

The International Review of Ancient Art & Archaeology

# MINERVA

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016

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## Signs and omens

The discreet role of the irrational in Islam

## Divine decadence

Mesopotamia was not a hot-bed of debauchery

## Written in stone

Exploring the rock art of Utah

## Dressed to kill

How fashion shaped medieval armour

# *Sensual sirens*

The women who inhabited the Classically inspired world of Frederic, Lord Leighton

Volume 27 Number 6



£5.95



# royal-athena galleries

Jerome M. Eisenberg, Ph.D., Director



## ATTIC BLACK-FIGURE NECK AMPHORA FROM THE GROUP OF TORONTO 305

In a battle between Greeks and Amazons (*amazonomachy*), a four-horse chariot (*quadriga*) is wheeling to the left. The horses have already turned, but the chariot itself still faces frontally, with the wheels foreshortened. The charioteer is not visible, but we see the Theban shield he wears on his back, with its red rim and characteristic indented sides. Of the warrior riding beside the charioteer, we see only his high-crested Corinthian helmet, his scabbard, his two long spears, and his round Argive shield. An air of equine ferocity is reinforced by the open mouths and white teeth. At the left is an Amazon carrying a spear and shield. She falls to the left; at first glance, the horses seem to be trampling her, but in fact she is behind them. Her attacker is probably the warrior at the far right, who strides to the left behind the chariot, his face hidden by the shield of the charioteer.



Reverse: In the center, Dionysos stands holding a rhyton in his left hand and a grapevine in his right. He wears an ivy wreath. Like the two satyrs in the scene, the god has a long red beard. One satyr stands empty-handed at the far right; the other stands behind Dionysos holding a jug, ready to fill the god's rhyton when summoned. Behind this satyr, at far left, is a maenad wearing a deerskin (*nebris*) over a chiton decorated with stars and rosettes.

Ca. 520-510 BC. H. 16 in. (40.6 cm.)

Ex Patricia Kluge collection, Charlottesville, Virginia, acquired from Royal-Athena in 1990; Dr. H. collection, Germany, acquired from Royal-Athena in September 2010. Published: J. Eisenberg, *1000 Years of Ancient Greek Vases*, 1990, no. 30.

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**Twixt Hope and Fear, 1895, by Frederic Leighton, oil on canvas. 110.5cm x 84cm. © Private Collection. Image Courtesy of Sotheby's. See pages 14 to 19.**

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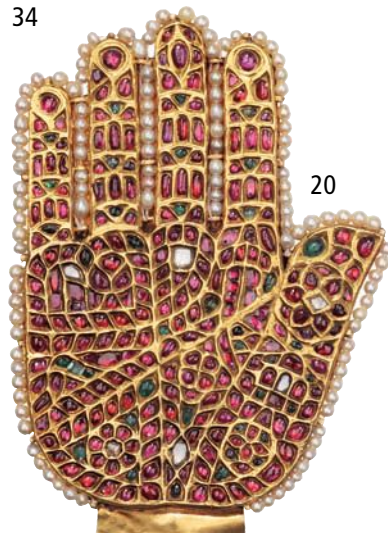
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## Amulets, art & armour

Charms to protect or give power to the wearer, sacred art that secures divine favour and fashionable armour that makes a man look good and live longer



Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830-96) was one of the leading artists of his day, a pillar of the establishment – he was President of the Royal Academy and a Trustee of the British Museum, who was knighted in 1878 – yet he presents a somewhat enigmatic figure. He was a curious mixture of conservatism and exoticism – as can be seen in his west London home, which is now the Leighton House Museum. This combination also informs Leighton's pictures, many of which have a strong Classical influence. His best-known work, *Flaming June*, 1895, has just returned to London from Puerto Rico to be included in an exhibition alongside four of his other late paintings. Our cover picture, *Betwixt Hope and Fear*, showing a seductively androgynous figure, is one of them. You can find out more on pages 14 to 19 where Dominic Green tells us about Leighton and the new exhibition.

Hope and fear are the impulses that inspire people to consult astrologers, wear amulets and try to find out what the future holds. These superstitious practices are officially frowned upon by Islam, but they have always been used – albeit discreetly. This is the subject of the autumn show at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Entitled *Power and Protection: Islamic Art and the Supernatural*, it includes some ravishing objects, as you will see if you turn to pages 20 to 25.

One ancient civilisation that has the undeserved reputation of being a sink of iniquity, superstition and debauchery is Mesopotamia. According to the Bible, every vice and luxury was embraced there, especially by its later kings, villainous Nebuchadnezzar and the even more wicked Belshazzar. We sent Polly Chiapetta to Louvre Lens to preview an exhibition about this supposed den of vice and she has written about what she found there on pages 26 to 32. In its early days it turns out to have been a rather sober and pious place; the decadence only came later.

Moving further East to Asia we find the source of a great collection put together by Sam Myers and his late wife, Myrna. This devoted American couple spent decades collecting beautiful and rare Oriental objects,

particularly jade, and a number of these items will go on show in Montreal in the middle of November. You can see some of the Myers' treasures on pages 34 to 39.

One form of art that cannot be collected is rock art whose context is the landscape in which it was created. Carol Chamberland, who has spent many years exploring and recording the vast outdoor 'art gallery' of America's southwest, visits Utah and finds some interesting images there; as you can see on pages 40 to 45.

The influence of landscape and natural phenomena on art and even architecture can have a subtle but pervasive effect, as Professor John Onians explains on pages 46 to 50. John, who has written on Classical art and architecture, has more recently turned his attention to the application of neuroscience in the study of art history, archaeology, anthropology and museology. His findings seem to suggest that the Greeks had a preference for the angular, while the Romans favoured a more circular approach – in everything from architecture to clothing.

Whether this applies to the design of armour is not discussed but, on pages 8 to 13, Tobias Capwell has assembled some fascinating facts on how fashion, as well as function, shaped suits of medieval armour. And Tobias should know for, as well as being Curator of Arms and Armour at the Wallace Collection in London, he has actually worn armour and used to be a champion joustier. Sadly he does not relate if he struggled into one of the wasp-waisted suits of armour favoured in the 15th century which were the must-have design for any young knight of the time.

Moving from the martial to the sacred, in our News section (pages 3 to 6), we look at the latest art installation in St Paul's Cathedral – it is a video triptych by the American artist Bill Viola called simply *Mary*. The placing of this work in the North Quire Aisle balances Viola's earlier piece, *Martyrs*, which was set up in the South Quire Aisle in 2014. We also report on the latest archaeological finds unearthed in the City of London during the Crossrail project and hear about the opening of three new museum projects, one in France and two in Italy. And, if you want to find out about the latest exhibitions, consult our Calendar on pages 56 to 61.

• **To finish, I send you all my Seasonal Good Wishes!**

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### John Onians

taught at the University of East Anglia from 1971 to 2007. He was founding editor of *Art History* (1978-88) and edited the first *Atlas of World Art* (2004). Now he uses neuroscience for the study of art-related behaviours; his latest book is *European Art: A Neuroarthistory*.



### Polly Chiapetta

is an editor and journalist, currently working with the guidebooks team at English Heritage. Her most recent project has been to edit Martin Millett and Rose Ferraby's guide to Aldborough Roman Town in North Yorkshire.



### Theresa Thompson

is a freelance journalist based in Oxford. After working in health education and for an environmental charity, she now writes regularly on art, archaeology, travel and the natural world for several different newspapers and magazines.



### Tobias Capwell

is Curator of Arms and Armour at the Wallace Collection, London. He is the author of numerous books on medieval and Renaissance weaponry, most recently *Armour of the English Knight 1400-1450*. The second volume, *Armour of the English Knight 1450-1500*, will be published in the autumn of 2017.

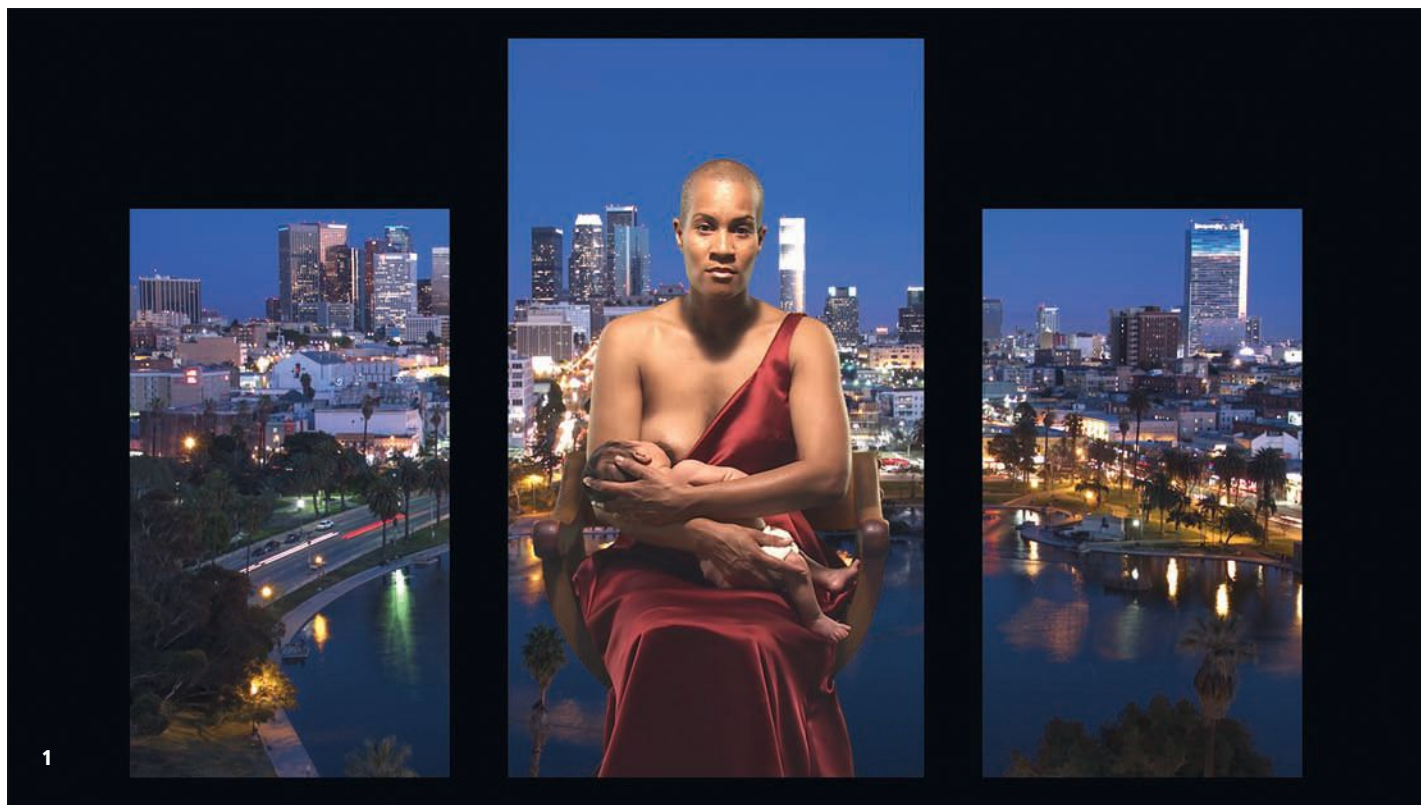




# inthe**news**

Recent stories from the world of art and archaeology

## Mary appears in St Paul's Cathedral



© BILL VIOLA. MARY, 2016. VIDEO TRIPTYCH; EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, KIRA PEROV  
PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY BLAINSSOUTHERN

Bill Viola is the latest in a line of carefully chosen contemporary artists to be invited to install their work in St Paul's Cathedral. In 2014 Viola's work, *Martyrs*, was placed in the South Quire Aisle; in September a new piece, *Mary*, a high-definition colour video triptych, was unveiled in the North Quire Aisle. Although the scale (155.4cm x 237.2cm x 9.9cm) of this 13:13-minute work is modest, its impact is stunning and its message is timeless. As Viola explains: '*Mary is a universal female figure present in nearly all spiritual and religious traditions. She maintains an infinite capacity to absorb and relieve the pain and suffering of all who come to her. She is the personification of the feminine principle, related to ideas of creativity, procreation, inner strength and compassion.*'

The succession of compelling images that morph very slowly across the screen of the new work

**Bill Viola's video triptych *Mary*:**  
**1. Lola Gayle as the Madonna with the city of Los Angeles behind her.**  
**2. Laura Gascoigne in the *pietà*.**

range from an awe-inspiring real-life black Madonna with a new born child to a *pietà* so touching that it will move you to tears. Scenes from the life of Mary, ranging from those of joy and hope to loss, pain and, ultimately, death, are also represented by images of the modern world where creation and destruction go hand in hand.

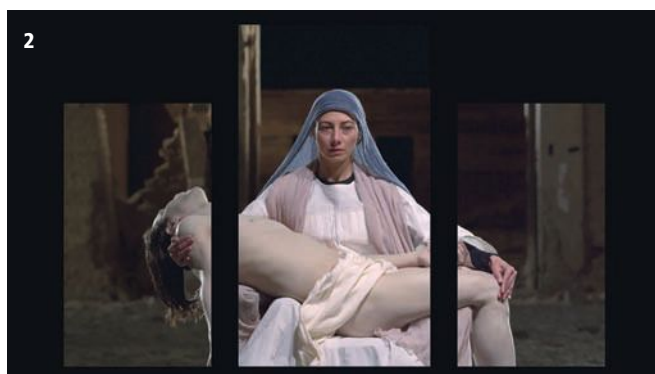
The 'part' of Mary was taken by two friends of Viola: Lola Gayle, a singer from Los Angeles, is the black Madonna with her five-day-old son Kian at her breast; while, dressed in blue and white, Laura

Gascoigne, an actress from Italy now living in the States, cradles the body of Christ in the *pietà*. Both women were profoundly affected by their participation in Bill Viola's *Mary*. Laura's training as an actress did not prepare her for this, as she admits: '*I had to go to a place I didn't know in myself.*'

St Paul's Cathedral has been home to a wide variety of art for centuries – from the exquisite carvings in the quire by Grinling Gibbons (1648-1721) to the dome murals of Sir James Thornhill (1675-1734), from glittering Victorian mosaics to Henry Moore's 1983 sculpture *Mother and Child: Hood*. The St Paul's Cathedral Visual Arts Programme, which was set up to explore the encounter between art and faith, has also invited work from contemporary artists such as Rebecca Horn, Yoko Ono and Antony Gormley. Viola's work is the latest to grace the cathedral.

• (For further information visit [www.stpauls.co.uk/billviola](http://www.stpauls.co.uk/billviola) and [www.billviolaatstpauls.com](http://www.billviolaatstpauls.com)).

**Lindsay Fulcher**





# Head to toe: two Italian museums

SU CONCESSIONE DEL MINISTERO DEI BENI CULTURALI E DEL TURISMO. MUSEO ARCHEOLOGICO NAZIONALE, REGGIO CALABRIA



Just as there is more to Verona than Juliet's balcony, the Roman arena and the opera, there is more to Reggio Calabria than the two famous 5th-century BC 'Riace' bronzes that were salvaged from the sea in 1972. Both cities can now add to the list of their major tourist attractions long awaited and newly remodelled archaeological museums.

Of the two, the Museo Nazionale della Magna Graecia in Reggio Calabria is the most noteworthy. After years of closure its conspicuous collection of important Greek artefacts – crucial for the understanding of South Italian pre-Roman cultures – is finally within reach of visitors venturing so far south to the very tip of the peninsula.

The museum was partially open in 2013 when the acclaimed Riace bronzes were finally re-housed there. They were, and are, set on earthquake-proof pedestals and displayed in a specially air-conditioned, decontaminated room – but they were not the only shipwrecked treasures found underwater along the Calabrian coast.

Two superb bronze heads of bearded men, almost contemporary to the Riace

sculptures, were found by fishermen in 1969. One of the two, 'the Basle Head', is dated to the early 5th century BC while the other, more naturalistic 'Philosopher's Head', is dated 450-400 BC. The Basle head was illegally exported to Switzerland but, luckily, was retrieved and now has pride of place among the museum's many other masterpieces.

Equally outstanding are the superb terracotta *pinakes* (votive tablets), dating from 6th and 5th century BC, that come from the Persephoneion, the most important temple in the whole of Magna Graecia. They are fine examples of the sophistication of Greek art in Italy at this time.

Excavations of a 4th-century BC Doric temple at Locri Epizephyrii, founded about 680 BC on the shores of the Ionian Sea, near modern Capo Zefirio, unearthed two large marble sculptures of the twins Castor and Pollux, which must have been part of the temple's monumental pediment; as well as a headless female figure, perhaps a Victory, which stood between them. Also on show is a rare, painted marble

## 1. and 2. Two galleries in the refurbished Museo Nazionale della Magna Graecia in Reggio Calabria.

6th-century BC *kouros*, a fortuitous find made by the revenue police investigating the contents of a private house in Reggio where it had been used as a lamp. One section of the museum is devoted to marine archaeology and the contents of shipwrecks, tangible proof of the continuous maritime trade plied along the Calabrian coast.

Meanwhile, in Verona, the Museo Archeologico al Teatro Romano, which is housed in a former 15th-century Jesuit convent built on a hillside overlooking the 1st-century AD Roman Theatre, has been refurbished and enlarged to actually include the theatre. The 1st-century AD arena is used as a venue for large-scale opera performances – Maria Callas made her Italian opera debut here in 1947.

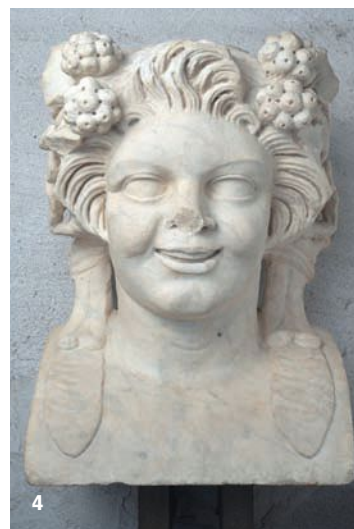
The museum's collection of Roman bronzes is one of the richest in Northern Italy. Objects pertaining to the cult of Isis, Harpocrates and Serapis, from a temple built nearby, are displayed in a special exhibition, *Egypt and Verona*, which also features Pharaonic artefacts collected over the centuries by local antiquarians; it is on show until September 2017.

These two museums at the opposite ends of Italy are welcome additions that warrant excursions away from the usual itineraries.

• (For more information on Museo Nazionale della Magna Graecia-Reggio Calabria visit: [www.archeocalabria.beniculturali.it](http://www.archeocalabria.beniculturali.it); for more on the Museo Archeologico al Teatro Romano-Verona visit: [www.museoarcheologicoverona.it](http://www.museoarcheologicoverona.it)).

Dalu Jones

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALESSANDRA CHEMOLLO



3. A view from the museum over the Roman theatre and the city of Verona through which the River Adige flows.

4. The smiling head of a faun, marble, circa 1st century AD. H. 40cm. Museo Archeologico, Verona.



# Lascaux IV is open at last...

The Montignac-Lascaux International Parietal Art Centre, known as *Lascaux IV*, will open to the public on 15 December 2016. This ambitious project was launched in April 2014, work started in September 2014 and it was expected to be completed by the spring of 2016, but the inauguration was delayed.

The centrepiece of this museum is an integral and exact full-size facsimile of the nearby Lascaux cave, the 'Sistine chapel' of parietal art, which was discovered by four teenagers in 1940.

The cave, which contains an amazing ensemble of rock paintings dating back to the late Solutrean and early Magdalenian periods (*circa* 15,000 BC), was the most important discovery since the finding of the painted cave of Altamira in 1879. Lascaux was opened to the public in 1948 and, over the next 15 years, it attracted a million visitors. But this came with grave consequences – in 1955, the first signs of damage were observed and the cave was closed in 1963 as a protective measure. For the public, this was the end of Lascaux I.

*Lascaux II*, the first facsimile, opened in 1983, 200 metres away from the original. About 90 percent of the cave art was reproduced using the latest techniques available at the



1. *Lascaux IV* is housed in an elegant building designed by Snohetta from Norway to blend into the landscape.

time. So far it has welcomed nearly 10 million visitors.

But due to growing interest in the site and its paintings, a travelling exhibition, known as *Lascaux III (Lascaux, the International Exhibition)*, was created and, in 2012, started a world tour. After the US, Canada and several European countries, it is now heading for South Korea and Japan.

*Lascaux IV*, the brainchild of the Dordogne *département* with the collaboration of the European Union, the French State and the Aquitaine Poitou-Charente Region, is a far-reaching achievement, intended to become both a tourist and cultural benchmark.

The Centre is located in the lower part of the Lascaux hill, in the French commune of Montignac-sur-Vézère (Dordogne). The elongated,

half-buried building blends perfectly into the hillside, with the broken line of the roof conveying the idea of a natural fault line.

The Parietal Art Centre is described as an 'interpretation centre'. Not a museum in the usual sense of the word, its aim is to highlight the site and explain its importance and significance, while broadening the subject to parietal art in general. Digital technologies and interactivity play a key role in that respect, and much use of them is made in all areas of the museum except, of course, in the facsimile itself. This was completed in 30 months by the Atelier des Fac-Similés du Périgord using the stone-veil technique.

The facsimile entrance is reached after a short walk to acclimatise visitors. Inside, the

atmosphere of the original cave has been reproduced – including its temperature, humidity, lighting, even its muffled sounds – and visitors are left to enjoy the immersive experience individually.

Other areas of the Centre are devoted to analysing and explaining what was found in the cave, presenting the work of prehistorians – from the 19th century to date – and showing the links between parietal and modern art. The last gallery is reserved for temporary exhibitions of works by contemporary artists.

*Lascaux IV* offers a unique and exhausting exploration of the fascinating world of cave art, masterly 'staged' by British scenographers Casson Mann.

• (For further information visit [www.projet-lascaux.com](http://www.projet-lascaux.com)).

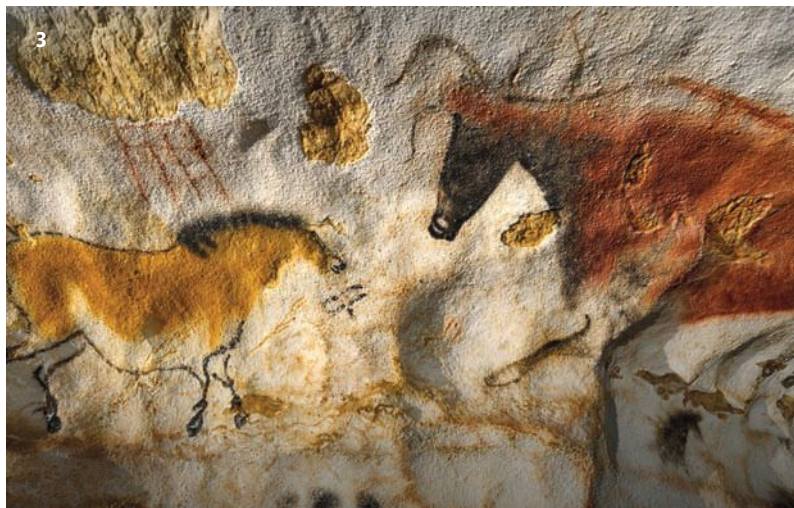
**Nicole Benzeth**

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2. In the Gallery of the Bulls, aurochs (wild cattle), horses and deer gallop.



