of Archaeology
(www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology)

Netherlands

Maastricht
TEFAF Maastricht
Presenting 7000 years of art history, dealers and experts in ancient art, design, paintings, works on paper, tribal art and more, will be taking part in the 31st edition of this leading art and antiques fair. Among those offering antiquities are Cahn International AG, Charles Ede, Galerie Harmakhis and Rupert Wace Ancient Art. This year, TEFAF Maastricht’s loan exhibition will showcase the Amsterdam Museum’s newly restored The Headmen of the Longbow Civic Guard House (1653) by Bartholomeus van der Helst, alongside examples of 16th-century silverware depicted in the painting. Five more recently restored Golden Age group portraits will also be displayed, including two by Ferdinand Bol.

MECC
10–18 March
(www.tefaf.com)

Russia

Moscow
Russian Art & Antique Fair
Russia’s only antiques fair returns for its 44th year with more than 250 galleries – from Russia, Germany, Italy, the United States and France – participating. Traditionally they exhibit Russian art, furniture and graphic design but, now, ancient art, numismatics, carpets, antiquarian books, photographs, sculpture and paintings from different periods from a variety of regions will also be on show.

Central Manege
6–11 February
(www.antiquesalon.ru)

Belgium

Brussels
BRAFA
Recent years have seen increasing visitor numbers at one of the world’s oldest art and antiques fairs, with more than 61,000 people attending BRAFA in 2017. On 27 January the first major international art fair of the year returns once more with 133 exhibitors from 15 countries taking part. Together, they offer high-quality works from across the globe, dating from antiquity to the present day. With Old Masters, tribal art, drawings by comic-strip artists, contemporary paintings, sculpture, furniture, jewellery, porcelain, glassware and clocks, there is something for all tastes. As ever, antiquities are well-represented and this year there are some new names, such as Sycomore Ancient Art, Ancient Art and Theatrum Mundi. The London-based dealer Ancient Art will show: a Macedonian gold state placed under King Lysimachus and struck with the portrait of the deified Alexander the Great with the horns of Ammon; a 7th-century BC Corinthian helmet; the only surviving shabti of Iweferbaku from the 18th Dynasty of Ancient Egypt. There are good number returning antiquities dealers, such as J Bagot and Wace Ancient Art, and also some new names such as J Bagot Arqueologia – Ancient Art from Barcelona who will be bringing a Roman 1st–2nd-century AD double herm of Apollo and Dionysos in marble (above) and a Roman 1st-century AD Athena in bronze.

Tour & Taxis
27 January–4 February 2018
(www.brafa.art)

Madrid

César Paternosto: Towards Painting as Object
Curated by the Argentinian contemporary artist César Paternosto (b 1951), this exhibition explores how artists have approached painting as object, rather than not just representation., since the beginning of the 20th century. Paternosto’s own works, such as Red Trio, 2015 (right), offering the current take on this are displayed alongside paintings by some of the great 20th-century artists, such as Picasso, Mondrian, and Juan Gris, who inspired this exhibition.

Musée Thyssen-Bornemisza
+34 917 91 13 70
(www.museothyssen.org)
Until 28 January 2018.

Switzerland

Lausanne

Ai Weiwei: It’s Always the Others
More than 30 works from 1995 to the present day created by Ai Weiwei can be found not just in the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts but all around the museums of the Palais de Rumine. In the Zoology Museum, for example, a 30-metre long dragon hangs high above visitors’ heads. This and other works make use of a variety of media including porcelain, wood, marble, jade, bamboo, silk, aluminium, wallpaper, photographs and videos, confirming the artist’s extraordinary versatility as well as his familiarity with traditional Chinese materials. One of the highlights is Sunflower Seeds – an installation of 10 tonnes of hand-painted porcelain seeds.

Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts
+41 21 316 34 45
(www.mcba.ch)
Until 28 January 2018.

Zurich

Nasca, Peru: Searching for Traces in the Desert
The Nasca Desert in southern Peru is home to many enormous geoglyphs, up to 370 metres in length and known as the Nasca Lines. Archaeologists believe they were created by the Nasca culture between circa 200 BC and circa AD 650. But who were these ancient people? An extraordinary array of around 200 artefacts, some from recent excavations and all from Peruvian collections, offers a comprehensive look at Nasca culture. Ceramic vessels in the form of hybrid creatures, such as a painted bottle in the shape of an orca (below), colourful textiles, found in graves, and gold masks all shed light on the daily life of the Nasca, their gods and the rituals associated with the Nasca Lines.

Museum Rietberg
+41 (0)44 415 31 31
(www.rietberg.ch)
Until 15 April 2018.

Belgium

Brussels

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Tour & Taxis
27 January–4 February 2018
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