3. A pony with the characteristically small head meets a large red bull.



# A Crossrail section of the City

Beneath the city streets, London is so riddled with tube lines, lost rivers and sewers, gas and cable pipes, car parks and storage spaces, that it must look like a giant gruyère cheese. Diving into this tangle of tunnels is Crossrail, one of Europe's largest engineering projects that has spent six years burrowing a 118-kilometre (73-mile) rail link from Reading in the west to Shenfield in the east. Each station is enormous: the one at Canary Wharf is 256 metres long, longer than the height of Canary Wharf Tower. Nearby, in contrast, is the well-preserved Georgian sugar warehouse on West India Quay, occupied by the Museum of London Docklands, which from 10 February next year will have an exhibition showing some of the 10,000 archaeological finds, from Neolithic to 20th century, that the Crossrail project has uncovered.

Trains on what is now to be called the Elizabeth Line, which is due to open in 2018, will run through the city far below the archaeological record, so it is only at the stations, where excavation has penetrated the upper four or five metres, that artefacts are found. As a result, says Jackie Keily, Curator of Archaeological Collections at the Museum of London, the finds have been unexpected, as these were not specifically identified archaeological sites, and they penetrated several layers of the city's history.

The earliest finds are Mesolithic flint shards from 8000 years ago, which were revealed at the station in North Woolwich at what must have been one of the first Thames valley settlements following the Ice Age. 'This is the waste from napping flint,' she explains, 'but there were few axe heads found, so they must have been taken away for use elsewhere. This was just the place that they were made.'

Between Woolwich and the City of London a number of manor houses were built, including King John's Court (circa 1450) at Stepney Green, where Crossrail's works uncovered, among other things, a chamber pot inscribed 'Oh what I see, I will not tell', and a wooden bowling ball. Bowls



Excavating human remains at Bedlam burial ground where Plague victims were found.

© CROSSRAIL/MOLA

was a popular Tudor past-time and no self-respecting manor would have been built without a bowling alley for guests to enjoy.

One of the most productive, and deepest, sites proved to be at Liverpool Street Station, where the massive infrastructure had to squeeze in between Moorgate in the west to Broadgate in the east. A cache of Roman *hipposandals* – horse shoes that were tied on to hooves – show that this was once a transport hub where pack animals would have been shod with these iron sandals before trotting along stone roads. Bones of the small breed of Roman horses were found here, too.

Human remains were revealed when the Bedlam burial ground was disturbed. This is the first time that DNA sampling has shown that death here was caused by the Plague. More life-affirming finds were the ice skates made from animal bones that sent medieval merry-makers whizzing around the frozen Moorfield Marshes, just beyond Broadgate.

Objects from more recent times include 16,000 vessels, mainly jam and pickle jars, from Crosse & Blackwell's pickling factory at Tottenham Court Road. The Astoria Cinema and Dance Hall had occupied their

building from the 1920s, but a large network of underground rooms was found to contain kilns and furnaces, as well as the ceramic and stoneware jars thought to have been abandoned when glass began to be used.

It is easy to imagine an ongoing conflict between engineers and archaeologists during excavation work, but Jay Carver, Crossrail's Lead Archaeologist, says that there have been no real problems – for both, it was a matter of education. Health and safety regulations prevented the archaeologists from reaching some areas, but the miners had cameras and learnt to photograph anything unusual which they showed them to see if it was worth keeping. Oxford Archaeology was involved in the project, and is still assessing the finds. Around 350 items have been chosen for *Tunnel*, the Museum of London Docklands exhibition, which will look at the daily life of people in London through the ages.

• *Tunnel: The Archaeology of Crossrail* will be on show at the Museum of London Docklands ([www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london-docklands](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/museum-london-docklands)) from 10 February to 3 September 2017.

**Roger Williams**



2. A Mesolithic flint scraper. 3, 4 and 5. Roman horse shoes or Hipposandals. 6. A pair of medieval animal bone ice-skates.

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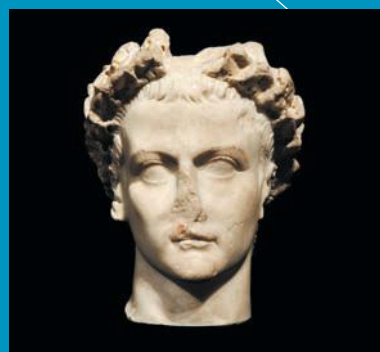
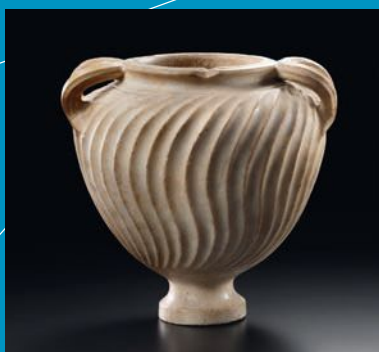
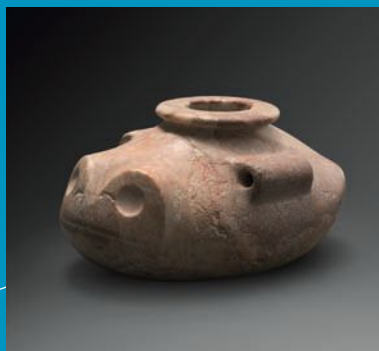
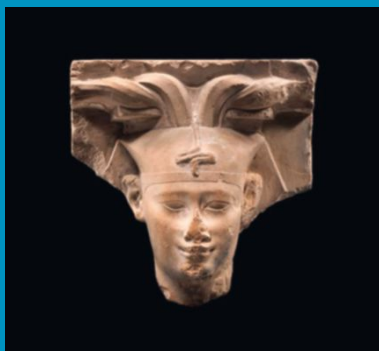
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# BRUSSELS



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# Fashion plates

Historian, curator and ex-champion jouster, **Tobias Capwell** explains how, during the 14th and 15th centuries, a young man wanted to be seen wearing the latest design of armour – not just for show, but because it could help to save his life in combat

In his *Livre de Chevalerie*, circa 1350, the famous French knight and author Sir Geoffroi de Charny (one-time owner of the Shroud of Turin) disdainfully denounced the followers of a new military fashion, which had recently appeared in western Europe:

*‘...it is not enough for them to be as God made them; they are not content with themselves as they are, but they gird themselves up and so rein themselves in round the middle of their bodies that they seek to deny the existence of the stomachs which God has given them: they want to pretend that they have not and never have had one, and every-one knows that the opposite is true.*

*‘And one has seen many of those thus constricted who have to take off their armour in a great hurry, for they could no longer bear to wear their equipment; and there are others who have been quickly seized, for they could not do what they should have done because they were handicapped by being thus constricted; and many have died inside their armour for the same reason, that they could put up little defence... There might be some who would prefer to give the appearance of being a good man-at-arms rather than the reality...’*

Charny was referring to the ‘wasp-waist’ fashion, a new trend at the time he was writing. All fashions promote a kind of exaggerated ideal of the human form and, historically as well as today, some are extreme. A particular fashion usually seeks to accentuate certain aspects of the body while minimising others. In fact the one usually works to aid the other. Amplifying the vertical lines of a model, for example, tends to move the viewer’s attention away from the horizontal, and vice versa. As the creators of very expensive ‘body-cases’ or human exoskeletons, late medieval and Renaissance

**1. Alabaster effigy of Sir Ralph Neville, 1st Earl of Westmorland (d 1425) and his wives, Margaret Stafford and Joan Beaufort, Church of St Mary, Staindrop, County Durham. Note the narrow waists of all three figures.**

© Cameron Newham.

**2. A one-piece breastplate, made by Master ‘P’, North Italian, circa 1400. The ‘V’-shaped bar over the chest is a stop-rib, designed to prevent incoming weapons striking the body from skating upwards into the throat. Private collection.**

armourers were perfectly aware of the fashionable pressures on their art – they were the makers of luxurious wearable sculptures that also happened to be hi-tech equipment for the battlefield. This dual-nature of armour meant that practical design features, developed purely to improve the function of the equipment, could quite easily slip into the realms of haute couture. But because armour always had to work well and look fantastic, it was often impossible to determine where function ended and fashion began.

So it was with the ‘wasp-waist’. Until the middle of the 14th century, the smelting of large enough pieces of iron and steel to make solid, one-piece breastplates had normally been a technological impossibility. Since the beginning of the iron age, the evolution of ferrous metal armour had been ruled by the problem of how to cover large areas of the human body with

iron (and later steel) plates when it was only possible to produce individual lumps or ‘blooms’ of iron about the size of a golf ball.

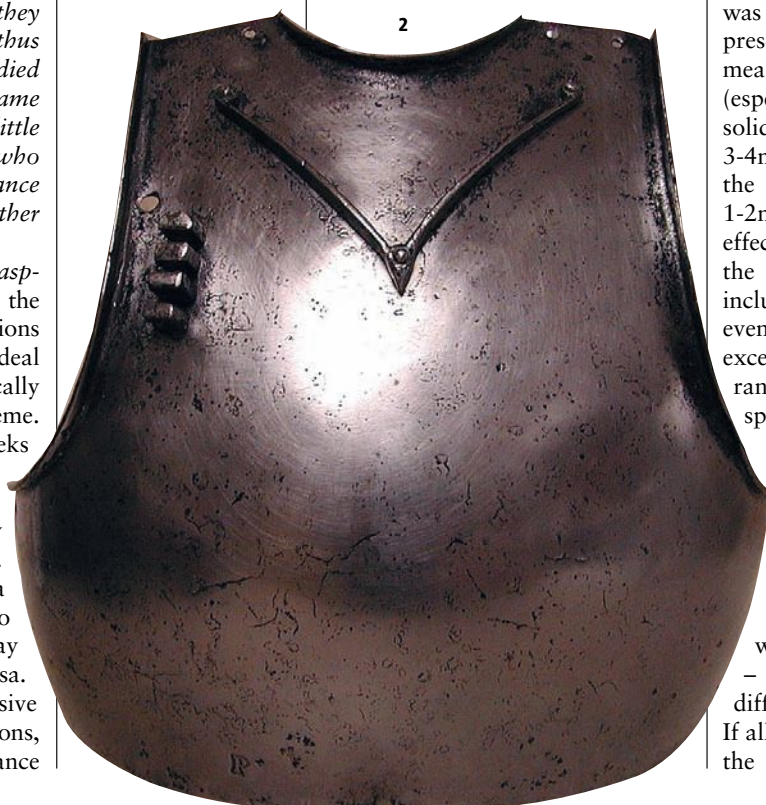
By the 14th century, however, smelting technology was gradually ‘sizing up’; the successful construction of larger bloomeries (the furnaces required to heat iron ore to the temperature required to trigger the chemical reaction that separated the iron from the silicates and other constituent parts of the ore as mined) began to yield a reliable supply of larger pieces of useable material.

Armourers, initially in Italy, were quick to determine the best ways of employing this new technology in their work. Revealingly, Richard Dany, one of the King’s Armourers in the Tower of London in 1380, is recorded as having lived in Lombardy where he ‘learned the mystery of making breastplates’.

The solid, one-piece breastplate was a hugely important innovation. It presented a serious countermeasure to the latest weapons (especially missiles) and tactics. A solid iron breastplate of around 3-4mm in thickness in the middle of the body, thinning to around 1-2mm at the sides, could effectively resist the attacks of all the ranged weapons of the day, including longbows, crossbows and even early firearms. It also provided excellent protection against close-range threats, such as the lance, spear and pollaxe.

But such a strong defence came at a cost. It was heavier than earlier forms of body armours that had been made up of smaller, lighter plates of iron, or hardened leather.

The design solution to the weight factor was distribution – spreading that weight across different areas of the wearer’s body. If all the weight had to be borne on the shoulders, the body armour



would quickly become uncomfortable. The equipment might not necessarily ever be unbearable, but good-quality fighting gear must be well-fitting and comfortable, to minimise the physical inconvenience that will otherwise quickly divert the wearer's attention away from his mission. As any hill-walker or mountain-climber can attest, comfort is especially vital when the equipment must be worn for long periods of time.

In the course of military operations in the late Middle Ages, armour might have to be worn all day and all night. When his tent collapsed on top of him in a storm during his military campaign in Wales against Owain Gly Dwr in 1402, King Henry IV avoided death from being crushed under the tent's centre post only because he had been sleeping in his armour (7 September 1402; recorded in the *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council*, i.185). And just as with design of modern backpacks, the answer to carrying the weight of solid plate body armours was to move some of the weight from the shoulders down to the waist. In the case of a backpack, this is achieved by means of a belt, which is cinched snugly around the wearer's natural waist, just below the rib-cage, at around the level of the navel. Armourers in the 14th century did the same thing with their breastplates – narrowing them as far as



**3. Visored bascinet, possibly French, circa 1380-1410. © Wallace Collection, London.**

**4. Reconstruction of an English suit of armour, circa 1400.**

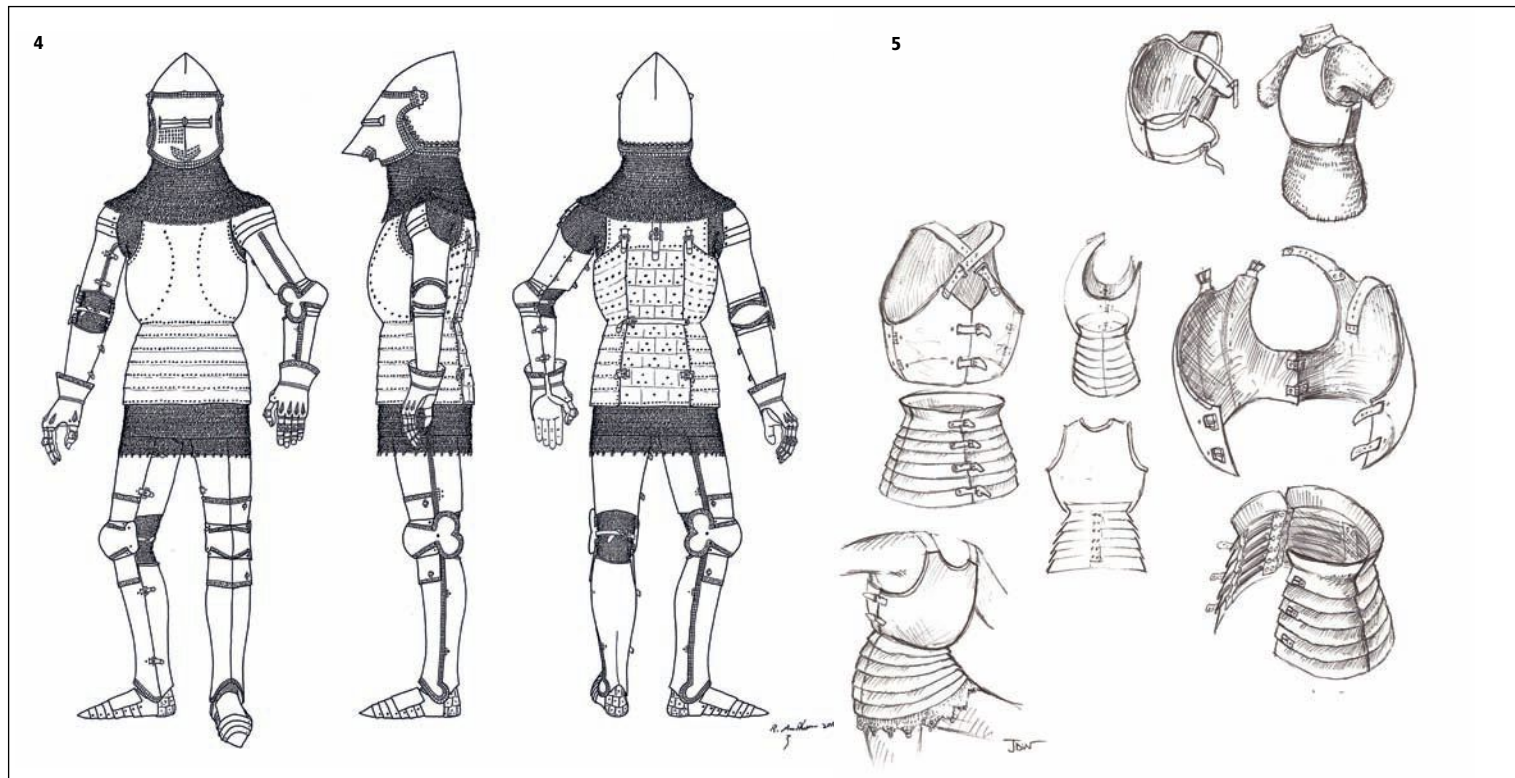
was possible at the waist took most of the weight off of the shoulders, making the wearing of the new armour convenient and practical. The narrow waist originally had a functional justification.

Aesthetically, the appearance of a small waist on early breastplates was accentuated by another entirely practical consideration – the wearer's need to breathe. But if the waist could be quite tight, the

area above it could not be so restricted, since the lungs needed to be able to inflate and deflate. Thus the shape of the breastplate had to allow for the expansion and contraction of the diaphragm.

This was achieved by creating a rapid upward transition from the narrow waist into a deeply rounded, globose form in the lower chest area of the breastplate, to allow sufficient space for deep breathing while wearing the armour. Interestingly, the technical requirements of the breastplate's form yielded a striking visual contrast. The deeply rounded chest, made purposefully larger and divergent from the shape of the man inside, made the waist look even smaller than it actually was. This armoured wasp now had an impressively voluminous thorax juxtaposed with his diminutive waist.

It is not difficult to see why this design lent itself to overemphasis. Its visual impact was based on contrast. The deep-chested but narrow-waisted silhouette of well-armoured men was quickly taken to





extremes to increase its appealing image – or because of the sinful vanity of the fashionistas, as Charny saw it.

In that respect this great French knight highlighted an interesting aspect of the position of the practical purist or fashion conservative – form should flow from function, not from fashion. Those in Charny's camp often saw exaggerated fashions as a crime against God, a process through which sinful narcissists corrupted the shape of the natural world and, thereby, the essence of divine creation.

Regardless of such sentiment, the wasp-waist predominated in the design of both civilian and military dress throughout the second half of the 14th century, and endured well into the 15th century. Sir Geoffroi would no doubt have been dismayed by the longevity of the fad he abhorred – had he lived to see it, but he was killed defending the Oriflamme, the holy war banner of France, at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356.

But Charny was by no means the only chivalric authority who saw honour and righteousness in the function of armour, while shame and impiety resided in its fashion. An articulate, if misguided, objection to innovations in armour fashions was expressed by Alonso de Cartagena, Bishop of Burgos, who in 1444 criticised what he saw as the superficial vanity of needless

**5. Body armour construction, circa 1380-1410. Narrowing at the waist allows the weight of both the upper and lower elements to be carried efficiently on the waist.**

**6. Body armour construction, circa 1430-50. More plates have been added to reinforce protection, while the ingenious construction still allows good mobility.**

**7. Construction of an arm-shoulder defence of circa 1380-1400. At this point the shoulder has only minimal plate protection.**

**8. Armet, Italian, probably made for export to Iberia, circa 1465. The visor is now missing. © Wallace Collection, London.**



and incessant changes in armour design, which he saw as a distraction of knightly attention away from the virtuous pursuits of holy war:

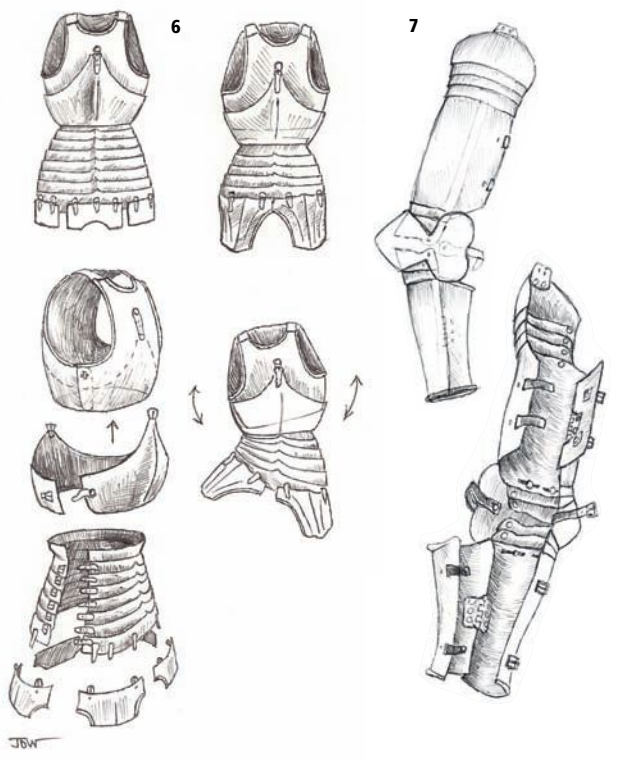
*'But what will we say, when we see the kingdom full of cuirasses and pauldrons, and those people in Grenada living in peace, and the refined practice of arms is spent on gathering armies against kinsmen and against those who should be friends, or in jousts and tourneys, of which one is abhorrent and abominable and a thing that brings dishonour and destruction, the other a game or a test of strength, but not the principal act of chivalry?...*

*'And thus, taking the two extremes, that is to say, either playing with arms or threatening those whom we call friends with them, we abandon the purpose for which they were made, which is to humble the pride of enemies. And I would greatly wish that chivalry's valiant and powerful should pay heed to the fact that the knights' acclaim does not lie in having many arms or in changing the conformation of them and devoting one's energy to discovering new pieces of armour and giving them new names so that if our ancestors arose from the dead they would not understand them, but rather in exalting the holy faith and expanding the kingdom's frontiers. And it should please God that in pourpoints and*

*bascinetts we were to do what some of the previous generations did, for greater honour would follow from that than from entering courts and cities overly accompanied by pages and wearing armets and panaches... who cannot see that this is more a demonstration and display of wealth than of virtue?'*

It is interesting to note that Cartagena stresses a specific set of armour terms that would have been especially significant to an armour-literate audience in the 1440s. The full cuirass of plate was at that point a recent development, composed not only of solid upper breast and back-plates, what was in fact called at the time the thorax (after the Ancient Greek precedent) but which also comprised a lower torso assembly (the corselet), a pair of pieces covering the diaphragm and middle back joined directly to articulated skirts or paunces of hoop-like plates, which protected the abdomen and lower back, to the level of the pubis and coccyx respectively.

This complex, well-engineered body armour system had only started to appear in Italy in circa 1415-20, and took some years to proliferate across Europe – it does not appear in England, for example, until circa 1430. For Cartagena, it was still quite a new innovation, and it certainly represented a significant departure from the





earliest solid plate body armours of the late 14th century.

Here, Cartagena appears to be confusing frivolous alterations for the sake of fashion with real battlefield necessities in the face of advancing weapons technology. The fact was, ranged weapons such as crossbows and firearms were becoming more of a threat in the 15th century, and the full cuirass built according to the latest Italian model offered a much more heavily reinforced defence, designed specifically to oppose the newest, most powerful iterations of such weapons. It would perhaps not have seemed so much like a frippery had Cartagena himself been under fire.

The *pauldrons* he mentions were another vital technical development. Until circa 1410, the almost universal plate protection for the shoulders in Europe was made up of a series of simple narrow plates, usually between two and four, attached to the base of a larger convex plate which covered the point of the shoulder. This whole shoulder assembly extended upwards from the *rerebrace*, the piece which covered the upper arm. The constituent parts of this set of shoulder plates, termed the *spaudler*, were usually attached to each other by means of internal leathers, so that they could collapse and expand over and under each other as the arm was raised and lowered. Mobility was good, but the protection the *spaudlers* provided was limited, since they covered only the area immediately around the points of the shoulders. There remained a significant gap between each *spaudler* and the neighbouring edge of the breastplate on each side. These areas, over the armpits, were usually covered with padded textile and mail armour, but they were still vulnerable to higher energy attacks, especially thrusts and the impacts of pointed stabbing weapons, such as spears and arrows.

By 1410, it was becoming clear that armoured warriors required more plate protection for their shoulders – those gaps had proved just too vulnerable, especially as weapons became more powerful. The *pauldron* was the answer to the *spaudler's* shortcomings in terms of coverage; they were characterised by increasingly expansive wings that extended away from the point of the shoulder around the body in front and back, enveloping much more of the surface area of the upper body to more than cover the once standard gaps that everyone, until recently, had accepted as a functional necessity.

The new *pauldrons* might have seemed unnecessary to Cartagena, but he had not suffered the consequences of not having them. He might very well have had more than one opportunity to witness them being suffered by others, however. Only a decade before the publication of his 1444 critique, a great passage of arms, the *paso honroso* ('passage of honour'), was held



by the flamboyant Leonese knight Suero de Quiñones near Hospital de Órbigo, to the west of Burgos. A great many knights from all over Iberia entered the contest, which was fought as a series of jousts of war (run in unmodified war armour using war spears having sharp, single-pointed spearheads).

These courses were dangerous, the risks being dramatically increased by the exclusion of the use of shields. The contestants were thus being struck directly on the armour itself, with sharp weapons that could slip and skate off the smooth plates in all kinds of unpredictable ways, causing accidental secondary strikes to vulnerable areas, such as the throat, saddle, groin,

legs and arm-pits. Notably, two of the participants, the *tenan* (defender), Pedro de Nava, and the captain of the opposing *venans* (answerers) were both injured in the same way – their opponent's lance skated across the breastplate from the left side to the right, to be trapped by the gap between breastplate and right shoulder plates, piercing the secondary defences and passing right through the shoulder joint. These unfortunate knights would certainly have afterwards appreciated the attributes of the latest, most advanced *pauldrons*, even if they cared not a jot for fashion. But then Cartagena might have faulted them for taking part in combat against fellow



9. Parts of a parade armour in the Mannerist style, made by Lucio Marliani (called 'Piccinino') of Milan, circa 1580-90. © Wallace Collection, London.



was only protected by the aventail and by the pisane, a standing collar made up of mail lined with padded textile and sometimes possibly leather. This arrangement worked well against hand weapons and light missiles, but it could not stand up in cavalry combat to the recently boosted striking power of the couched lance used in conjunction with the newly developed lance-rest, or *arrêt de la cuirasse*. This little metal arm, attached to the breastplate, both supported the weight of the lance, allowing it to be made longer and heavier, and acted as a shock absorber by allowing an impact to be resisted with the body's core strength rather than just with the hand, arm and shoulder. So the forces involved in a mounted collision with the lance were greatly increased, and a new threat was introduced into knightly armoured combat.

After the eyes, the throat had always been the most vital target in couched lance combat on horseback. As early as the 12th century, it was recognised that frontal injuries to the throat were particularly common among mounted men-at-arms. In his journal *Chirurgia (Surgery, circa 1180)* Raimon of Salerno (active 1180-1209), calls special attention to lance wounds to the throat, mentioning them as being a particular danger to knights when fighting other members of their class: 'If a knight who goes into battle with poor armour is wounded in the throat so that the breath escapes through the wound when he wants to speak, he is so badly injured, then leave him alone, for he is guaranteed to die.'

Clearly around 1410, and probably earlier, armourers and armour-users throughout Europe had arrived at the general consensus that helmets needed to protect the throat more effectively, with ridged plates of iron or, increasingly, steel. There were several different ideas about how to achieve this. In western Europe the prevailing approach was to simply build up the bascinet by adding additional chin and collar plates to create the so-called great bascinet. In Italy, and in areas under Italian influence (such as Iberia), a greater conceptual leap was made in the development of the armet. The earliest armets were simply bascinet-like skulls, but cut away at the sides to allow for the attachment of hinged cheek-pieces. This design allowed the helmet to open to accept the head, before being closed around it, with the cheek-pieces locking together at the chin. Thus the whole head and neck were enclosed in hard plates. The armet was usually fitted with a visor, and a reinforcing chin and neck defence called a wrapper was strapped over the outside. In this way the neck was now very well guarded against the heavy cavalry lance, and indeed diverse other threats as well.

Cartagena was wrong to suggest that the knights and men-at-arms he criticised had the freedom of choice about whether or not to update their equipment, and he was

wrong to characterise their efforts to do so as driven purely by vanity, fashion, and an obsession with technical cleverness. The fact was that those who failed to keep up with the latest innovations in weapons and armour ran an increasingly greater risk of horrible injury and violent death. This is not usually an issue for the Beau Brummells of the world.

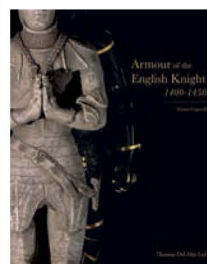
Cartagena does, however, call our attention to an interesting property of armour: that it can be almost impossible at times to determine the point at which the function ends and the fashion begins. Armour was, after all, a type of clothing, albeit in metal, and so inherently bound to follow the fashionable sensibilities of the time in which it was made. Yet it was also high-tech equipment for fighting.

These two aspects, armour as fashionable dress or body art, and armour as a utilitarian technology, influenced and exerted pressure on each other, to the point where they became completely fused. It is a wider and well-known design principle that beauty can naturally arise out of good functionality, and that spontaneously generated beauty is quickly seized upon as something to be valued in itself. So it was with armour. The graceful, sculptural qualities of the armour of the 14th and 15th centuries, which arose from the need to keep pace with ever more powerful weapons, came to be prized and sought after for its own sake in the 16th century.

The achievements of the great artist-armourers of the High Renaissance make it quite impossible to argue against the status of armour as an expressive and decorative art form, if it ever had been possible before, but they were simply advancing and elaborating basic principles that had been established centuries earlier. Indeed, it is fascinating to note that as the functional military relevance of full knightly armour declined over the course of the 16th century, its artistic merits were increasingly celebrated, with the fabulous works of the great masters pushing the possibilities of contemporary metalworking techniques to their absolute limits. Indeed, the removal of functional pressures liberated armour as an art and as luxurious fashion. If he had been writing in the 1580s rather than the 1440s, Cartagena might have actually had something to complain about. ■

Christians in the first place, another thing that he deplored.

Finally, Cartagena pits the old, tried-and-tested *bascinet* against the state-of-the-art armet, and once again he mistakes a critical breakthrough in functional armour technology for an elective, whimsical fashion. By the early 15th century the bascinet with an attached mail aventail, which had been the universal head defence for almost 100 years, was no longer providing adequate protection against key advances in weaponry. The design provided an excellent defence against downward and head-on blows but was weak in the neck area. The throat was especially vulnerable and until *circa* 1410



• *Armour of the English Knight 1400-1450* by Tobias Capwell is published by Thomas Del Mar Ltd ([www.thomasdelmar.com/books/](http://www.thomasdelmar.com/books/)) at £45. The second volume, *Armour of the English Knight 1450-1500*,

will be published in the autumn of 2017.

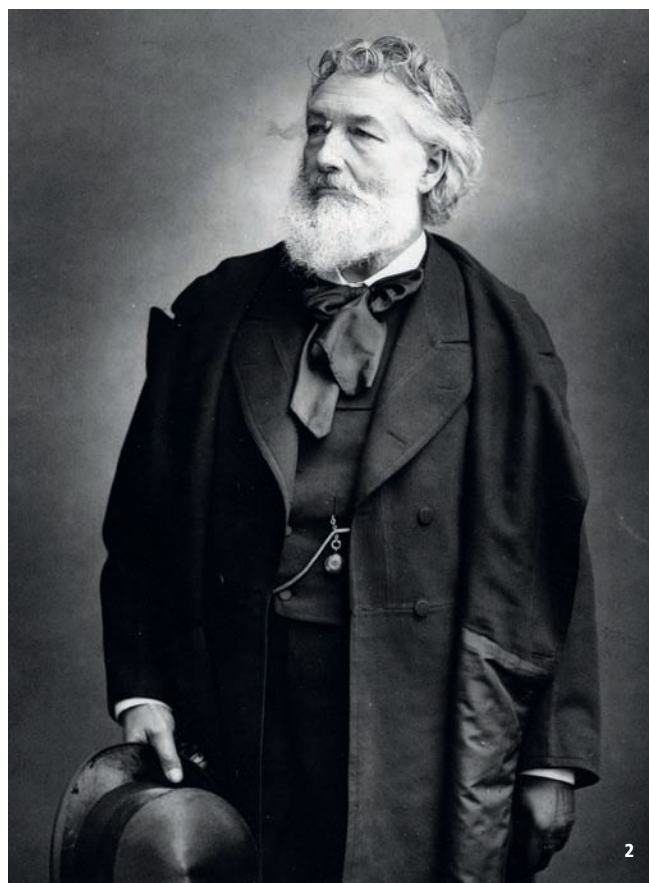






# Victorian classics

As the iconic painting *Flaming June* returns to Leighton House Museum in London, **Dominic Green** looks at the influence of the Classical World on the inscrutable artist Frederic, Lord Leighton



**B**eneath an awning on a marble balcony, a young woman sleeps coiled into the folds of an orange dress and her long brown hair. Below the balcony, the reflection of the noon-day sun on the Mediterranean Sea is like molten silver. A branch of flowering oleander, fragrant, fleshy and poisonous, climbs over the balcony – beauty and danger, sleep and death. *Flaming June* is Frederic, Lord Leighton's most popular painting, and one of his last. Leighton

**1. *Flaming June*, 1895, by Frederic, Lord Leighton. © Museo de Arte de Ponce. The Luis A Ferré Foundation Inc.**

**2. Lord Leighton, an artist and a gentleman, looking flamboyantly respectable in a photograph by Bedford Lemere, taken on 1 April 1895. © Historic England Archive. Image: Courtesy of Leighton House Museum.**

submitted it to the Royal Academy of Art's exhibition in 1895, but he was too ill from angina to attend the opening. He died in January 1896 from heart failure, an unfinished study of a Bacchante, drawn in chalk on a 'piece of coarse brown wrapping-paper', by his bed.

This month, *Flaming June* returns to the artist's London house and studio, now Leighton House Museum, to be reunited with four other paintings that together comprise Leighton's final artistic statement. *Twixt Hope and Fear*, *The Maid with Golden Hair* and *Candida* are loaned from private collections; *Lachrymae* is from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; while *Flaming June* has come all the way from the Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico.

'I am delighted that, over 125 years on, we can reunite these five paintings created by Leighton in the home and studio he cherished,' says Daniel Robbins, Senior Curator at Leighton House Museum. 'This exhibition will give visitors the chance to look more closely into this final body of work with *Flaming June* as its centrepiece, and to consider afresh Leighton's achievements as an artist.'

This exhibition will also offer visitors the rare chance to examine the last iterations of Leighton's Classicism. All five oils are studies of single female figures. All, as the title of *Twixt Hope and Fear* makes explicit, are ambivalent in mood. Apart from *The Maid with Golden Hair*, all are Classical in ambience. But the Classicism, like the emotional mood, is allusive



and imprecise. Frederic Leighton (1830-96), Laurence Alma-Tadema (1936-1812) and George Frederic Watts (1817-1904) formed the great triumvirate of late Victorian art in its most respectable mood: sensual without being smutty, and painterly without being decadent. But where Watts was diffident and spiritual and Alma-Tadema was Dutch and commercial, Leighton was official and responsible. He was President of the Royal Academy of Arts from 1878 to 1896. He was Colonel-in-Chief of the Artists' Rifles. He was a useful bachelor at society dinners. And he was quite unknowable.

Just who is *Minerva's* cover girl, the woman in *Twixt Hope and Fear*, and why is she twixt them? Leighton scholar Elizabeth Prettejohn notes that the sitter's pose resembles that of the Georgian actresses in Reynolds' *Mrs Abingdon as Miss Prue* and his *Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse*. Her upright, swivelled posture and her unblinking eye-contact also echo Leighton's *La Nanna* (1859), which depicted Nanna Risi, the famous artists' model from Rome that he met while studying there in the 1850s. Prettejohn sees the woman in *Twixt Hope and Fear* as plausibly 'a Roman patrician or empress, a Lucretia, Faustina, or Agrippina' – a Roman antecedent to one of Sargent's English aristocrats.

*Twixt Hope and Fear* might well embody a familiar Victorian allegory, but is it an allegory of public life and well-bred virtue, in which the English are the heirs to Marcus Aurelius? Or do the play of this androgynous woman's fingertips on the chair, and her sensual surfaces of flesh, wool and fabric direct the viewer's attention towards another, more private story?

In *The Private Life*, his short story of 1892, Henry James made Leighton the Lord Mellifont. Mellifont is 'first – extraordinarily first – essentially at the top of the list and the head of the table'. He is 'the patron, the moderator', and 'almost as much a man of the world as the head waiter – a font of mellifluous charm'.

Henry James contrasts Mellifont with another character in his story, the poet Clare Vawdrey, who, like Robert Browning, is 'all private', a man of 'sound but second-rate opinions that bear no detectable relationship to the artistry of his verse'. Browning, James knew, used ordinariness to dull the loss of his extraordinary wife



**3. *Twixt Hope and Fear*, 1895, oil on canvas, 110.5cm x 84cm. © Private Collection. Image courtesy of Sotheby's.**

**4. A preparatory oil sketch for *Flaming June*, 1894-95, oil on canvas, 11.5cm x 11cm. © Private Collection. Image courtesy of Gallery 19C.**

**5. Study for *Flaming June*, 1894, black and white chalk on brown paper, 36.7cm x 28.1cm. © The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Image courtesy of Leighton House Museum.**

Elizabeth. What, James asks, is behind Lord Mellifont's public life?

In the 1870s, Leighton was a crucial player in the development of Aestheticism. That movement expired in disgrace with the trial of Oscar Wilde in April 1895, while Leighton was working on his last paintings. Does *Twixt Hope and Fear* owe more to art than life? The powerful body reminds us of one of Michelangelo's prophets or sibyls on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, or one of the Fates sculpted on the Parthenon marbles at the British Museum, where Leighton was, naturally, a trustee.

The Elgin Marbles had reshaped British Classicism in Leighton's youth, but he kept up to date with archaeological discoveries, too, and

Prettejohn detects the influence of 'an altogether new range of reference'. After 1875, a German team under Ernst Curtius excavated late archaic pedimental sculptures at ancient Olympia. In 1877, they unearthed a superb Hermes and the Infant Dionysus which, on the basis of a passing reference by Pausanias, was attributed to Praxiteles.

Prettejohn detects a resemblance between the 'big-boned, fleshy faces' on the Olympia pediment and the woman's face in *Twixt Hope and Fear*. Crucially, she links the horizontally extended arm of the Apollo on the west pediment to the sitter's arm, which hangs vertically over the back of her chair. This arm is the heart of the painting. It bisects the canvas, and is in higher light



than her face. It obtrudes from the front of the image, as massive as marble. Leighton himself called this 'abstract form'. As in the massive, lengthened thigh that dominates the body of *Flaming June*, the grand style of ancient sculpture is incorporated into the modern portrait.

One of Leighton's first acts when he became President of the Royal Academy was to order a cast of the Olympia Hermes for Burlington House. Back to the public world: when Leighton made art for art's sake, it was tutelary. He intended his final group work, *Phoenicians Bartering with Ancient Britons*, to be a gift to the modern merchants of the City of London.

The public rooms of Leighton House are a lavish and grand stage, from the dazzling languor of the Arab Hall on the ground floor to the vast studio on the third floor. Everything being punctual, proper and theatrical, Leighton's models entered by a kind of stage door at the back of the house, and ascended to the studio via the back stairs with the servants. This preserved his dignity and their modesty, as well as indicating the class distinction between the artist and his sitters.

Backstage, Leighton's bedroom and dressing-room are small and spare. The society figure who, like Henry James' Mellifont, 'had never been a guest in his life', built a house with no guest rooms, and no one else ever slept in Leighton's bedroom. In 1900, it became a museum.

Leighton acknowledged the pleasure that he took in the company of young men. Yet, after his death, his lifelong friend, the Roman painter Giovanni da Costa, referred in a letter to Leighton's 'wife'. Perhaps this was Dorothy Dene, his preferred model during his last years, and the recipient of the biggest personal bequest in his will. It has also been rumoured that Leighton fathered an illegitimate child. We cannot know. Leighton's motto was 'Fear Shame'. Nothing if not professional, he seems to have been as good as his word.

Leighton made four nude studies for *Flaming June*, before draping his subject's body in fabric that somehow manages to be both transparent and opaque at the same time. He was, he said, a 'fanatic' for colour, and claimed to prefer it to the specific candour of the line. The richness of his colours, like the lush interior of Leighton House,



is a kind of protective veil over the life within.

Henry James hinted that there might be nothing at all behind the façade. Similarly, the man from the *New York Times* thought he had seen through Leighton at the Royal Academy show of 1895. He wrote: 'In each one there is the single figure of a girl – the Leighton girl – bare-armed and robed in flowing draperies. She mourns, she sleeps, she muses, she smiles, now with a marble urn at her side, now in a garden, now with the distant sea behind her, always smooth and sleek, and delicately tinted, and always ready to be photogravure and processed for the customers of the print seller.'

Is this Leighton as secret cynic, a genteel pornographer making big money from the trappings of high culture? Is the 'Leighton girl' a commercial ploy, like the Pears Soap girl by John Everett Millais, who succeeded Leighton as President of the Royal Academy? We might say the same of the Roman interludes of



Alma-Tadema, and with more justification. Leighton is more than a technician and an entertainer. Reproduced in a photogravure or on the screen, the sea in the background of *Flaming June* looks flat and burnished. In the flesh, the sea is churned with *impasto*, which would traditionally be in the foreground. The slope of the sleeping woman's body directs the eye towards annihilating infinity.

The late Leighton does not loosen his brushwork, as in the 'late style' of Titian or Turner. Instead, the lateness is an autumnal mood. In the Royal Academy's 1895 show, the Classical challenger to Leighton's lone women was Alma-Tadema's *Spring*, a Roman festival crammed with figures and action. Meanwhile, the ailing Leighton turns away from the crowd. As Cicero said, to philosophise is to learn how to die. He returns to earlier experiences and images, and sees the tragedy of lost time.

As Aeneas weeps: '*Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentum mortalia tangent*' (*There are tears in things, and thoughts of mortality touch the mind*). The title of one of Leighton's final portraits, *Lachrymae*, surely derives from this line from Virgil's *Aeneid*. In composition, Leighton returns to a grieving figure in his earlier work, *Electra at the Tomb of Agamemnon* (1869). That subject was drawn from the beginning of Aeschylus' *Chorephoi* (*The Libation-Bearers*); Leighton, like his friend Robert Browning, shared in the revival of enthusiasm for the work of the archaic Greek playwright Aeschylus.

Just as Leighton refers back to Electra in the figure in *Lachrymae*, so the setting and title also pulls backward from Latin associations to Greek origins. The Doric column and vases are accurate. The rendering of the Latin *lacrimae* as *Lachrymae* uses the common English transliterations of the Greek characters *chi* and *upsilon*. If the public ethos and architecture of Victorian Britain remained Roman, its aesthetics became increasingly and intimately Greek. By hints and prompts, Leighton directs us towards the private spheres of sexuality, sleep and death.

On his last cruise around the Mediterranean in the spring of 1895, Leighton's holiday reading was Walter Pater's essay collection, *Greek Studies*. Pater, Leighton's

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friend and erstwhile neighbour, had tutored Oscar Wilde at Oxford, and caused a scandal by advocating pleasure over morality.

One of the essays in *Greek Studies* was entitled 'The Age of the Athletic

Prizeman', an apt description of Leighton and his time. Another, 'A Study of Dionysus', described myth as 'welding into something like the identity of a human personality the whole range of man's

**6. *Lachrymae*, 1894-95, is a study in melancholy, in which Leighton is perhaps looking back from London to his earlier life in Rome and Athens. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, Scala, Florence.**

**7. A photograph of Frederic Leighton in his studio taken by Bedford Lemere on 1 April 1895. Now fully restored, the studio is at the heart of the Leighton House Museum. © Historic England Archive. Image courtesy of Leighton House Museum.**

**8. In *Study for Head of Lachrymae*, circa 1895, Leighton shows he is a skilled draughtsman who follows the Academic method of careful preparation. © The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Image courtesy of Leighton House Museum.**

*experiences of a given object or a series of objects'.*

Leighton said that the pose in *Flaming June* was 'not a deliberate one, but was suggested by a chance attitude of a weary model who had a peculiarly supple figure'. The result, however, is a mythical welding of elements. The sleeper's pose echoes Michelangelo's *Night and Leda*. She has the face of a Victorian Englishwoman, but she wears a *chiton* and sleeps in an ancient Greek setting. Her upper body is resting, but she is contorted from the waist down; the sleep of reason is producing monsters of desire.

In an early oil sketch, Leighton positioned a small, humped island in the sea. In the final version, the island has gone, but its shape returns in the sleeper's right shoulder. This now pushes above the line of the balcony, as though she is striving towards dissolution in the sun and sea.

As the *British Medical Journal* observed in 1895, the 'physiological and anatomical possibility' of her mighty thigh is open to question'. So, too, the psychology of the image and the complex, private allusions of Leighton's Classicism. ■

• *Flaming June: The Making of an Icon* is on show at Leighton House Museum ([www.leightonhouse.co.uk](http://www.leightonhouse.co.uk)) from 4 November until 2 April 2017.







# Signs and Omens

Although astrology, fortune-telling, the use of amulets and other superstitious practices are frowned upon by Islam, they have been used throughout history for a variety of purposes, as **Theresa Thompson** discovers in a new exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum



The sumptuously illustrated pages of a horoscope with images of planets and the signs of the zodiac on a rich blue and gold decorated background represent the moment of birth of Prince Iskandar ibn 'Umar Shaykh (1384-1415), the grandson of the great Turco-Mongol ruler Timur, or Tamerlane (1336-1405).

This natal chart was drawn up in 1411 in Shiraz (in today's Iran) at the prince's request by his court astrologer Mahmud ibn Yahya ibn al-Hasan al-Kashi. It shows the position of the planets across the heavens at the precise moment when Prince Iskandar was born on 25 April 1384. Horoscopes were

**1. The horoscope of Iskandar: left-hand page from the *Nativity Book of Iskandar Sultan ibn 'Umar Shaykh, 1411, ink, gold and colours on paper, Shiraz, Iran. 26.5cm x 16.7cm. © Wellcome Library, London.***

**2. Part of a coffee set, a lidded bowl, saucer and spoon, richly decorated with astrological signs, symbols and figures, early 19th century, enamelled gold, Iran. Bowl D. 8.2cm; saucer D. 12.7cm; spoon L. 13.2cm. © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.**

usually cast at the time of birth, but Iskandar was 27 when this one was made. Why was that?

The reason, according to Dr Francesca Leoni, Curator of Islamic Art at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, was that it was essentially an act of propaganda. 'He is using his personal horoscope as a tool in the larger exercise of power,' she says. 'Iskandar saw himself as the rightful heir to Tamerlane, in spite of his late grandfather's support for his brothers. He was very ambitious. He manipulated the horoscope.'

Dr Leoni, whose exhibition *Power and Protection: Islamic Art and the Supernatural* is currently

on show at the Ashmolean, goes on to explain, 'At this time Iskandar was consolidating his territorial expansion. By making an official horoscope, which was itself a privilege of rulers, and by manipulating the position of the planets that governed royalty, he is showing that the sky is supporting his political ambitions.'

The text of the horoscope unfolds over 86 folios, from opening invocations, to the astrological chart itself, followed by a discussion and interpretation of the position of the planets in the 12 signs. For Iskandar, it predicted a long and healthy life, victories in war, challenges and threats to his authority, plus similar





illuminated manuscript art, *Le Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*.

This rare manuscript (one of two of its kind on show) not only indicates the outstanding abilities of the miniaturists working in Iskandar's atelier, but also attests to the prince's highly cultured nature, as Dr Leoni explains: 'Besides political ambitions, the horoscope reflects his intellectual interests, particularly in astronomy and astrology – which were then part of the same science; one served the other in the pre-modern world.'

Within Islamic societies, people of all backgrounds have engaged in esoteric if sometimes controversial practices, such as astrology and the interpretation of omens, which have had varied degrees of acceptability at different times and places. Some practices, however, such as oneiromancy (dream interpretation), bibliomancy (divination using a book), physiognomy (character divination by means of an individual's physical appearance), astrology and geomancy (called *ilm al-raml*, 'the science of the sand' in Arabic), besides talismans and divination by letters, have all been continuously used at both popular and elite levels.

All these pursuits have produced a huge range of objects. In *Power and Protection: Islamic Art and the Supernatural* more than 100 artefacts and works of art are on display. Used as sources of guidance and protection in both the public and private spheres, they range from Iran to India, Morocco to Malaysia, and date from the 12th to the 20th centuries. Most come

generic observations. At first, things all went well, and the stars seemed to be validating Iskandar's royal aspirations. A few months after the horoscope was compiled he conquered Isfahan, further expanding his territorial control over Iran.

Ultimately, however, the forecasts were contradicted when he died in 1415 at the age of 31, executed by his uncle Shahrukh after his rebellion and attempt to recapture Shiraz.

Quite apart from being a significant example of astrology in the Islamic world, Prince Iskandar's *Nativity Book* (*kitab-i viladat*) is also an exquisite work of art. 'The quality of the work is outstanding. It's one of the highest achievements of Timurid book arts,' says Dr Leoni, who compares it to that masterpiece of French Gothic

**3. Judgement Day, a page from the *Fa'Inama (Book of Omens)* circa 1610-30, ink, colours and gold on paper, probably from Golconda, India. 41cm x 28.4cm. Nasser D Khalili Collection, London. © Nour Foundation. Courtesy of the Khalili Family Trust.**

**4. Calligraphic finial in the shape of a dragon, late 17th to early 18th century, brass, from Golconda, India. 18cm x 10.7cm. © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.**





from the Ashmolean's own Islamic Art collection and loans from other leading institutions, but one third of the exhibits are from the private collection of the British-Iranian scholar Nasser D Khalili in London.

Objects are firmly at the centre of investigations of an ongoing research project led by Dr Leoni and supported by the Leverhulme Trust, which has been exploring the supernatural in the Islamic tradition from the Middle Ages onwards. The exhibition is an outcome of that research, and it is the first major show to highlight these themes.

*'It's a human drive we are addressing here,'* says Dr Leoni. *'Belief in the supernatural and the practice of divination have held a place in people's lives across all times and cultures. In Islam, as in all religions, such beliefs and practices have often merged and been integrated into popular religion.'*

The human tendency to seek explanations about why things happen is manifold in all cultures, and is possibly innate. That, and the desire to predict, or perhaps influence, the future expresses itself in a huge variety of ways and objects. The exhibition opens by exploring the so-called permitted or 'licit' practices such as astrology (which continues into Islam from pre-Islamic traditions) and divinatory practices, such as *ilm al-raml*, bibliomancy and dream interpretation.

On display are curious books of omens, mysterious dream-books, magico-medicinal bowls, and a marvellous gold-enamelled coffee set intricately ornamented with astrological signs, confirming the relevance of divinatory sciences and occult practices in Islamic courts.

The science of dream interpretation evolved into a sophisticated practice in the medieval Islamic world. An important but unassuming object, the *Dream Book of Tipu Sultan*, the ruler of the Indian kingdom of Mysore, exemplifies this. The existence of this personal diary was unknown until the royal palace was sacked by the British after a siege in 1799, in which 'The Tiger of Mysore' was killed. It was discovered in a place so secret that not even the vizier, the Sultan's closest adviser, knew that he was keeping it.

In this small journal Tipu Sultan records in his own hand the dreams he had for a dozen years from 1786 until just before he died. In some

**5. Set of 12 coins of Emperor Jahangir with signs of the Zodiac, 1618-23, gold, from Agra, India. Diameters 2cm-2.1cm. © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.**



**6. Calligram in the shape of a camel, 1800-1, ink and gold on cream and light blue paper, mounted on board, signed by Mustafa Edirnavi, from Turkey. 8cm x 43.5cm. © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.**



cases he tries to interpret them, always describing them as visions sent from God. Although the 37 dreams have captivating titles (*The gift of the turbans; The white elephant from China...*) the majority reflect Tipu's concerns about

his enemies. In the exhibition the book is open at *Dream XXVIII, The Fresh Dates*, and Tipu Sultan writes: *'At the capital, on the night of Sunday, the following morning being Monday, the 2nd of the month Zakiri, of the year Saz,*



1225... I had a dream. It seemed to me as if three silver trays of fresh dates known as rath were brought and placed before me... fresh and full of juice... they had been reared in the garden...' He wakes and interprets the dream, equating the dates to his three enemies of the time, and the fact that they will be eventually taken down. In a post-script he notes that a few days after the dream one of the three died.

'You can see his devotion behind this: his belief that Allah is there, helping and guiding him,' says Dr Leoni. 'It's another instance of a very personal story. Records like this help us understand how far and widespread these practices were, and how much dreams meant in day-to-day existence.'

Tipu Sultan's book also underlines the strong element of privacy in many practices. Dr Leoni considers the exhibition an opportunity for visitors to look at aspects of Islam that may not be known. The *haji*, for instance, is a very public, whereas this is private.

'Fortune-telling is forbidden under Islam,' Dr Leoni points out. 'People don't always talk about doing these things: one, because they know they may be blamed, knowing that these practices in some people's eyes should not happen; and two, because they are very personal.'

'Everything that is associated with divination is extremely contentious; it happened in the past and is all over. However, as much as it was contentious, it was also practised. These objects reveal a much more nuanced picture. The assumption is that it is problematic but these things have always been problematic in religions is general, not just in Islam.'

Bibliomancy uses either a religious text, such as the Qur'an, or a secular one, an important work of literature by revered poets such as Jalal al-Din Rumi or Hafez. Dr Leoni says that for centuries their poetic collections have been the sources of advice to the point that, today, you can still find editions of Hafez with the augury deduced from the poems written beside them.

*Books of Omens (Falmama)* are specific to bibliomancy, emerging as a genre at the beginning of the 16th century. Divination was performed by the individual seeking guidance first by randomly opening the book



7. Amulet, late 17th to early 18th century, cornelian inscribed and jade inlaid with gold and inset with emeralds and rubies, From India, 3.2cm x 4.1cm. © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

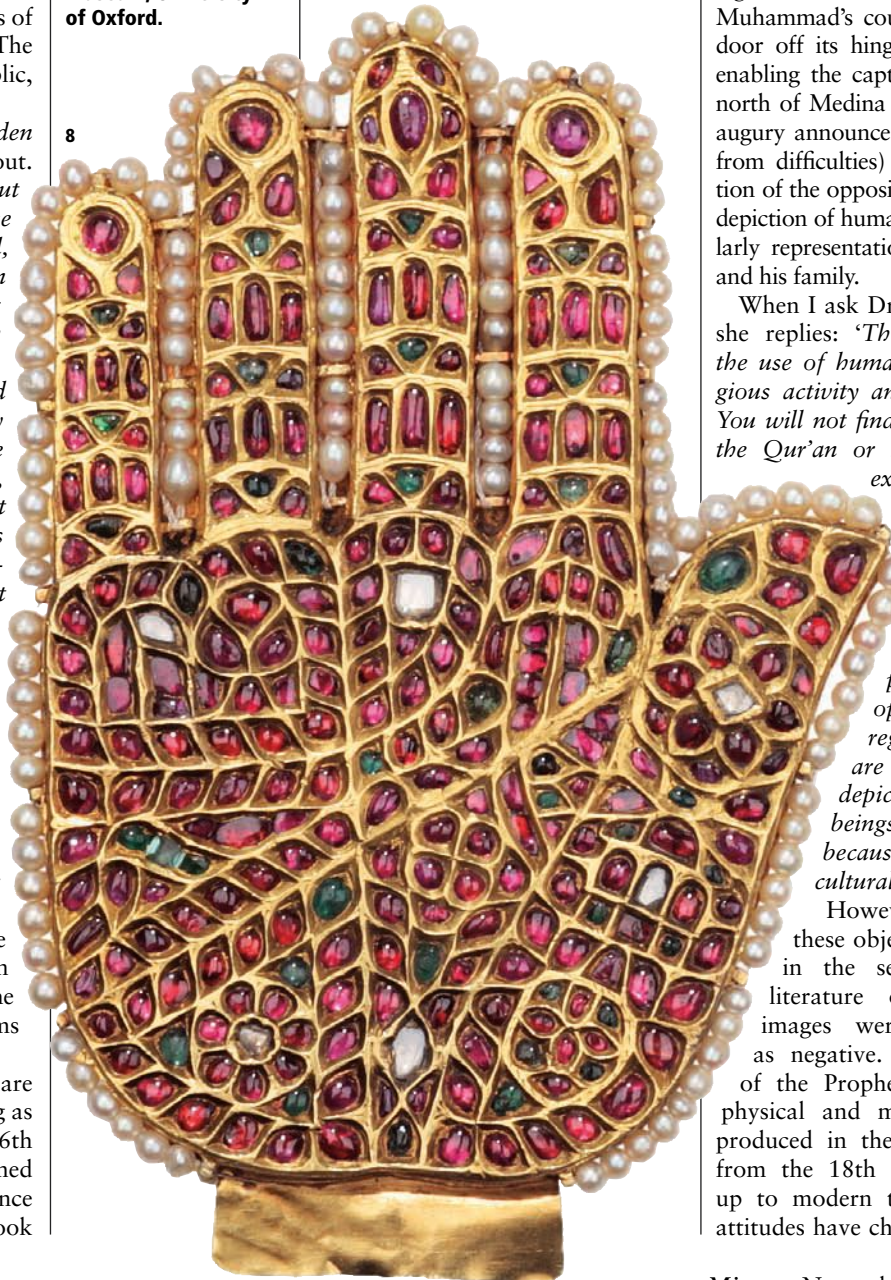
and contemplating the vivid image on the right-hand page, then reading the prognostications in the text opposite. Folios from two *Falmama* are displayed in the exhibition: an enormous mid-16th-century manuscript made for Shah Tahmasp I

(1514-76), son of the founder of the Safavid dynasty; and one from Golconda, India (circa 1610-30), which has a vivid illustration of Judgement Day.

An image in Shah Tahmasp's book showing *Ali's exploits during the attack on Khaybar*, where Muhammad's cousin lifts a massive door off its hinges single-handedly, enabling the capture of the fortress north of Medina (the corresponding augury announces success and relief from difficulties) leads to the question of the opposition in Islam to the depiction of human imagery, particularly representations of the Prophet and his family.

When I ask Dr Leoni about this, she replies: 'This holds true for the use of human images for religious activity and in architecture. You will not find human images in the Qur'an or in a mosque, for example. In other words, the primary prohibition is against idolatry. 'Of course, you have different traditions of pictorial art developing in different regions – and some are more open to the depiction of human beings than others because of different cultural circumstances.'

However, as some of these objects on view show, in the secular sphere, in literature or in the arts, images were not perceived as negative. Written portraits of the Prophet – extolling his physical and moral attributes – produced in the Ottoman world, from the 18th or 19th centuries up to modern times, reveal how attitudes have changed: how image



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became word – how the Prophet went from being represented, to being represented veiled, then to being represented through words.

The exhibition further examines the power of the written word, principally the non-liturgical uses of the Qur'an, through ceremonial objects, military equipment and medical tools that reveal how the Holy Book of Islam was used as a source of protection and cure. Verses from the Qur'an adorn items from amulets to calligrams, talismanic shirts to swords.

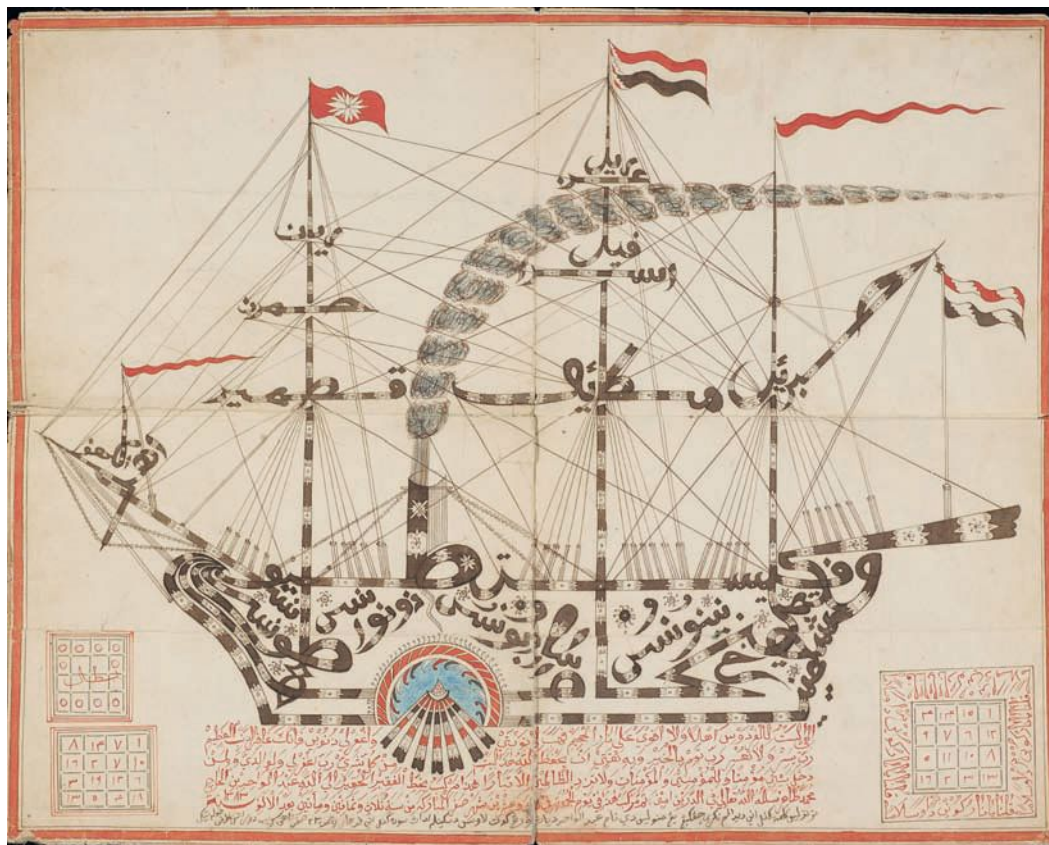
One striking amulet, set with semi-precious stones and worn as a bracelet (Mughal India, 17th-18th century), is inscribed in tiny cursive script with six lines from one of the most cited verses from the Qur'an, *The Throne Verse*, beginning: 'God there is no god but He, the Living, the Everlasting. Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep...'

In the final gallery the focus is on personal amulets and talismans. From contemporary plastic amulets that can be bought today at the Shrine of Eyüp, Istanbul's most sacred site, to a stunning 18th-19th-century amulet from Hyderabad, India, fashioned from gold, rubies, emeralds, diamonds and pearls in the shape of the *Hand of Fatima*, they embody the belief that they can harness and channel protective and healing powers.

The human hand is one of the most iconic and universal symbols of protection, and the *Hand of Fatima* is a common Islamic motif, especially among the Shi'a. It is considered to be a powerful defensive amulet against the evil eye, a belief that is recognised in the Qur'an. The one on show is among the few to have survived. It is an exceptional piece, made of two parts and probably used as a finial, or *alam*, on a ceremonial standard or banner.

The objects in this show are fascinating, and many are beautiful, showing an exemplary level of craftsmanship. Several are on view for the first time. Seen as a whole, the exhibition offers a unique contemporary lens through which the cultural and metaphysical context of Islam can be better appreciated.

Dr Leoni said that she hopes this exhibition will be 'an opportunity for people to reflect on the complexity of Islamic practice, its nuances, the richness of its art, in the past and the present. As well as the extent to which we share'. ■



**8. Finial in the shape of the 'Hand of Fatima', late 18th to early 19th century, gold on a lac core with rubies, emeralds, diamonds and pearls, probably from Hyderabad, India. H. 11.8cm. Nasser D Khalili Collection, London. © Nour Foundation. Courtesy of the Khalili Family Trust.**

**9. Djimah (talisman) in the form of a ship with the names of the Four Archangels (Jibra'il, 'Izra'il, Israfil and Mika'il) on the masts, coloured ink on paper/cloth signed 'Abdul Wahid Muhammad Tahir from West Sumatra, Indonesia, 6 July 1866. 34cm x 42.6cm. © Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.**

**10. Celestial globe, brass, inlaid with silver, signed by Ja'far ibn 'Umar ibn Dawlatshah al-Kirman, Iran, 1362-63. D. 16.5cm. © Museum of the History of Science, University of Oxford.**

• *Power and Protection: Islamic Art and the Supernatural* is on show at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford ([www.ashmolean.org/exhibitions/](http://www.ashmolean.org/exhibitions/)) until 15 January 2017. A fully illustrated catalogue, edited by Dr Francesca Leoni, is available at £20.

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In February 1847 the lighter *Cormoran* arrived in the port of Le Havre from Basra in Iraq, carrying in its hold two monolithic man-headed bulls, or *lamassu*, each in six pieces. They were among a large number of archaeological finds excavated by the French consul in Mosul, Paul Emile Botta, in 1834 at the site of what he believed to be the city of Nineveh. In fact, he had discovered Dur Sharrukin, or Khorsabad, site of the sumptuous palace of Sargon II, dating from 713 BC. The four-metre high guardian figures, which had once stood at the gates of the palace, were the highlights of what became the first 'Assyrian Museum' in the west, housed in the Louvre.

In early March 2015 news began to emerge from Iraq that Khorsabad had been attacked by the terrorist group known as Islamic State (IS), and archaeological remains there had been looted and destroyed. It followed attacks in the preceding days on remains at the ancient Assyrian capital of Nimrud, 20 miles south of Mosul. In chilling video footage posted on social media, the Northwest Palace dating from the 9th-century BC appears to explode in a cloud of dust and a shower of masonry. In another

# Divine

**Polly Chiapetta** previews an exciting new exhibition at Louvre Lens that paints a very different picture of Mesopotamia from the debauched and evil civilisation that is depicted in the Bible

**1. The Death of Sardanapalus, 1844, (copy after a painting by Eugène Delacroix in Musée du Louvre, Paris) by Frédéric Villot (1809-75), oil on canvas. 73cm x 92cm. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/ Jean-Gilles Berizzi.**

**2. Human-headed bull (prototype lamassu), chlorite, circa 2150-2000 BC, Neo-Sumerian epoch, found in Sumer, Mesopotamia. 12.1cm x 14.9cm x 8cm. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/ Hervé Lewandowski.**

scene men armed with drills and sledgehammers seem to be attacking panels carved with reliefs of foliage and figures.

Worse was to come: the murder in September last year of 81-year-old Khaled al-Asaad, the archaeologist who had spent his life excavating and curating Palmyra in Syria, took the violence with which the extremist group was determined to obliterate the pre-Islamic past to a new and horrifying level. While the true scale of the damage to Iraq's cultural heritage, not to speak of the human cost, wrought by IS is still unclear, the reported events have thrown into the spotlight an area whose history, legends and culture have for millennia been widely

misrepresented and misunderstood.

The new exhibition, *L'Histoire Commence en Mésopotamie (History begins in Mesopotamia)* at the Louvre's outpost in Lens, northern France, and drawn largely from the museum's own collections, explores the astonishing cultural and scientific legacy of the land between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. It also examines the impact it continues to have on modern culture, from Verdi to Boney M and from Degas to *The Exorcist*. That the origins of this rich source of influence are under threat adds a sense of urgency to the attempts by, among others, archaeologists and museum professionals, to record these sites and to make the





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# decadence?

world aware of the threat they face.

Central to the exhibition is a roll-call of innovations that happened in Mesopotamia: the first empire, the first dynasties, the first cities, the first writing are all explored. So why, the organisers ask, does such a sophisticated civilisation, with a legacy that extends over millennia, figure so little in the popular imagination?

The answer supplied by this show is that it does, but often we don't realise it. The lack of accessible major archaeological sites and spectacular remains (there are no pyramids or sphinxes) has meant that we have had to rely on archaeological exploration – which became a scientific pursuit only during the 19th century – for our appreciation of the achievements of successive dynasties of the ancient Near East.

The sources for modern understanding until then had been secondary, with descriptions of varying

**3. and 4. Cylinder seal and its imprint on a clay panel showing devotion to a divinity, Neirab (formerly Nera), Neo-Babylonian epoch, circa 1000-539 BC, carnelian and gold. 2.8cm x 1.2cm. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/ Raphaël Chipault and Benjamin Soligny.**



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accuracy passed on through Greek writers, such as Diodorus Siculus. But these are as nothing compared to the influence on Western perception which came from the Bible, and in which Mesopotamian civilisation is portrayed in

unambiguously negative terms. *Revelation 17:5* speaks of Babylon as 'the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth'. This city's reputation was notorious and its depictions in Western art and literature emphasise its extreme corruption and decadence laced with more than a whiff of exotic allure.

Typical of these stereotyped



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images of cruelty and dissipation is Delacroix's *Death of Sardanapalus* (1) which shows the implacable monarch, besieged in his palace by his enemies, preparing to self-immolate, taking with him in his melodramatic exit all his worldly goods: concubines and horses are not spared. Then there is Rembrandt's

**5. Bronze figurine of the demon Pazuzu, Neo-Assyrian epoch, circa 934-610 BC, found in Assyria (?) Mesopotamia. 15cm x 8.60cm x 5.60cm. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/Thierry Ollivier.**

*Belshazzar's Feast*, 1636-38), which shows the moment when the divine writing, foretelling the end of the empire founded by Nebuchadnezzar, magically appears on the wall. As for Belshazzar, he will be weighed in the balance and found

wanting. Mythical Babylon, the embodiment of luxury, sloth and degeneracy, was a symbol of otherness all the more potent for being seen through the distorted prism of wilful misunderstanding.

This dramatised version of Near Eastern culture, however, contrasts with the restrained aesthetic of the objects on show in Lens. One of the most striking works in the exhibition is the votive mace-head of Gudea (6), ruler of Lagash, whose large eyes gaze out with serene wisdom and majesty from beneath a cap covered with tight curls, possibly of fur. Of the many carvings of Gudea, who saw to it that his image adorned temples throughout Lagash in southern Mesopotamia, this one is distinctive in the calm authority it conveys. As one whose power was believed to have come from divine as well as human lineage, it was the ruler's duty to embody strength, wisdom and piety.

Like much about Gudea's life, the precise dates of his period as *ensi*, or governor, are unknown, but he was believed to have ruled between 2144 and 2124 BC, tasked with looking after his people and serving them in every way, from ensuring their prosperity by filling the granaries with grain and the rivers with fish, to ending oppression and administering justice. Chief among his duties was the construction and decoration of temples; Gudea is known to have built or restored numerous places of worship in the city of Girsu alone. The god in whose

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name Gudea held power was Ningirsu, and in one particularly impressive diorite statue of *circa* 2120 BC the king holds in his lap the plan of a temple dedicated to Ningirsu. Gudea and his family demonstrated their devotion to the gods by placing votive offerings, such as the manheaded bull statuette (2), in the temple.

The prosperity of the region between and surrounding the Tigris and Euphrates rivers was based chiefly on agriculture – barley, date palm, fruit trees and pulses flourished in the rich alluvial plain to the north; irrigation made possible cultivation in the drier south. The development of towns and cities from the 4th millennium BC saw a rise in trade as craftsmen sold manufactured goods such as textiles and baskets, jewellery (such

**6. Votive mace-head of Gudea, prince of Lagash, Neo-Sumerian epoch, reign of Gudea (*circa* 2120 BC), limestone, from Tello (formerly Girsu). 25.2cm x 25cm. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/ Franck Raux.**

**7. The so-called 'Vase of Enmetena', silver and copper alloy, Sumerian epoch, reign of Enmetena (*circa* 2420 BC), from the 'House of Fruits' (Tell K), Tello (formerly Girsu). 35cm x 18cm. © RMN-Grand Palais/ Raphaël Chipault et Benjamin Soligny.**



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**8. Female statuette called the 'Lady with a Scarf', chlorite, Neo-Sumerian epoch, *circa* 2150-2000 BC, found at Tello (formerly Girsu). 17.8cm x 11.8cm. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre, dist.)/Thierry Ollivier.**

**9. Votive relief of Ur-Nanshe, King of Lagash, surrounded by his family and dignitaries, limestone, Sumerian epoch, reign of Ur-Nanshe (*circa* 2520 BC), from the 'House of Fruits' (Tell K) at Tello (formerly Girsu). 39cm x 46.5cm x 6.5cm. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/Philippe Fuzeau.**



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as the bead necklaces on show in this exhibition), pottery, metalwork and glass. With very little in the way of mineral wealth (most buildings were made chiefly of mud and straw bricks, stone being scarce) commerce was crucial – many of the objects of metal in the exhibition, such as the silver-alloy ‘Vase of Enmetena’ (7) *circa* 2420 BC, found

**10. Ebih-II praying, Sumerian or Akkad epoch, *circa* 2400 BC, alabaster, lapis lazuli, shell and bitumen, from Temple of Ishtar, Tell Hariri (Mari). 53cm x 21cm x 37cm. © RMN-Grand Palais/Raphaël Chipault.**

at Girsu, would have been made of materials brought by river or canal, or overland by carts. (Enmetena was an early Mesopotamian king.)

Religion permeated every aspect of life in Mesopotamia. The ancient Near Eastern world teemed with gods, goddesses, spirits and demons, whose realm often overlapped with that of humans in the legends that

record their exploits. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the most famous tale of the vast body of Mesopotamian literature, tells the story of the god-king Gilgamesh, endowed with superhuman strength but cursed with very human failings. Together with his bosom friend Enkidu (their story is possibly the first bromance), he battles the guardian monster of the cedar forest, Humbaba, and later encounters beings with the heads and bodies of men and the tails of scorpions. Other supernaturals that troubled the lives of men included Pazuzu (5), the king of the demons and the personification of evil, now familiar through *The Exorcist* films. In the Louvre Lens exhibition a bronze statuette, dated *circa* 934-610 BC, portrays him as a winged creature with a monstrous head and gaping jaws, and a body that is part human and part animal. But, despite his demonic aspect, Pazuzu also had an angelic side, since he was believed to protect women in childbirth against the baby-devouring female demon Lamashu.

Every aspect of human activity or experience had a god or goddess to oversee it – health, fertility, birth, feasting, rain and thunder were all presided over by deities who required devotion and appeasement in order to ensure that humans would flourish in their spheres of influence. They were often worshipped under different names in different areas and by different ethnic groups: Shamash, the Babylonian and Assyrian god of the sun, was known to the Sumerians as Utu; the moon god known to the Akkadians, Assyrians and Babylonians as Sin was worshipped as Nanna in Ur. Some divinities multi-tasked: the Sumerians’ Inanna – known to the Akkadians as Ishtar – was the goddess of both love and armed conflict, and the similarly warlike god Ninurta also held the more peaceful brief of presiding over wells and irrigation.

Sacred buildings proliferated in ancient Mesopotamia, and their construction was the responsibility of the ruler, who demonstrated his piety by the number and splendour of shrines and temples he founded. These significant institutions in urban centres, with their priests, acolytes, choirs, orchestras and maintenance staff, not only included rooms for rituals and meetings but also, like western monasteries, refectories, kitchens, dormitories, gardens, fields and farms. They were home not only



to priests but also to vulnerable members of society – orphans, the sick and disabled. The remarkably well preserved figure of Ebih-il (10) superintendent of Mari (in today's Syria), is one of a number of votive figures that would have been left in a temple to offer eternal prayer, his hands folded in front of him in a gesture of piety. Another striking example is the figure known as the 'Lady with a Scarf' (8) who probably represents a princess in Gudea's family.

Evidence of religious ritual can be seen on a limestone stele showing a ceremony with music (12), although the details are lost to us today. Equally intriguing are the objects, known as foundation pegs, inscribed clay figurines or metal peg-shaped cones (14) which were placed in the foundations of shrines or temples, together with a collection of small objects as a

**11. Royal head (the 'Head of Hammurabi') Amorite epoch, circa 1840 BC, gabbro, from Sush (Susa), brought from Mesopotamia as spoils by Shutruk-Nahhunte in the 12th century BC. 15.20cm x 9.70cm x 11cm. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre, dist.)/Raphaël Chipault.**

**12. Stele showing a religious ceremony with music, limestone, Neo-Sumerian epoch, second kingdom of Lagash, circa 2140-2100 BC, from Tello (Girsu). 120.5cm x 63.5cm x 25cm. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/ Mathieu Rabeau.**



12



11

**13. Proto-cuneiform administrative tablet, terracotta, Proto-urban epoch, circa 4000-2900 BC, found at Warka (Uruk). 4.5cm x 7.2cm x 1.5cm. © RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/Franck Raux.**



13



symbolic record of the ruler's piety and the role he played in the building's creation. The very deliberate nature of these gestures makes their meaning all the more mysterious.

Of all the figures that stand out in the vast sprawl of three millennia of Mesopotamian history, Hammurabi is among the best known, and a section of the exhibition celebrates his contribution not only as a lawgiver but also as a unifier of the kingdom of Babylon. Although the Louvre's famous 2.25-metre high stone stele of the Code of Hammurabi is not on show in Lens, the lawgiver himself is represented by a bust of an elderly man often thought to be an image of him (11). Almost as remarkable as the 300 laws he laid down – relating to areas as diverse as property, contract, land tenure, concubinage, assault, debts and the property rights of priestesses – is the volume of correspondence that exists in the form of clay tablets with cuneiform writing that attest to his diligence as an administrator and a diplomat and his prowess as a warrior.

With the rise of the city-states in the region came a greater need for administrative bureaucracy for their



governance. The earliest known writing, dating from about 3300 BC, was produced in Uruk. One inscribed clay tablet on view in Lens (13) is among a number of proto-cuneiform records dealing with earnings and expenses, contracts, stock accounts and measurements of land, which were destined for preservation in archives: paperwork

**14. Foundation deposit of Ur-Bau of Lagash, Neo-Sumerian epoch, reign of Ur-Bau (circa 2150 BC). The copper alloy metal figure/peg (H. 29cm) and limestone cuneiform tablet were found in a clay jar under the corner of the temple of Ningirsu in Tello (Girsu).**  
© RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre)/ Raphaël Chipault et Benjamin Soligny.

**15. Votive plaque, in the shape of a beard, dedicated to the god Sara, gold, Sumerian epoch, circa 2900-2350 BC, found in Tell Djokha (Umma). 8.5cm x 6.7cm x 2cm.**  
© RMN-Grand Palais/ Christian Larrieu.

**All the objects are on loan from Musée du Louvre, Paris.**

in clay. In contrast, texts relating to royalty – often documents to be buried under buildings to record who had them built and for which god – were in more permanent materials, including stone and precious metals. The gold plaque in the form of a votive beard (15), once possibly attached to a statue, is dedicated by the queen of Umma in Sumer to the god Sara. As the early pictographs gave way to cuneiform, the script of wedge-shaped marks most closely associated with the region, more languages could be recorded using adaptation of the single writing system.

While it is true that the objects currently on display in Lens are testaments of the achievements of a long-vanished civilisation in a remote region now locked in conflict, this exhibition shows us that their impact on the West is far more immediate and their resonance far deeper than we might realise. The survival of these pieces of sculpture, tablets and objects for 5000 years has enabled the advancement in our understanding of them, made in the past 150 years, and much more remains to be discovered.

Religious extremists may hope that by obliterating the past they can control the future – in fact they only impoverish it. ■

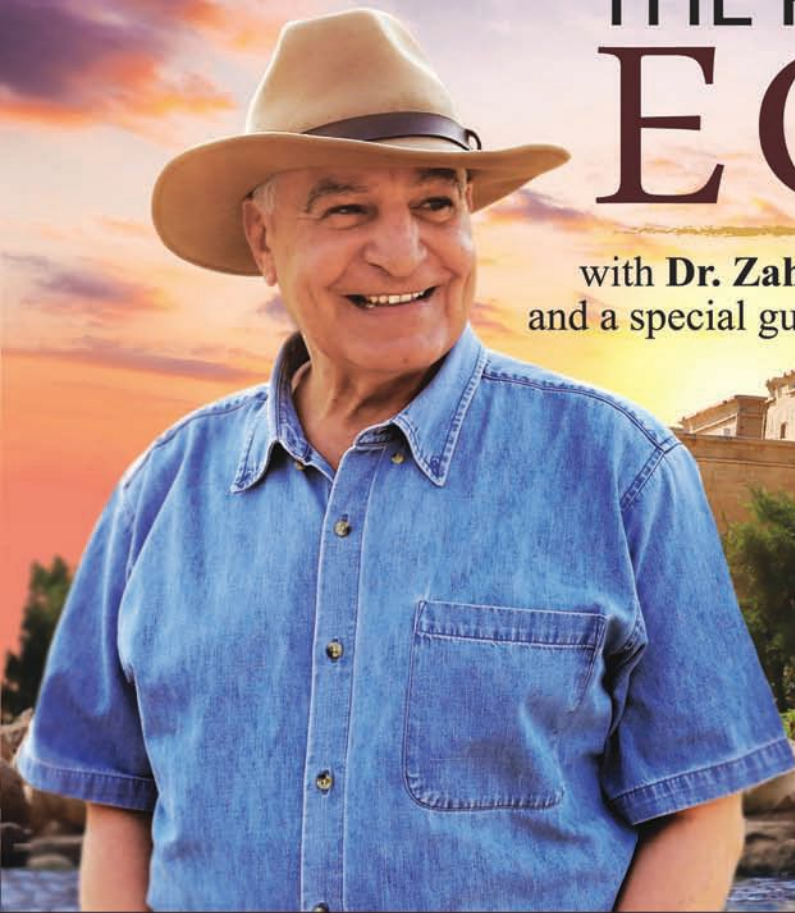
• *History Begins in Mesopotamia (L'histoire Commence en Mésopotamie)* is on show at Louvre Lens ([www.louvreens.fr](http://www.louvreens.fr)) from 2 November 2016 to 23 January 2017. The catalogue (in French) is jointly published by the Musée du Louvre Lens and Snoeck Publishers at €39.





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# East meets West

**Dalu Jones** tells the story of Sam and Myrna Myers, an American couple whose extensive collection of exquisite Asian art is being celebrated in an exhibition in Montreal

**M**yrna and I went to Brussels because I had a meeting with the law firm that was handling a case for Gulf & Western. I went to my meeting and Myrna went to the Place du Grand Sablon to see what she could find in the antique shops. I was to meet her after lunch so we could look together. When I saw her, she had a big smile and said, “Happy Birthday, Sam. I found something wonderful under a chair in a brocante just down the

**1. Sam and Myrna Myers at an exhibition in New York in 2003.**

street. Come on.” Racing down from the Place, we went into an old dusty shop where she pointed to a marble sculpture of a lion (3) standing on the floor. Frankly, my face didn’t light up. I started to examine it carefully, with a highly critical eye, trying to understand and judge the piece – never having handled or really looked at that type of marble sculpture before.

‘As one can imagine, Myrna was crestfallen – but she had already agreed to buy the piece and so we

carried it off. Later, in the car, she told me how disappointed she was by my reaction – especially since she bought it for me for my birthday. I tried to explain that I always look critically at any new object that I don’t understand – that she had to give me time to appreciate it – and that I was really sorry to have spoiled her élan.

‘The fact was that this was a case of her having made a real “find”. The lion is a wonderful example of Tang 8th-century sculpture. It



found a permanent home on our dining-room mantel.'

So writes art collector Sam Myers in *Stories for my Children and Grandchildren* in the exhibition catalogue for *The Sam and Myrna Myers Collection*.

The Myers were two Americans who fell in love with Paris in the mid-Sixties and decided to move there. Then, over five decades, they amassed more than 5000 objects, branching off from an initial interest in Classical antiquities into collecting Asian art, porcelain, textiles, costume (2) and jades especially. Myrna Myers passed away four years ago, but her husband has continued to add to their collection.

Now a tribute to their long and loving relationship has taken shape in a major exhibition, *From the Lands of Asia: The Sam and Myrna Myers Collection*, which opens at the Montreal Archaeology and History Complex in Canada on 16 November.

Chosen by Jean-Paul Desroches, former Senior Curator at the Musée Guimet in Paris, some 450 wonderful objects that range from early pieces – Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman artefacts – to magnificent examples of the later arts from China, Japan, Korea, Tibet and Central Asia are all displayed here. The exhibition follows an original itinerary that leads visitors past the milestones of an unconventional journey undertaken by this unorthodox couple (1).

'We had no master plan,' writes Sam Myers in the exhibition catalogue. 'In a gallery or museum, we would look at the profusion of works or art, seeking to find the ones which spoke to us, which stood out from the rest. It was by chance that we turned our attention to new fields. The process was always the same – we would find something we thought was particularly appealing or beautiful or mysterious, choose one or more pieces and start to study, to learn about what we had discovered. We didn't abandon any of our previous interests, but rather simply added to the range of our studies and search. Throughout, we would never purchase any piece unless we both felt the same way and

wanted to live with it at home. It all started with the small Tanagra heads in Ascona...'

These 4th-century BC Greek terracotta figurines were shown to them in the early 1970s, following a chance encounter with an eccentric art dealer, Wladimir Rosenbaum (1894-1984), whom they met at Ascona, the Swiss lakeside resort famous for its gathering of a group of outlandish utopian artists and intellectuals including the analytical psychologist CG Jung. They soon discovered that, despite limited means, they could acquire beautiful and genuine ancient works of art. Another early acquisition, again from Rosenbaum, was a large Pharaonic granite head, probably from the 18th dynasty, which is displayed in a 'Cabinet of Antiquities' that introduces the exhibition.

Although initially attracted to Middle Eastern and Classical antiquities, their evolution in taste eventually led the Myers to focus on Eastern artefacts, exemplified in a 'Cabinet of Curiosities' that juxtaposes objects from different periods and provenances that are all linked by a powerful aesthetic. Visually striking objects illustrate the various avenues explored by the Myers over the years. These diverse artefacts include: a mysterious Ethiopian guardian figure in wood; a 19th-century elephant mask from the Cameroons; a Korean roof-tile in the shape of a fierce, snarling dragon head, dating from the Silla dynasty; exquisite Liao rock crystals (AD 907-1125); a Tang dynasty (AD 618-907) metal plaque showing a rhinoceros with his Indian trainer (9); and some 17th/18th-century Goanese Indo-Portuguese ivories.

But at the heart of the exhibition is a magnificent



**2. A chaopao, or formal silk brocade court coat, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, 18th century, China. 134cm x 218cm. Decorated with five-clawed dragons, this garment would have been made for a high-ranking imperial prince.**

**3. Marble lion, Tang dynasty, 8th century, China. H. 29cm.**





array of archaic jades from China. The Myers amassed one of the richest and most complete private jade collections in the world, ranging in date from the Neolithic period (3500-2000 BC) through the Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) and ending with the Yuan (AD 1279-1368). Their attraction to jades is the result of another chance encounter, which happened in 1974, when Sam Myers was in a small antique shop in Philadelphia. There he saw 'a shoe-box filled with non-descript and unidentified Chinese and

**4. Chinese jade plaque showing a tiger with a dragon's features, late Eastern Zhou, early Han period, 3rd century BC. 14.5cm x 22cm. Formerly in the Vignier Collection, Paris.**

**5. Very early Chinese dragon-shaped jade pendant, Hongshan culture, circa 3500-2000 BC. 20.3cm x 20.1cm.**

*pre-Columbian small jades and various stone pebbles'. Among these, he found a small jade cicada. As Myrna Myers recalled: 'Ignorant of its origin and significance, we nevertheless responded to its intriguing half-pebble, half-worked form, its subtle variations of colour and the smooth feel of the stone. These are the essential qualities which appeal to us in jades, as well as the impression of inner light.'*

This was the first of many jade pieces that the couple would go on to collect. Among the splendid jades

on display (5, 6 and 14) there is a series of *bi*, or disks (7a and 7b) and *cong*, or vertical tubes (8). Their function in early Chinese culture is still cloaked in mystery.

A large plaque representing a tiger with dragon's features (4) was another memorable acquisition, once again spotted by chance at an auction in Paris. This 3rd-century BC plaque originally came to France through the Chinese art dealer Ching-Tsai Loo (1880-1957) during the late 1920s when the collecting of early Chinese jades in the West had just begun.

CT Loo, a legendary figure in the art world, took advantage of excavations made by archaeologists in the new Republic of China, who were bent on discovering material evidence of their country's history. Loo opened a gallery in Paris and decorated it in an Art Deco style, known as 'Pagoda Paris'.

But while he was acknowledged as the unrivalled dealer of Chinese art for the first half of the 20th century, CT Loo was criticised in his native country for his active role in removing his nation's antiquities and archaeological treasures and selling them to Western collectors. He defended himself in the preface of the catalogue for his liquidation sale in 1950, saying: 'No matter which object I exported from my country, they were all bought openly on the market, in competition with







6. Jade dancers, Han dynasty, 3rd-2nd century BC, China. 7.8cm x 5cm.



7a and 7b. Jade *bi* disks. Late Neolithic, early Bronze Age, circa 2200-1900 BC, and Liangzhu culture, circa 3300-3200 BC, China. Various sizes, the diameter of the largest is 43cm.



7a

8. Jade *cong* decorated with masks, Liangzhu culture, circa 3300-3200 BC, China. 8cm x 8cm.

9. Repoussé gilded copper plaque showing a rhinoceros with his Indian trainer, an exotic tribute offered to the Chinese court, Tang dynasty, 618-907 AD, China. D. 27.5cm.



7b

*others... I am happy today that these objets d'art that I exported are securely and carefully preserved for posterity, because I think that if they had remained in China, many of these beautiful objects would have been destroyed.'*

If we consider the destruction of Chinese and other cultural heritage

during the 20th century, CT Loo certainly had a point, which is as true and controversial today as at the time he made it.

In the catalogue, Filippo Salviati, the curator of the jade section of the exhibition, gives details of his painstaking, ongoing research into Neolithic China, a period that

continues to intrigue art historians and archaeologists, as it presents crucial new evidence from current excavations that challenge commonly held theories on early Chinese cultures, their ethnic composition and their geographical distance from what has long been believed to be the cradle of Chinese



8



9



civilisation, the Yellow River basin. He provides a thorough overview of the most important jade-using cultures of late Neolithic China, based along the eastern coastal regions: Hongshan (*circa* 3500-2000 BC) in the north-eastern provinces of Liaoning and Inner Mongolia; Liangzhu (*circa* 3300-2200 BC) in the south; Dawenkou (*circa* 4500-2500 BC) and Longshan (2500-1700 BC) in the Shandong peninsula.

Liaoning is where the oldest evidence of jade-working has been found in China: the Chahai site (*circa* 5000 BC) has yielded small artefacts in nephrite that are, to date, the earliest known jades carved in China and, indeed, in the entire world.

The Hongshan culture is a complicated archaeological riddle still waiting to be decoded. One Hongshan site in Liaoning province is Niuheliang, an area of several square kilometres still only partly excavated and a candidate for the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Here, Chinese archaeologists have uncovered the stone foundations of ritual or ceremonial structures and a partly underground



10

**10. Chinese Guanyin Bodhisattva reclining in a 'royal repose', polychrome wood, Song Dynasty, first half of the 12th century. H. 57cm.**



11



12

**11. and 12. Extremely early humanoid figure, jade, Hongshan culture, *circa* 3500-2000 BC, China. 6.5cm x 2.8cm.**

temple that they named Nushenmiao, or 'Goddess Temple', because of the remains of life-size clay sculptures and small statuettes of pregnant women, so far unique in Neolithic China.

The tombs excavated here contain exclusively jade items, suggesting the high status of the people buried in them, signified by their jade ornaments and the motifs carved on them, such as coiled, monstrous creatures thought by Chinese archaeologists to be amongst the earliest representations of the dragon. Peculiar Hongshan jade statuettes with anthropomorphic features (11 and 12) still await precise identification as to their nature and function.

One of these figurines, in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, was donated to the museum by a former director, Louis CG Clarke (1881-1960), who presented it *'in the belief, by no means unreasonable*



‘The process was always the same. We would find something that we thought appealing or mysterious or beautiful.. and start to study to learn about what we had discovered’

at the time, that it was a Maya work from Central America’ (Chinese Carved Jades, Hansford, 1968, p84). A clear indication of how enigmatic the Hongshan jades are.

The catalogue well describes the Myers, their winnin combination of innocence and their shrewdness, their capacity for anticipating art market trends, trusting their instinct and the role that chance played in their lives. In fact, even they were surprised by their exceptional finds, be it a polychrome Song dynasty Guanyin Bodhisattva

**13. Meiping vase. Blue and white porcelain, Yuan dynasty, 14th century, China. H. 40cm. Meiping are high-shouldered vases with a small neck and a narrow foot.**

**14. Jade pieces, Eastern Zhou period, 5th to 3rd century BC, and Han dynasty period, 3rd-2nd century BC, China.**



13



14

serenely reclining in the position of a ‘royal repose’ (10) or a rare, large 14th-century *meiping* vase (13) overlooked at an auction by less discerning bidders.

All the objects in the exhibition are beautifully illustrated in

the catalogue, and prefaced by essays from distinguished scholars. These provide the information necessary to appreciate the many facets of an exceptional collection put together by the teamwork of a talented couple. ■

• From the Lands of Asia: The Sam and Myrna Myers Collection is on show at the Montreal Archaeology and History Complex in Canada ([www.pacmusee.qc.ca](http://www.pacmusee.qc.ca)) from 16 November until 19 March 2017. The catalogue, *Two Americans in Paris, a Quest for the East*, edited by JP Desroches, is published by Editions LIENART at €50.





# Written in stone

The petroglyphs of Utah range in subject from geometric signs and abstract motifs to hunting scenes and copulating couples, as **Carol Chamberland** discovers

**T**he approach to Parowan Gap is as easy as it gets – I simply drive up, park and emerge from the car on a brisk autumn morning to find petroglyph evidence of ancient peoples everywhere. Zigzags and cross-hatchings, rows of toothy triangles, striped ovals and rectangles, bird tracks, concentric circles, and human hands – all superimposed upon each other in an apparently haphazard fashion. I see menacing human figures with horned head-dresses – and the famed ‘zipper-glyph’ [so-called because it looks like a zip]. After being initially

**1. The Rochester Rock Art Panel dominates a cluster of huge boulders standing high above a confluence of two ancient rivers. An easy hike leads from the parking lot to these sacred stones.**

shocked by the sheer quantity of these images, it is their consistent quality that stands out. A lot of care went into these glyphs; they were deeply and carefully pecked into the rock to last forever.

The Gap itself is the by-product of a slow-motion battle between an uplifting sandstone ridge and a down-cutting river. Eventually the rising ridge and drying climate defeated the river, leaving the wind gap that we see today – geologically spectacular and an inviting passage for humans of any era.

It is culturally outstanding, too. The abundant abstract motifs hark

back to Archaic times, when hunter-gatherers roamed the area between 5500 BC and AD 100. These are the darkest coloured symbols, because they have had the longest time to weather. Archaeologists suspect that the abstract glyphs refer to priestly trance states, or important rites of passage. Modern Native Americans believe the ‘zipper-glyph’ is a map and also a calendar of ancient travels.

Fremont people (named after the nearby Fremont River where evidence of their culture first surfaced) crafted these representational images here between 1000 and 1500





years ago. Primarily hunter-gatherers, they dabbled in agriculture and built small villages. Parowan Gap is the south-western frontier of their domain. The horned humans, bird tracks and human hands are most probably linked to hunting magic.

More recent are the images left by the Southern Paiute in the form of shields, sun symbols and burden baskets. These are the least weathered, and not deeply pecked like the older glyphs. The Paiute tribe has occupied this area since the Fremont people departed around AD 1300. The last people to migrate here were the Mormon settlers in the

**2. A variety of strange, snarling beasts gallop menacingly across the face of the main boulder.**

**3. The 'zipper-glyph' is believed by modern Native Americans to be a map and calendar of ancient travels.**



mid-1800s, but they added nothing to Parowan Gap's rock art.

Occasionally, another car arrives, disgorging visitors who quickly scan the rocky cliffs and leave again, but I linger in admiration, my mind teased by these ancient messages. For a location so easily arrived at, I find it difficult to leave.

On another day, the wind whips fiercely across the San Rafael Swell. Peaks in the distance are white-capped, and it could snow here at any minute, too. No matter, the Rochester Site beckons me out of the car and along a rocky trail to a cluster of huge sandstone blocks balanced high above the confluence of two dry riverbeds. At one time this must have been a lush spot, strategic for hunters, or priests.

Today it is an enigma. A giant boulder looms high over my head, covered in petroglyphs, soil to sky. These are not normal hunting scenes or trance-like abstractions. Galloping across the dark surface are bizarre

snarling beasts that never roamed the earth, and some that surely did: grizzly bears, giant spiders, and big-horned sheep. Goggle-eyed beings peer out of rainbows but normal-looking humans also occupy this panel, without apparent fear. One continuous line connects the ground to the sky, like an ancient lightning rod. Nearby, I find a large boulder conveniently slumped over and suitable for a seated appraisal of this wild menagerie.

But there's more. When I explore the other megalithic boulders, I find some scenes of deer hunts and others showing men and women copulating. All the petroglyphs here have similar patina, implying they were created during roughly the same period. They are probably quite old, but experts disagree on their provenance. Some claim they are of the Fremont culture, others say they belong to the much older Barrier Canyon style. I have seen plenty of Fremont sites and these are



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4

very different. Nor do they resemble the Barrier Canyon style, which tends towards large red paintings of mythic human-like figures, not fantastic creatures like these, nor scenes of erotica. I'm unconvinced by both arguments. Though buffeted by a cold wind, my return hike is light of step. I have communed with some very strange beings today.

East of Green River, a dirt road strikes north from the hamlet of Thompson Springs. Three and a half miles in, I pull up at a small parking lot. The sun shines brightly and a soft breeze sways through the endless sagebrush, perfuming the air. An imposing sandstone cliff rises above me. I've arrived at the Segó Canyon Site.

On my left is the most recent panel, made by Ute tribesmen – with white paintings of shields and hunters, buffalo and horses, they depict details of everyday life in the 19th century. To the upper right is a large panel of trademark Fremont petroglyphs, trapezoidal figures without arms or legs, adorned with elaborate headgear and necklaces. Surrounding them is a loosely circular arrangement

**4. The Segó Canyon Site is remarkable for its rock art panels spanning thousands of years and many different cultures. Painted and pecked images are represented here.**

of big-horned sheep. There are a number of abstract designs and occasional pieces of 19th-century cowboy graffiti. Older than the Ute panel by 1000 years, it has a distinctly spiritual quality about it.

Rounding the corner of the bluff I encounter an impressive array of Barrier Canyon style paintings high on the cliff-face. They are large (1-2 metres), red, and mysterious. Some are very faded, while others retain their pigment. I suspect they were painted over a long period of time. Static goggle-eyed figures without arms or legs, no one could mistake these for images of everyday life. Accompanied by serpents and flying objects, they grab my attention and hold on. Across the dirt road is another panel in this style. These figures rise out of the ground, so I walk over for a closer look. They tower three feet taller than me. They are bullet-shot – perhaps by bored cowboys – and abraded where cattle have rubbed against the wall. Westerners haven't always respected these ancient paintings.

Strangely, archaeologists have found no material culture associated with these pictographs, so

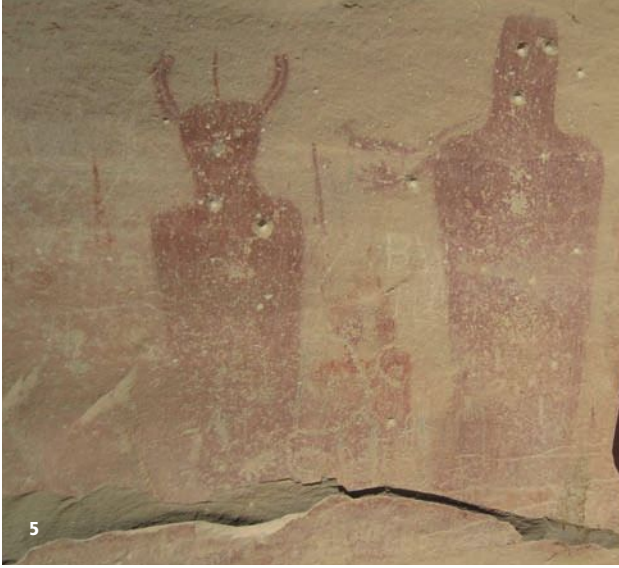
debate rages on their age and meaning. Current theories place their creation between 2000 and 5000 years ago by an unknown, probably nomadic, people.

Around 1000 years ago, much of Utah was Fremont country. Nine Mile Canyon is a great place to visit their domain. The canyon is actually 25 miles long, with a gravel road running the entire length. It is cold and windy on a recent visit, but that doesn't deter me from stopping every half-mile to explore. This is coal-mining country, so I share the road with large, rumbling trucks.

Researchers of the Fremont culture call this Northern San Rafael territory. It could be considered working-class Fremont, for the petroglyphs here are prosaic and crudely executed, compared to the more accomplished rock art of their cousins up north. Hunting scenes and abstract designs predominate, the stuff of survival in a harsh climate.

Fremont people practised limited agriculture, relying heavily upon the collection of wild foods. Nine Mile Canyon's most famous panel, the Great Hunt, is found at the far





end of the road. It shows an autumn scene, depicting sheep migrating down from the high country, the only time of year when rams join the herd. I note the shaman wearing a horned headdress and hunters wielding bows and arrows.

Archaeologists have discovered deer headdresses like this in their Fremont excavations. Closer exploration within the canyon reveals rough dwellings eked out under large boulders and low overhangs. With good eyesight and binoculars, you can spot the inaccessible 1000-year-old food granaries high up in the cliffs, intact to this day.

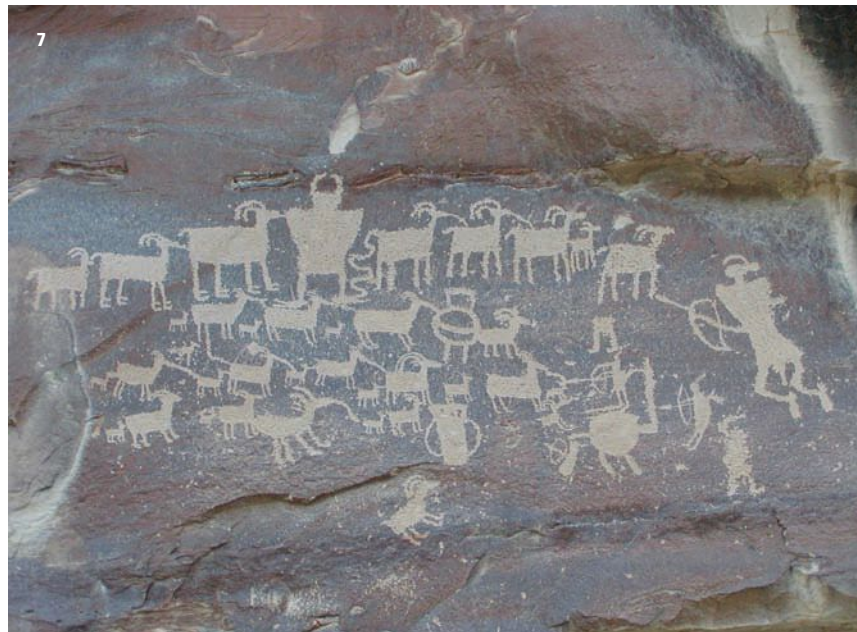
For a look at the Classic Vernal variant of Fremont rock art, I travel north to McConkey Ranch, a privately owned, but publicly accessible site. (Classic Vernal is a term used to describe the Fremont rock art sites near the Vernal River in northern Utah. It is very precise, monumental, and imposing compared to southern Fremont rock art sites.) The trail along the jutting sandstone cliffs leads to a dazzling array of precision craftsmanship. One large figure after another looms ominously overhead in bold frontal assault. Trophy heads and fierce weaponry are as proudly displayed as elaborate necklaces and headgear. There, I wander for hours and leave a donation in the visitor building upon my departure. I'm grateful to the family who trusts the public with this treasure, but I wonder how well they sleep at night, below the grim visages of these ancient warriors.

While I am in the neighbourhood, I pay a visit to Dinosaur National Monument, which has an active quarry where a massive bed of dinosaur bones is being excavated by paleontologists, and check out the fabulous exhibition. Then I make the long backcountry drive over rolling grasslands to McKee Springs. A short climb brings me to another collection of monumental Fremont figures. Imposing in their

**5. Larger than life-sized Barrier Canyon style pictographs are found in the Sego Canyon. They are believed to be 2000 to 5000 years old.**



**6. The Fremont Panel at Sego Canyon is covered with typical Fremont-style petroglyphs of ceremonial figures and bighorn sheep.**



**7. The Great Hunt Panel is located at the far end of Nine Mile Canyon. Fremont people carefully pecked this scene about 1000 years ago.**

**8. The Ute Panel at Sego Canyon dates to the late 1800s. The multi-coloured paintings depict scenes from everyday life for the Ute people.**







9

size and rigid frontal posture, they were intended to frighten, and they still do. Here, too, are severed heads and ostentatious jewelry. Archaeologists studying the Fremont have recently unearthed wooden frames designed for stretching scalps. These ancient warriors had no metallurgy, but they knew well the razor sharpness of obsidian. I am grateful to be here today, 1000 years after they left.

Moab is an area I like to visit

**9. McConkey Ranch is an essential site for people interested in Classic Vernal Fremont rock art. It is privately owned but accessible to the public.**

at any time of year – except in the extreme heat of summer. The sun usually shines here, even when the temperature drops below zero and snow blankets the ground.

The Colorado River snakes green through the striking red landscape, which is mostly preserved in National Parks and Monuments. Today it has become a dirt bike mecca, but I come here for hiking and rock art. This is the boundary

between the Fremont culture and the Ancestral Puebloans, a sedentary, agricultural people who inhabited the region some 2000 years ago. They gradually migrated south, and now live mostly in New Mexico and Arizona.

A quick drive from downtown, the Moab Golf Course offers an easily accessible site. Giant boulders bear trapezoidal Fremont figures with waving arms and striding legs, huge



10



11





12



13

antlers and earbobs. They appear friendlier than their northern counterparts. Prancing deer, rows of sheep, zigzags and other humanoids have been here hundreds of years before the golfers arrived to practise their esoteric ritual game.

I drive west along the Colorado River, stopping at Jug Handle Arch, a dinosaur track site. Above the tracks are petroglyphs – a row of antlered figures holding hands. They look

solemn, perhaps dancing. Below them, a profusion of sheep, birds and abstract designs appear darker and older than the processional figures. I feel certain the site was chosen for its outstanding view and perhaps the dinosaur footprints. My eyes bounce back and forth – glyphs, view, glyphs, view. Eventually I inch my way down the trail, back to the present day.

For my last trip on one frozen



15



14

**10. Bold frontal figures sporting elaborate headdresses and necklaces are typical of the Classic Vernal style of Fremont rock art at McConkey Ranch.**

**11. Precision pecking is key to these Classic Vernal petroglyphs. These ornate figures are more than a metre high.**

**12. In Dinosaur National Monument, there are a number of excellent Fremont rock art sites. This elaborate figure holds a shield in one hand and a severed trophy head in the other.**

**13. Most petroglyphs in Canyonlands National Park are Ancestral Puebloan in origin. Here at Shay Canyon are flute players and a dancing deer.**

**14. At Moab's Golf Course, huge boulders are covered in Fremont-era figures and sheep. This one wears an elaborate headdress and earrings.**

**15. Overlooking the Colorado River outside Moab, a group of Ancestral Puebloan figures appears to be dancing. Below them is an array of more figures and sheep.**

**All photographs: Carol Chamberland.**

winter afternoon, I explore Shay Canyon, a steep hike off the road to Canyonlands National Park. I find a few Fremont glyphs, high on the cliff, and very dark, but mostly this site is Ancestral Puebloan in style. With snow crunching underfoot and wild turkeys gobbling nearby, I follow a procession of flute-players, dancing deer, zigzags, masks, bighorn sheep, abstract designs and sinuous lines snaking dozens of feet along the cliff base and up to the sky. The site has a musical quality, a celebratory feel. I am glad to be in Pueblo country again. ■

#### USEFUL WEBSITES

- *Parowan Gap, southwestern Utah:* [www.utah.com/parowan-gap](http://www.utah.com/parowan-gap)  
[www.parowan.org/parowan-gap/](http://www.parowan.org/parowan-gap/)
- *Rochester Rock Art Site, south central Utah:*  
[www.sanrafaelcountry.com/san-rafael-swell-rochester-rock-art-panel.html](http://www.sanrafaelcountry.com/san-rafael-swell-rochester-rock-art-panel.html)  
[www.sanrafaelcountry.com/san-rafael-swell-rochester-rock-art-panel.html](http://www.sanrafaelcountry.com/san-rafael-swell-rochester-rock-art-panel.html)  
[www.sanrafaelcountry.com/san-rafael-swell-rochester-rock-art-panel.html](http://www.sanrafaelcountry.com/san-rafael-swell-rochester-rock-art-panel.html)
- *Sego Canyon, southeastern Utah:* [www.scienceviews.com/indian/segocanyon.html](http://www.scienceviews.com/indian/segocanyon.html)
- *Nine Mile Canyon, east central Utah:* [www.castlecountry.com/Nine-Mile-Canyon](http://www.castlecountry.com/Nine-Mile-Canyon)
- *McConkey Ranch, north central Utah:* [www.utahoutdooractivities.com/dryfork.html](http://www.utahoutdooractivities.com/dryfork.html)
- *Dinosaur National Monument, northern Utah, near Colorado border:* [www.nps.gov/dino](http://www.nps.gov/dino)
- *Moab rock art, southeastern Utah:* [www.discovermoab.com/rockart.htm](http://www.discovermoab.com/rockart.htm)  
[www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/moab/cultural/rockart.html](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en/fo/moab/cultural/rockart.html)
- *Canyonlands National Park:* [www.visitutah.com](http://www.visitutah.com)

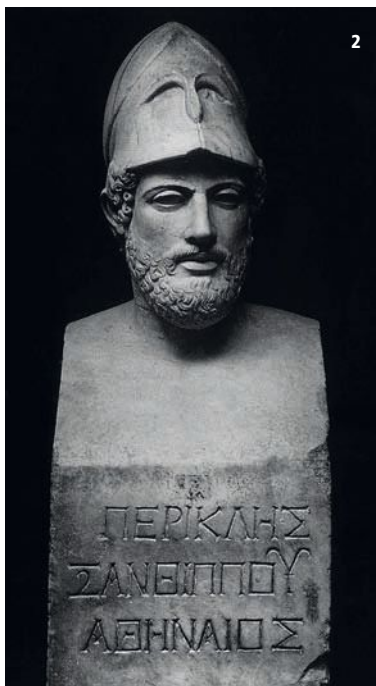


Greeks can be thought of as angular while Romans seem to be circular, according to **John Onians**, who believes that neuroscience can help us understand the contrasting visual preferences of different nations

# Classical forms



1



2

**W**hen we look at different communities in the past, or the present, we often have a feeling that their members share properties and preferences that they never articulate, let alone explain. Until recently this phenomenon was hard to explain. If we take the Pantheon, *circa* AD 118-25 (1) in Rome, for example, we may feel that the rectangular trabeated porch is very Greek, while the rounded *cella* with its dome is very Roman. Until recently, though, we had no way of backing that hunch because nobody in antiquity discusses the difference.

Now the most recent discoveries of neuroscience have transformed

**1. Dedicated to the worship of every god (*pan* = every; *theon* = divinity), the Pantheon was built *circa* AD 118-25 by Emperor Hadrian. With its portico of Corinthian columns under a pediment and vast domed rotunda, it combines the angular and the circular.**

this. By revealing the principles governing the individual's neural formation, neuroscience allows us to look again at people living in different places and times, and to reconstruct mental processes that had a profound effect on their preferences, of which they could never have been conscious.

We can ask ourselves whether the contrast between the geometries of the two architectural elements of the Pantheon may not be rooted in the same mental processes as earlier characterisations of the Greeks as angular and the Romans as rounded.

One of the clearest illustrations of the contrast is provided by their respective characterisations of the





perfect man. For the Greek poet Simonides (circa 500 BC) as quoted by Plato, the good man is *tetragonos*, 'quadrangular', 'wrought without blame'; while for the Roman Cicero in the mid-first century BC, repeating a Stoic idea, the happiest man is like a sphere, having no angles to which a 'blemish of vice' might adhere (*Paradoxa Stoicorum*, 2). The latter idea is also taken up a few years later by Horace, who tells us that the wise man is 'smooth and round, so that nothing external can attach to the polished surface' (*Satires*, II: 7, 86-7).

Such metaphors also found visual expression. The Greek word *tetragonos* was also applied to the rectangular herms that were used to portray Greek generals, such as Pericles (2), and also to the model statue, Polykleitus' *Doryphorus*, (*Spear-bearer*). While in *Institutio Oratoria* (I: 11,3), Quintilian tells us that the toga should be worn in a round fashion, as we can see

**2. A Roman marble copy of a Greek herm portrait of Pericles in a Corinthian helmet. Inscribed 'Pericles, son of Xantippus, Athenian', the original was made in the mid-5th century BC by the Greek sculptor Kresilias. It exemplifies the Greek love of the angular and the rectangular. Vatican Museum.**

**3. The Greek tunic was made from a rectangular piece of cloth, whereas the Roman toga used a semi-circle of material.**

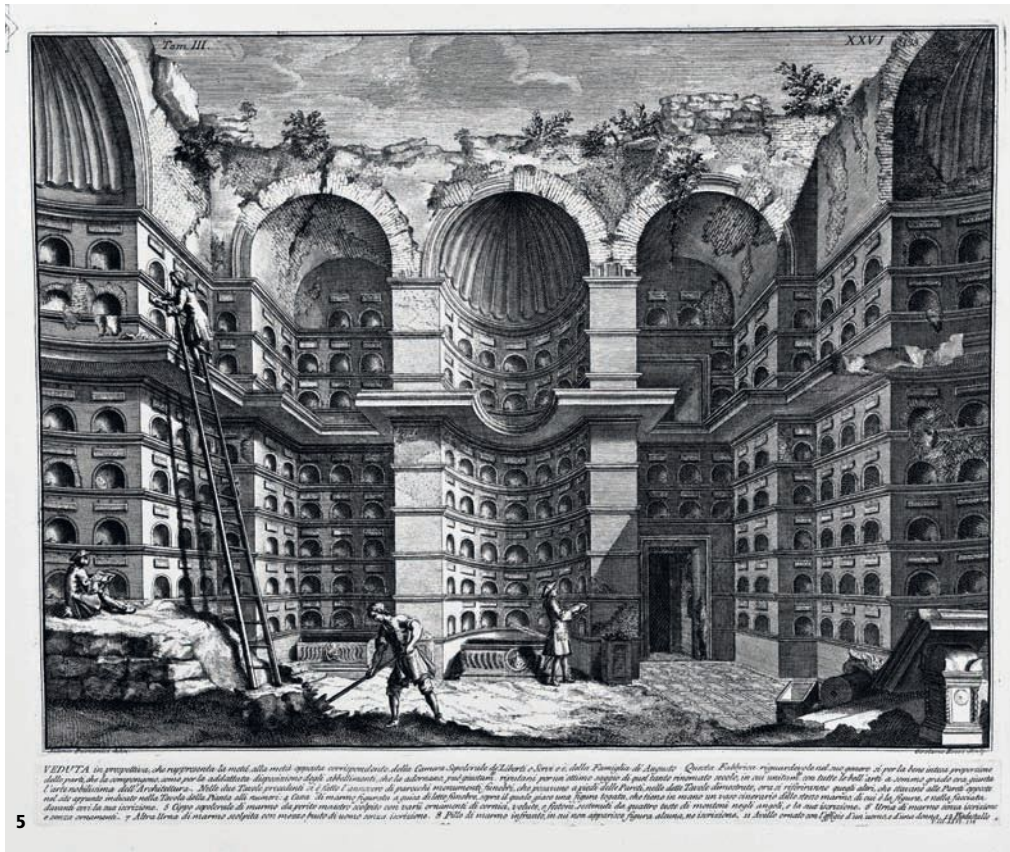
**4. Rectangularity is the salient property of the quintessentially Greek building – the Parthenon (447-432 BC) on the Acropolis, which dominates the skyline of Athens.**

in numerous Roman statues. This reference to the toga reminds us that the clearest context in which these differing preferences were expressed was in clothing, in the contrast between the shapes of the materials of which the typical Greek and Roman clothing were made. Greek clothes were cut from rectangular material, the Roman toga was semicircular (3). Indeed, so canonical was the distinction in geometries that we read of the

normally toga-clad Roman citizens in Greece putting on 'rectangular' clothes to escape the anti-Roman violence of the Mithridatic war in the early 1st century BC (*Athenaeus, Deipnosophists*, V, 213), while later in the same century, Dionysius of Halicarnassus insists that the toga is 'not rectangular but round' (*Roman Antiquities*, III, 61). But what most reinforced the awareness of the different geometries under the Roman Empire was the







circumstance that the process of a slave acquiring his freedom involved him taking off the rectangular *pallium* and putting on a rounded toga.

The importance of the distinction in dress between Greek rectangularity and Roman roundness allows us to consider the possibility that this particular distinction might have been exploited both unconsciously and consciously in the field of architecture. Rectangularity is certainly a salient property of all Greek architecture, as we see it manifested in the Parthenon in Athens (447-432 BC) (4), while Roman architecture prominently exploits the curve in both plan and elevation.

There is a similar contrast in ornamental elements. While all niches in Greek buildings are rectangular in both plan and elevation, the Romans regularly employ recesses that are curved in both dimensions. And again, while all Greek pediments are triangular, Romans often use ones that are segments of circles. The correlation with the distinction in the geometry of dress is startling. Angular and rounded forms in architecture may have carried the same associations as they did in clothing.

This suggestion is borne out by the three building types in which combinations of the two forms feature with particular prominence. Thus an

**5. The Tomb of the Freedmen of Livia, Rome, early 1st century AD (after Columarium of the Freedmen of Livia Drusilla, etching and engraving by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, 1756).**

early use of the curved niche is found in the Tomb of the Freedmen of Livia, which once stood on Rome's Via Appia: it is framed by two niches that are rectangular (5). The combination giving precedence to the rounded form may reflect the fact that many of the tomb's occupants would have been slaves, who had



exchanged the rectangular *pallium* for the rounded toga. Much more common is the combination of such forms in the theatre, a setting in which a Greek-type play, known as a *fabula palliata*, might alternate with a Roman-type *fabula togata*. Here, alternation became habitual. At the top of the seating of the Graeco-Roman theatre at Taormina in Sicily, round niches with rounded tops alternate with rectangular niches crowned by triangles (6), and similar alternations are often found both on the front of the stage and in the *scaenae frons* behind, as, for example, at Sabratha in Libya.

Such alternations become one of the more remarkable innovations in Roman architecture, and their association with a Greek and Roman dualism is confirmed by their use in a third building type, the library. Pairings of Greek and Latin libraries were common in the Roman world, being prominent in the Augustan Temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill in Rome, in the two buildings either side of the great spiral column in Trajan's Forum and in Hadrian's monumental library at Athens. Only two, though, have preserved their ornamental forms, that in the Basilica of Plotina, Nîmes (7), once known as the Temple of Diana, and that of Celsus in Ephesus, both of around AD 120. Both are distinguished by their combination of triangular and segmental pediments. In the library at Nîmes





small ones alternate over the niches on the interior. At Ephesus two large segmental pediments frame a central one that is triangular.

The alternation of forms in such libraries refers primarily to an acknowledged dualism of literary traditions, but it also resonates with a hidden dualism in the form of the letters in which the two literatures were expressed, a dualism that is evident in the two sets of inscriptions in Greek and Roman capitals that are another feature of the Library of Celsus. This dualism has in fact remarkable properties in common with the other dualisms of Greek and Roman dress and Greek and Roman architectural forms. While there are many variations in the letter forms of the two linguistic traditions, going back to their Phoenician origins, as in architecture, the overall trends are clear.

The standard forms of the Greek letters Γ, Δ, Π and Σ (Gamma, Delta, Pi and Sigma) all feature angles as prominently as their Latin equivalents, C, D, P and S, do curves. It is also striking that three Greek letters, Α, Δ, and Λ (Alpha, Delta and Lambda), share the triangular form of the Greek triangular pediment, while the Latin C and D share the broad curve of the Roman segmental variant.

We cannot know for certain what caused this differentiation between Greek and Roman letters, but since

**6. Alternating rounded and rectangular niches in the upper gallery of the Graeco-Roman theatre at Taormina in Sicily.**

**7. The Library in the Basilica of Plotina (the so-called Temple of Diana) showing triangular and segmental pedimented scroll cases, circa AD 130, Nîmes, France.**

the trend to rounder forms manifests itself already in the alphabets of Greek colonies in Italy and in that of the Etruscans, it is natural to look for its source in an experience that all three communities would have shared. And our search may be guided by knowledge of the principle of neural ‘plasticity’, the property of neural networks that ensures that they are liable to be reshaped by experience.

In the case of visual networks this means that the more people in a particular community are exposed to a particular shape in the natural or social environment, the more their neural resources will adapt to their perception, to the extent that they will actually acquire a preference for looking at such forms.

The most common shared experience of the different inhabitants of the Italian peninsula was landscape, and it contrasts with that of the Greek peninsula in much the same way as the two alphabets.

The mountains of Greece, with their prominent rocky silhouettes, are certainly more angular than those of Italy, which were also more frequently softened by woods. We can also contrast the rectangular shape of the Athenian Acropolis with the rounded shape of the Roman Capitoline Hill with its reference to the shape of a head (*caput*).

Much the most striking example of roundness in the Italian landscape,

though, is provided by the many extinct volcanoes, especially those grouped around Rome. Indeed, it is easy to forget how unusual is the landscape around Rome. There is no other major city anywhere in the world that is surrounded within a radius of 100km by numerous extinct volcanoes, several of which have left craters filled with circular lakes (10). These volcanoes would always have been the most striking feature of the topography of Latium, the site of whose legendary first capital, Alba Longa, the predecessor to Rome below it on the plain, was on top of one of them, overlooking the crater lake of Lago Albano (11).

Although they are not often mentioned in ancient texts, these extinct volcanoes would have attracted frequent and intense attention, and that would have given their viewers unique visual preferences. It is easy to see how such preferences could have given people who lived in the area, including architects, patrons and users, a taste for circular structures covered with roofs that diminished upwards, culminating in a round opening, of which the Pantheon is the most splendid example (8).

Some will think it unlikely that neural resources shaped by looking at landscape might be employed to look at buildings, but such a proclivity was certainly facilitated



by the brain's organisation. Both landscape and buildings are processed in the parhippocampal place area (PPA) because it was easy for an area that had developed originally to deal with natural space also to deal with the human-made features with which it came to be filled. This meant that in a region like Latium, where volcanoes inherently possessed properties of regularity and symmetry that were more normally attributes of buildings, it was easy for both to be processed by the same neural resources. Such neural responses made it more likely that one would influence the other.

This gives us a better idea of what the formal properties of a building, such as the Pantheon, might have meant to patrons, designers and users, especially if we reconsider them in the light of the interests of its patron, Hadrian. One of his principal goals was to treat Greek and Roman cultures with equal respect. This was why he sometimes wore the toga at dinner and sometimes the *pallium* (*Historia Augusta*, Hadrian, 22), why he built extensively in both Athens and Rome and why he constructed paired libraries of Greek and Latin texts in both cities, as well as directly or indirectly inspiring the building of such libraries at Nîmes and Ephesus.

This may also be the key to his conception of the Pantheon, where many of the structure's distinguishing features, from the combination of a rectangular trabeated porch with a circular domed main space, to the double alternation of both triangular and segmental pediments in the internal elevation and of curved and rectangular niches in plan (9) can all be seen as reassuringly monumental expressions of the emperor's balanced vision. ■

• *European Art: A Neuroarthistory* by John Onians is published in hardback by Yale University Press at £45.

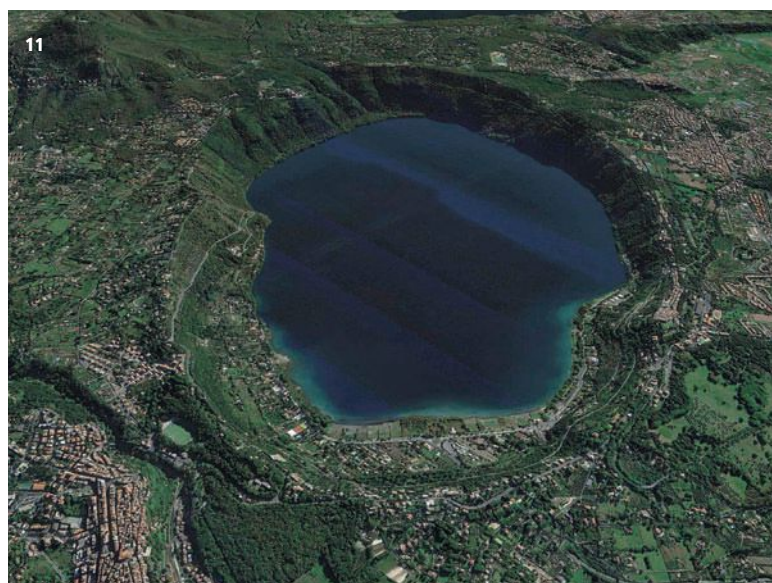


8. An aerial view of the Pantheon showing its mighty dome, circa AD 118-circa 125.

9. The interior of the Pantheon with its pedimented niches; it was constructed circa AD 125.

10. A map showing the large number of volcanic crater lakes to the north and south of Rome.

11. An aerial view of Lago Albano, a water-filled volcanic crater in Lazio near Rome.







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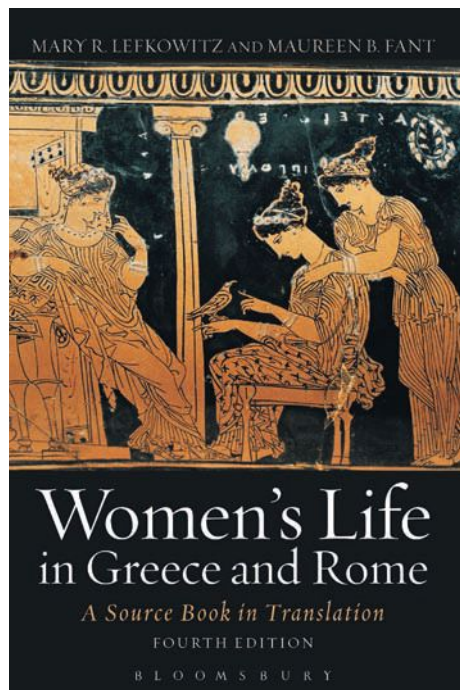


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**Women's Life in Greece and Rome: A Source Book in Translation**

*Mary R Lefkowitz and Maureen B Fant*  
Bloomsbury

496pp, 40 black-and-white illustrations  
Paperback, £24.99

Women's voices from antiquity are extremely rare and as the texts are almost entirely by men means that the overall picture is somewhat skewed. Nevertheless, as this tightly packed sourcebook (the very first on ancient women when it appeared in 1982) shows, there is an astonishing amount of material on the subject of women's lives – from writing tablets, drama, philosophical treatises, funerary inscriptions, and more, covering a range of topics from late pagan saints and menstruation to dowries and pimps.

Now in its 4th edition, Lefkowitz and Fant have updated their collection of texts in translation to include new discoveries, notably the recent fragments by Sappho and Hellenistic epigrams about women by Posidippus of Pella (circa 310-240 BC). But Sappho is not the only female writer to appear; there are Corinna, Anyte, Nossis and Suplicia, and two writing tablets, from Vindolanda in England, contain the earliest examples of Latin handwriting by a woman.

The passages are organised according to subject, largely allowing them to speak for themselves with little (but helpful) commentary, which is used to introduce the author and to highlight issues, such as the lack of a proper context for some of the texts. This up-to-date and varied volume is a bountiful resource, amply furnished with fascinating, insightful and, at times, entertaining extracts; it is indispensable to anyone with an interest in the lives of ancient women.

*Lucia Marchini*

**An Archaeological Study of Human Decapitation Burials**

*Katie Tucker*

Pen and Sword Books Ltd

256pp, 60 colour and black-and-white

illustrations, two maps

Hardback, £25, \$49.95

I have a theory (which I hope is not sexist) that women are attracted to gruesome subjects. Recently, while sitting in a café in Anduze, our local market town, I fell into conversation with a respectable elderly lady. Somehow the talk turned to books. She plunged her hand into her sac and pulled out a *polar* (crime novel). 'You must read this. It's fantastic!' The following night I had a mild shock. In the first chapter the bad guys crucified a farmer on his barn door. 'Ugh,' I said to my wife, 'I wouldn't have expected madame to like this stuff.' 'That's nothing,' my wife replied, 'try reading Val McDermid. She's really gruesome.'

I developed my highly unscientific theory when, as a field archaeologist, I regularly excavated human burials: all the bone experts were women. Lots of them, like Fred Vargas (a French woman), have since taken to writing explicit crime fiction.

From the 1970s my colleagues and I excavated many Romano-British burials in the Thames Valley region. A surprising number had been decapitated. The results were analysed in 1981 by the osteologists Mary Harman and Theya Molleson in one of the earliest studies of beheaded bodies in southern Britain.

Now, nearly 35 years later, Katie Tucker has tackled the subject on a much bigger scale – and the result is definitely not bedtime reading. This book is quite technical, though not particularly difficult for a non-specialist, who is helped by useful photographs and illustrations. Its origin, as a PhD thesis, is evident; in other

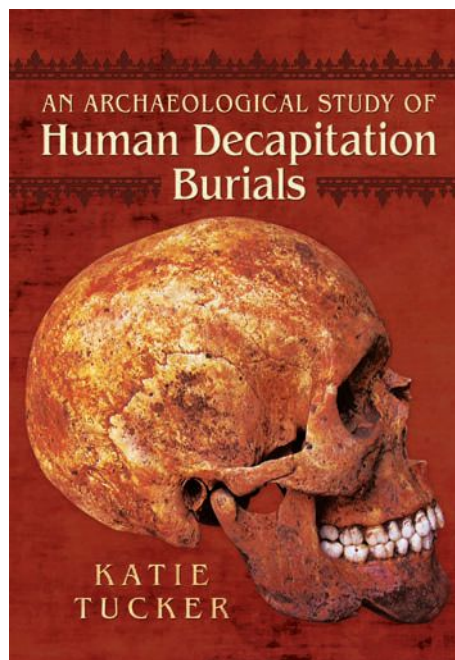
words it is a thorough and somewhat dry read. The author's style is that of a post-mortem report – there is no sexing up the evidence here. However, given the frequency of the phenomenon in Britain, from the Neolithic until the early medieval period, this detailed study will be of considerable help both to field archaeologists and to the osteologists attempting crime scene investigations.

Detailed recording of cut marks in bone can reveal the processes of human butchery. Many were severed carefully from the front, in the early stages after death. Frequently the bodies were those of women, and the severed head was often placed near the feet in the grave. Why? This is a question that remains to be answered.

There are individuals and burial sites in the later Anglo-Saxon period (usually 9th to 11th centuries) where the motivation of the actors is clear: these were execution sites. The cut marks in the vertebrae were cruder, made from the back, and the victims were usually adult males, such as the young man beheaded at Stonehenge. Only seven per cent of identified later Anglo-Saxon execution victims were women.

A mass grave found beneath St John's College, Oxford, contained up to 38 adult males, several of whom had been decapitated. Radiocarbon dating placed the event in the 10th century AD while isotopic analysis suggested that the victims were Scandinavian. Was this vivid evidence of the English intolerance of foreigners, or perhaps even the St Brice's Day massacre, when Danes in Oxford were rounded up on 13 November 1002 and slaughtered on the orders of King Aethelred? Or does the radiocarbon dating indicate an earlier unrecorded incident, settling the score with immigrants or terrorists? After all, one man's Viking raider is another's Scandi trader. Now that could make for a much livelier book.

*David Miles*



**What is Paleolithic Art? Cave Paintings and the Dawn of Human Creativity**

*Jean Clottes, translated by Oliver Y Martin and Robert D Martin*

University of Chicago Press

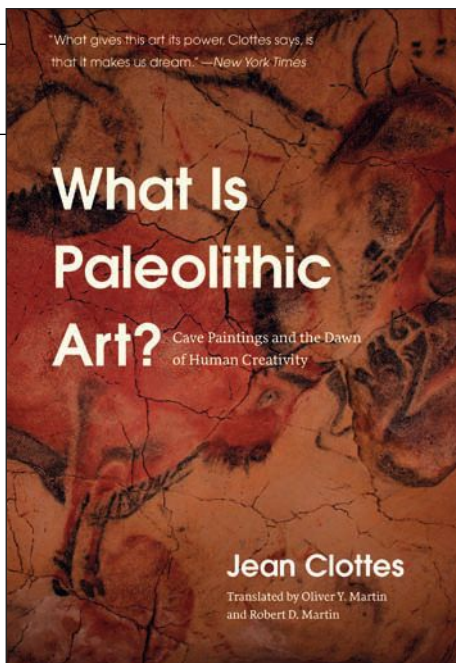
192pp, 28 half-tones, two line drawings

Paperback, £12.50, \$18

This year the French newspapers have been full of reports about the decline in tourism this summer – 11 per cent down in terms of numbers and cash. The weather, strikes and terrorist incidents are blamed but one success story stands out. A year after its opening, the replica of the Chauvet Cave near Pont d'Arc has far exceeded its predicted visitor numbers – and I am not surprised.

Inside the origami-like building, inserted carefully into the garrigue-covered limestone plateau, there is a magnificent





re-creation of the painted caves – arguably the world’s oldest – and the visitor experience is carefully managed to minimise the impact of our own presence. Some will have criticisms: the cost (\$62.5 million), the reduction in scale, the relocation of the site, even the name itself. The location, Pont d’Arc, is emphasised rather than M Chauvet, one of the three discoverers.

Nevertheless, I thoroughly recommend a visit (though it is best to book on-line beforehand) and in order to appreciate fully the sensitivity, skill and complexity of the artists’ work you should read Jean Clottes’ book *What is Paleolithic Art?*

Clottes is a doyen of Palaeolithic research. Few, if any, have so carefully explored the painted caves of France, from the Charente to the Pyrenees, and travelled so extensively to compare them with the rock art of traditional people found in the Americas, Africa, Eastern Asia and Australia.

There are plenty of coffee-table books layered with magnificent colour photographs of the bulls of Lascaux, the rhino, horses and lions of the Grotte de Chauvet or the bison of Altamira and Niaux. This is not another one. Jean Clottes’ book is more modest in design yet rich in content: a fascinating muse on his personal research, career and travels, an attempt not just to explain where, when and how Palaeolithic people created art, but why.

Clottes seeks to enter the minds of these people, as well as their caves, and to explore what it is to be human. Most of his vast published output has been in French and aimed at a specialist audience. Here, he targets a wider readership and the University of Chicago Press is to be congratulated for making the book available in English in this careful and elegant translation.

*What is Paleolithic Art?* provides a neat summary of the subject, and the fashionable theories that have flourished since the first discoveries in deep caves, at Altamira in 1879 and then in the Dordogne at Combarelles and Font-de-Gaume. The longest-lived theory, of Abbé Breuil and Henri Bégouën, advocated that cave art represented

hunting magic. Jean Clottes, himself, along with David Lewis-Williams, is closely associated with interpretations based on shamanism and the origin of religion. They are not without their critics, as Clottes admits, but his explanations here are more subtle than his harsher critics sometimes claim.

A particularly interesting aspect of the book is Clottes’ account of his encounters with contemporary traditional people, particularly in North America, Siberia and Australia. He is privileged to have met and spoken with members of what may be the last generation of humans to engage actively with rock art – men and women who understand the marvellous complexities of their mythology and their symbols and who can convey the power of the human imagination. This is a book both about the richness of human life, and an archaeological life well-lived.

David Miles

### Charlemagne

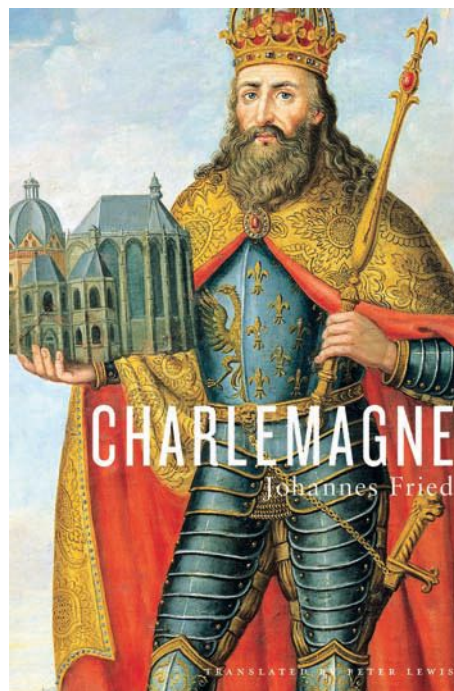
*Johannes Fried, translated by Peter Lewis*

Harvard University Press

630pp, 8 colour and 62 black-and-white illustrations, and two maps

Hardback, £25

By Charlemagne’s deeds shall we know him: the refounder of Europe, the Church reformer, the patron of the Carolingian Renaissance. His personality is less clear. The emperor who ushered in a revival of learning left little in the way of personal documentation. The German historian Johannes Fried makes the best of this problem. *Charlemagne* is a comprehensive biography, but it is also, as Fried admits, ‘a work of fiction’, based on his ‘visualisation’ of Charlemagne (circa 748-814) and his ‘alien landscape’. The result is an expert



work of forensic assembly.

Fried’s Charlemagne is, above all, a Christian king and his court at Aix-la-Chapelle a centre of Christian culture. Physically strong, a warrior intimate with violence and blood, Charlemagne is also an active intellectual. He endows his capital with a superb cathedral, and attends Mass every morning and evening. He insists that monks be literate and versed in logic and rhetoric, and he reforms the education of the general population; he also engages the Anglo-Saxon scholar Alcuin of York as his personal tutor. His most fateful decision, to enact the legal principle that the Pope is beyond the reach of temporal law, is part of this mix of political and personal assertion.

The result is a detailed survey of the origins of the Holy Roman Empire in the chaotic, depopulated and largely forested terrain of Western Europe, and an intriguing interpretation of its first emperor.

We cannot know for certain if, when visiting Pope Hadrian I in 773, Charlemagne remembered how, as a boy, his father Pepin the Short had set out to greet Pope Stephen II. Yet we cannot understand the ‘Most Christian King of the Franks’ without such images. There are no ‘far-ranging reflections on methodology’ here, but there is the smell of ‘dung and cesspits, chicken coops and pig rearing’ – which give us a real whiff of Charlemagne’s world.

Dominic Green

### Ancient Worlds, An Epic History of East and West

*Michael Scott*

Hutchinson

432pp, 15 colour and four black-and-white illustrations, and seven maps

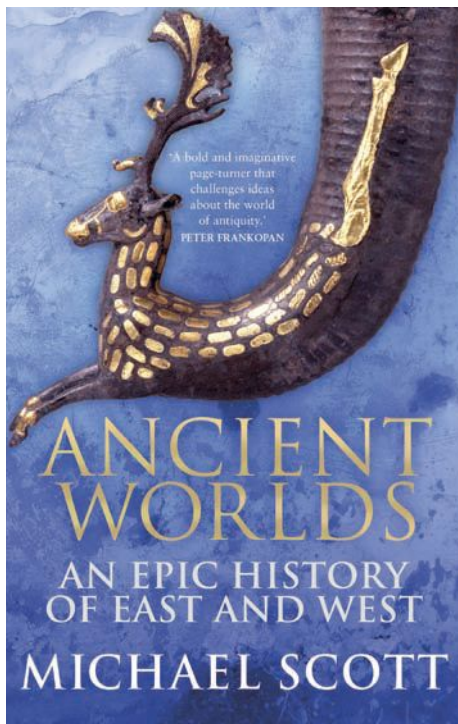
Hardback, £25

As Michael Scott, Associate Professor in the University of Warwick’s Classics and Ancient History department and a popular broadcaster, points out at the beginning of his new book, we are prone to taking a delineated view of ancient history, separating it into chunks that are largely independent of one another.

In *Ancient Worlds, An Epic History of East and West*, he accordingly sets out to broaden our view of the ancient world from the Mediterranean to India and China over a 900-year period. In our era of globalisation this is a welcome approach, which Scott pursues by examining three pivotal moments in history. The first is the 6th century BC defined by the birth of new political systems: the rise of democracy in Athens, the republic in Rome and the emergence of Confucianism in China. A study of the relationships that evolved between different communities, through warfare in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC, follows.

Starting with Hannibal’s crossing of the





Alps in 218 BC, he traces the rise of a constellation of states and empires – from Rome to the Seleucid Empire to the Qin Dynasty in China. Scott then considers the developing relationship between the human and divine worlds in the 4th century AD including the ascent of Christianity in the West and the growth of Hinduism in India and Buddhism in China.

The author deftly sweeps us along on an illuminating voyage through history, revealing how an array of political systems and religious beliefs came to be, and the growing connections between them. In this, he provides us with a thoroughly enjoyable and much wider view of the ancient world and a better understanding of how it shaped our own.

*Diana Bentley*

### **Egyptomania: A History of Fascination Obsession and Fantasy**

*Ronald H Fritze*

Reaktion Books

448pp, 50 black-and-white illustrations

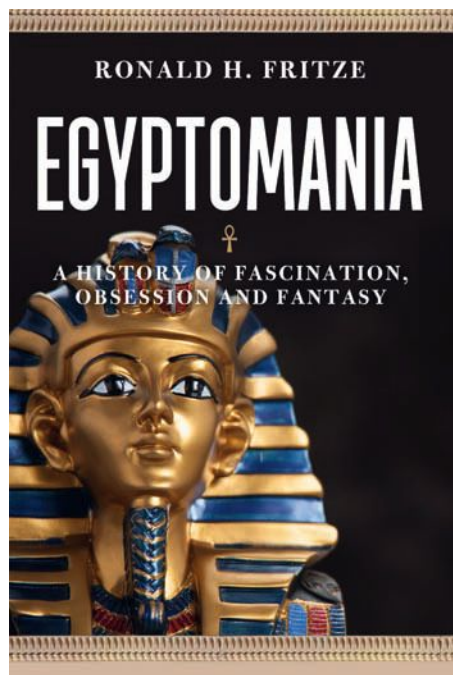
Hardback, £25

Ancient Egypt has long held the world in its thrall. From the earliest times it became famed as the home of awe-inspiring treasures and unique and, to many, mysterious and exotic practices and beliefs. Ronald H Fritze, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and Professor of History at Athens State University, proves himself to be an expert guide on this journey through the history of our fascination with Ancient Egypt in all its forms – ranging from the serious study of Egyptology to its more bizarre manifestations in popular culture.

Egypt intrigued its neighbours. Herodotus

recorded its various appeals and both Alexander and the Romans conquered the country – but it was Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt and Champollion’s decipherment of hieroglyphs that really ignited passionate interest in the West. It lured intrepid 19th-century travellers, such as the writer William Makepeace Thackeray and the founder of modern nursing, Florence Nightingale, to the banks of the Nile. The acquisition of its artefacts by archaeologists and collectors showed all things Egyptian to the world, culminating in the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb in 1922. The opening up of Egypt to the West was, however, a mixed blessing which led to some destruction; for example, believed to have medicinal and magical properties, mummies were pulverised into powder and sold as nostrums.

Egypt has also inspired a cornucopia of creative ventures – from Verdi’s opera *Aida* to Hollywood blockbusters, such as *The Mummy*. Today, Egyptian themes are still evident in architecture (the Pyramid at the



Louvre in Paris), in interior design, fashion and fiction (Wilbur Smith’s latest novel *Pharaoh*) which all remind us of ancient Egypt’s continual allure. Fritze skilfully balances this heady mix with aplomb to produce an entertaining, enlightening work.

*Diana Bentley*

### **In Search of the Irish Dreamtime: Archaeology and Early Irish Literature**

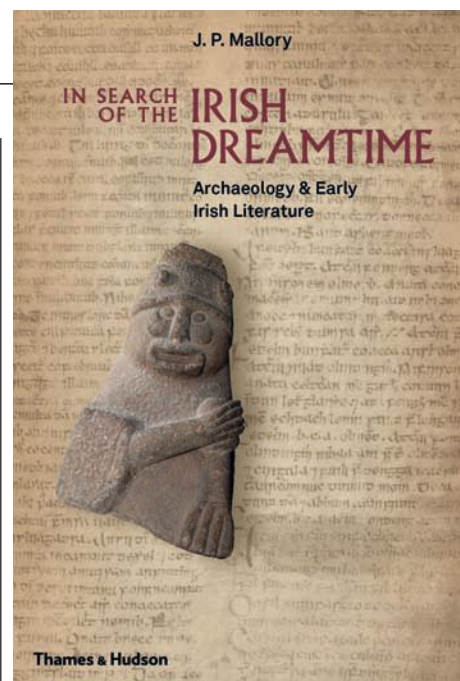
*JP Mallory*

Thames & Hudson

320pp, 88 black-and-white illustrations

Hardback, £18.95

In medieval times, industrious clerics in Ireland compiled accounts of the country’s history that supposedly extended back to



around 3000 BC, making them the longest accounts of any nation in Europe. In these, explains JP Mallory – Emeritus Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at Queen’s University Belfast – the Irish were provided with a written account of their ‘*Dreamtime*’, a concept borrowed from the Aboriginal people of Australia who recognise a sacred time in which both their natural and human worlds originated.

Traditionally viewed as four main groups – the Mythological, Ulster, Finn and Kings ‘cycles’ – these medieval works relate the history of Ireland from the time of its first settlements and the daring battles of its great warriors, such as Cu Chulainn, to the lives of the Irish kings. Later, in the 17th century, these narratives were drawn upon by scholars to produce a summary of the entire recorded history of Ireland, with material added from their own time.

The accuracy of this medieval material was, however, disputed from early on – and it appears even in its own time. Today, much of the earliest history contained in these accounts is dismissed as the product of active imaginations.

In *In Search of the Irish Dreamtime*, JP Mallory sets out to explore the truth of these traditional Irish narratives. Were they the written record of tales transmitted orally down the generations or the work of monks, who drew on the landscape of their own times, with material added from the Bible and Latin literature? Professor Mallory compares traditional narratives with the archaeological evidence, both linguistic and physical. In so doing, he provides us with highly readable accounts of these early, event-filled epics.

For those unacquainted with the legendary accounts of the origins of Ireland, this is an accessible guide to the subject. Readers familiar with the territory should find it an absorbing and comprehensive probing of the veracity of the monks’ work.

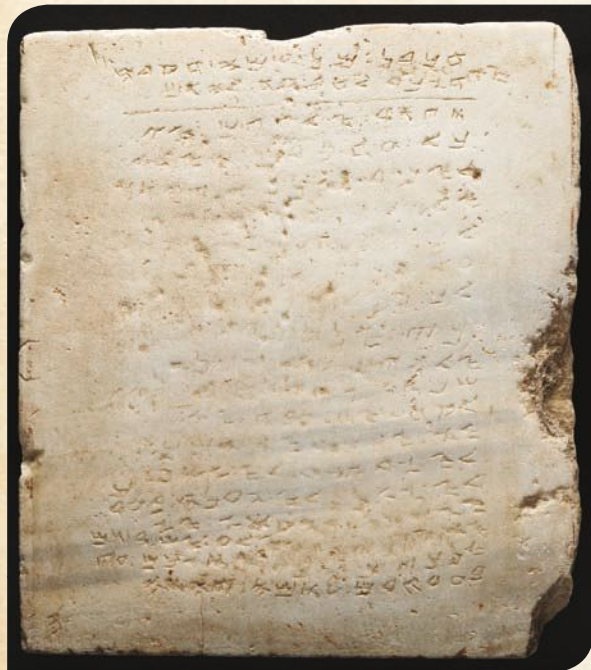
*Diana Bentley*



# BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY AUCTION

November 16, 2016 | Beverly Hills | Live & Online

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## The Living Torah 10 Commandments Stone

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- ✦ Uncovered in Yavneh, Israel in 1913
- ✦ Published by Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (later President of Israel) in 1947
- ✦ Inscribed in the Samaritan dialect, the most complete "Samaritan Decalogue" known
- ✦ 20 lines of text, including dedication, invocation, and 9 of the 10 Mosaic Commandments, with the additional Samaritan command to "raise up a temple on Mount Gerizim" in Samaria
- ✦ Likely part of a Synagogue complex built in CE 300-500
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- ✦ Sale conditional on the stone being placed on public exhibition "so it may be enjoyed by all"

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- ✦ Anchor from a Roman ship, circa CE 100-200
- ✦ Complete and intact Coptic child's tunic, circa CE 300-500
- ✦ Iconic "pot" held by Archaeologist Nelson Glueck in famous photo, 1956
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## UNITED KINGDOM CAMBRIDGE

### *An Amateur's Passion: Lord Fitzwilliam's Print Collection*

In celebration of the Fitzwilliam's bicentenary year, this exhibition focuses on the museum's founder, Richard, 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam's vast collection of 40,000 prints. Arranged into albums stored in his library, Fitzwilliam's acquisitions include etchings by Rembrandt as well works by less well-known artists. Some of these albums, rarely seen in public, will be on display to help uncover what interested this avid collector.

**Fitzwilliam Museum**  
+44 (0)1223 332900  
(www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)  
Until 29 January 2017.

## DUNDEE

### *Reflections on Celts*

Two Iron Age mirrors – the Holcombe mirror from the British Museum and the Balmaclellan mirror from National Museums Scotland are both visiting Dundee in a British Museum *Spotlight* tour, which examines how stylistic differences in these two objects found at opposite ends of the country reflect regional differences in Celtic identities and communities. Artefacts from The McManus' own collection will also be on show, telling the story of the Celts in Dundee and the surrounding area.

**The McManus**  
+44 (0)1382 307200  
(www.mcmanus.co.uk)  
Until 5 December 2016.

## EDINBURGH

### *Drawing Attention: Rare Works on Paper 1400-1900*

Little-known treasures from the Scottish National Gallery's drawings collection, many of which have never been on view before, are the focus of this exhibition. Spanning five centuries of superb draughtsmanship, these works have been chosen for their beauty and diversity and, in some cases, their downright quirkiness. The artists' names may be unfamiliar but the works speak for themselves.

**Scottish National Gallery**  
+44 (0)131 624 6200  
(www.nationalgalleries.org)  
Until 3 January 2017.

### *The View from Here: Landscape Photography from the National Galleries of Scotland*

As part of the Institute for Photography in Scotland's *Season of Photography 2016*, views of landmarks from across the world from the 1840s to today are now on show. The works include inspiring images of historic sites, such as the 1858 albumin print of the Great Pyramid and the Sphinx (above) by Francis Frith, and of natural wonders like Niagara Falls. It also reveals the evolving photographic processes.

**Scottish National Portrait Gallery**  
+44 (0)131 624 6200  
(www.nationalgalleries.org)  
Until 30 April 2017.



## LIVERPOOL

### *Tracey Emin and William Blake in Focus*

In a curious pairing, Tracey Emin's infamous work *My Bed* is displayed in the north of England for the first time in an exhibition, which explores the links between her and poet and artist William Blake. Born some 200 years apart, both artists' work shows a preoccupation with spirituality, birth and death. Among pieces on show by Blake are his colour print, *Pity*, circa 1795 (below left), *The Blasphemer* and *The Crucifixion: 'Behold Thy Mother'*.

**Tate Liverpool**  
+44 (0)151 702 7400  
(www.tate.org.uk)  
Until 3 September 2017.

## LONDON

### *South Africa: The Art of a Nation*

South Africa's rich and extremely long history is told through 100,000 years of its arts, from prehistory to the present, in this, the first major UK exhibition on the region. Covering aspects such as colonialism and apartheid, the works on show include some of the British Museum's recent acquisitions of contemporary African art as well as objects on loan to the UK for the first time. Among the highlights are the gold treasures of Mapungubwe, the capital of the first known kingdom in southern Africa, which flourished between AD 1220 and 1290. These gold figures include such high status animals as the cow, wildcat and the rhinoceros, which would go on to become the symbol of the Order of Mapungubwe, awarded to Nelson Mandela in 2002.

**British Museum**  
+44 (0)20 7323 8299  
(britishmuseum.org)  
Until 26 February 2017.

### *Rock Art: Power and Symbolism in Southern Africa*

Showing alongside the British Museum's *South Africa* exhibition, is the Asahi Shimbun Display presenting a section of rock art from Zimbabwe and exploring the rituals and material culture of San Bushmen, groups of





hunter-gatherer-fishers in southern Africa. The Coldstream stone (below left) which was found in a burial cave, depicts three human figures, possibly shamans, and offers an insight into the belief systems of those who crafted this rock art circa 7000 BC.

**British Museum**

+44 (0)20 7323 8299  
(britishmuseum.org)  
Until 20 November 2016.

**Academics, Agents and Activists:  
A History of the School of Oriental  
and African Studies, 1916-2016**

Celebrating 100 years since it opened as the School of Oriental Studies in Finsbury Circus, this exhibition charts SOAS' history and looks at its essential contribution to the national war effort as a centre for language tuition during the First and Second World Wars. Over the century the alumni of SOAS have included Hollywood actors, such as Paul Robeson, scholars, Soviet spies and the Burmese political activist Aung San Suu Kyi. Their stories, experiences and contributions are told here.

**Brunei Gallery, SOAS**

+44 (0)20 7898 4046  
(www.soas.ac.uk/gallery)  
Until 17 December 2016.



**Victorians Decoded: Art and  
Telegraphy**

The first communications cables connecting Europe with America were laid across the Atlantic Ocean floor from Valentia Island in Ireland to Newfoundland in Canada 150 years ago. To mark the anniversary of this important development, this collaboration between Guildhall Art Gallery, King's College London, the Courtauld Institute of Art, and the Institute of Making at University College London brings together a selection of rare artefacts, such as code books, communications devices, and samples of transatlantic telegraph

cables. Also on show are paintings by Victorian artists, including Edward John Poynter, Edwin Landseer, James Clarke Hook, William Logsdail, William Lionel Wyllie and James Tissot, who explored how long-distance cable telegraphy changed people's perceptions of time, space, and speed of communication.

**Guildhall Art  
Gallery**

+44(0)20 7332 3700  
(cityoflondon.gov.uk/  
guildhallartgallery)  
Until 22 January  
2017.

**Maino's Adorations:  
Heaven on Earth**

Two vast paintings, each measuring over three metres in height, by the Spanish artist Fray Juan Bautista Maino are on loan from the Prado to the UK for the first time to coincide with the National Gallery's *Beyond Caravaggio* exhibition. These

works, *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (below left) and *The Adoration of the Kings*, painted in 1612-14, once formed part of the altarpiece for the high altar of the Dominican church of San Pedro Mártir in Toledo. Maino came in contact with Caravaggio's work in the Contarelli Chapel in the church of San Luigi dei Francesi when he travelled to Rome, and his two Adorations are among the first Spanish paintings in a Caravaggesque style.

**National Gallery**

+44 (0)20 7747 2885  
(www.nationalgallery.org.uk)  
Until 29 January 2017.

**Australia's Impressionists**

Some 40 loans from Australian public and private collections, and from private collections in the UK, are brought together to present a wider view of Impressionism. Many of the works on show have never been seen in the UK before. They show how a distinctive Impressionist movement took root in Australia and helped to establish a new national identity.

Paintings by Charles Conder, John Russell, Tom Roberts and Arthur Streeton, such as the latter's *Ariadne*, 1895 (above) all feature.

**National Gallery**

+44 (0)20 7747 2885  
(www.nationalgallery.org.uk)  
From 7 December to 26 March 2017.

**Seduction and Celebrity: The  
Spectacular Life of Emma Hamilton**

Born the daughter of a Cheshire blacksmith in 1765, Emma, Lady Hamilton embodies an extraordinary example of social climbing. She was renowned for her beauty and her relationship with Horatio, Lord Nelson. While still in her teens, she became George Romney's muse and several of his paintings and drawings of her are on show, along with works by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Thomas Lawrence and others, including Tomas



Prioli (above, he portrays Emma in a Classical pose). Among the 200 objects on show are letters between Emma and her lovers, some of which reflect her political influence, her songbooks, clothing and jewellery, including the betrothal ring given to her by Nelson.

**National Maritime Museum**

+44 (0)20 8858 4422  
(www.rmg.co.uk)  
From 3 November to 17 April 2017.

**Picasso Portraits**

Over 75 portraits, including *Woman in a Hat (Olga)*, 1935 (below), by Picasso, both well-known and less familiar, feature in this exhibition. The works span the artist's entire



© NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA, CANBERRA

© NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, LONDON

© SUCCESSION PICASSO/DACS LONDON, 2016 PHOTOGRAPH: CENTRE POMPIDOU, MINAMI-CCL, DIST. RMN-GRAND PALAIS







career and include examples in all media. There are a number of self-portraits on show, as well as depictions of his children, friends, lovers and wives, including Olga Picasso, Jean Cocteau, Igor Stravinsky, Guillaume Apollinaire, Carles Casagemas, Marie-Thérèse Walter, Dora Maar and Lee Miller. Not only do the works explore how Picasso was able to have greater creative freedom by only portraying people in his intimate circle, rather than working to commission, but they also reflect how he was influenced by previous great Masters, particularly Velázquez and Rembrandt.

**National Portrait Gallery**  
+44 (0)20 7306 0055  
(www.npg.org.uk)  
Until 5 February 2017.

**John Gibson RA: A British Sculptor in Rome**

To commemorate the 150th year since the death of the Neoclassical artist John Gibson (1790-1866), the RA is exhibiting more than 30 rarely seen works by Welsh-born Gibson, who was elected to the Academy in 1836. One of the most prominent sculptors of his time he is little known today. Fascinated by Classical Greece and Rome, trained by Canova in Rome, and patronised by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, he produced many fine marble sculptures and reliefs. Among the exhibition's highlights are Gibson's large-scale marble sculpture of Narcissus, his plaster casts of Hero and Leander, and his marble reliefs of Cupid and Psyche (above), which are all shown alongside preparatory drawings from his studio and archival material, bequeathed to the RA by the artist in 1866.

**Royal Academy of Arts**  
+44 (0)20 7300 8090  
(www.royalacademy.org.uk)  
Until 18 December 2016.

**Opening up the Soane**

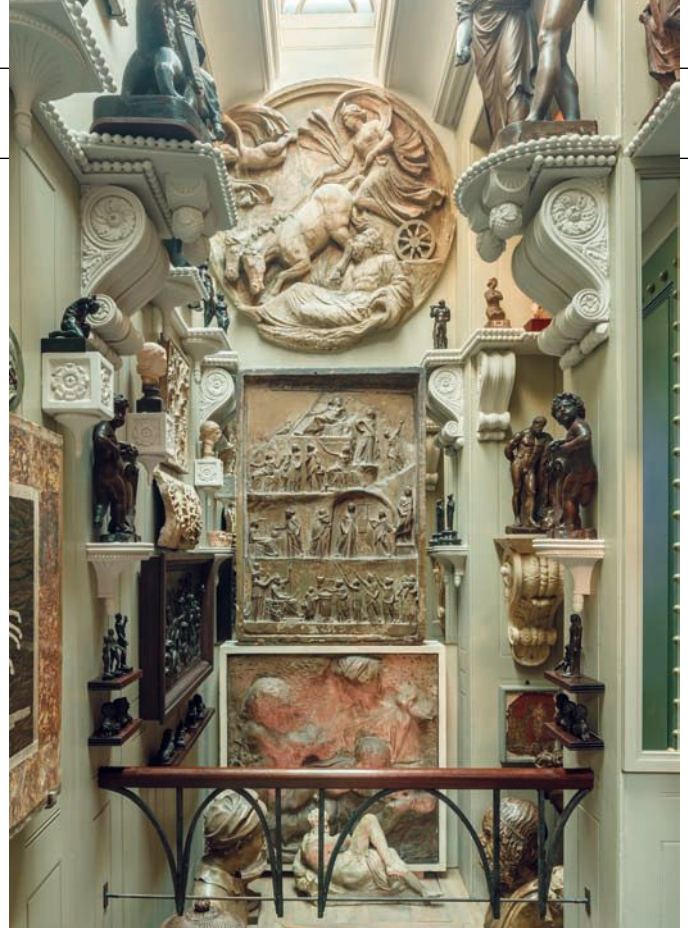
The seven-year *Opening up the Soane* programme has now been completed, and Sir John Soane's Museum has been

returned to the architect's original design for his Georgian house-museum, allowing it to be seen as he intended. A number of lost spaces have been re-created and opened to visitors for the first time, and the museum now has full step-free access. Among the restored areas are the kitchens, the ante-room and the catacombs in the basement, the lobby to the breakfast room (above right), and the Apollo recess. The museum's candlelit evenings will continue to take place on the first Tuesday of each month.

**Sir John Soane's Museum**  
+44 (0)20 7405 2107  
(www.soane.org)  
Ongoing.

**Below Stairs**

Organised in partnership with this year's London Design Festival, *Below Stairs* takes advantage of Sir John Soane's Regency kitchens and sees work by UK designers Edward Barber



PHOTOGRAPH: GARETH GARDNER

and Jay Osgerby, Paul Cockledge, Jasper Morrison and Martino Gamper, displayed in the newly reinstated space.

**Sir John Soane's Museum**  
+44 (0)20 7405 2107  
(www.soane.org)  
Until 28 January 2017.

**SALISBURY**

**Constable in Context: Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows in Perspective**

Of his painting *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, 1831 (below), John Constable wrote, 'I am told

*I got it to look better than anything have yet done.'* One of the artist's vast canvases, he called it '*The Great Salisbury*'. Now, after touring the UK, the work has reached home as the centrepiece of an exhibition of images of the city's cathedral, from the 17th to the 21st centuries. These include works by JMW Turner, Frederick Nash, Henrick de Cort and Frederick MacKenzie. But, as *The Great Salisbury* shows, Constable was not just another artist who painted a view of the cathedral; his canvas had a notable impact on later artists, and marked



© TATE, LONDON 2013



a transition from purely architectural representation to personal expression, with a real feeling for the subject.

**Salisbury Museum**

+ 44 (0)1722 332151

(www.salisburymuseum.org.uk)

Until 25 March 2017.

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**LOS ANGELES, California**

**Real/Ideal: Photography in France, 1847–1860**

Soon after the birth of photography, amid debates over the medium's potential uses in science and art, French photographers sought suitable objects, places and people as their subjects. This show looks at early photography's role as a documentary medium and also explores questions as to whether it merely recorded reality, or expressed an ideal or vision. As part of the Missions Héliographiques, formed in 1851, photographers such as Gustave Le Gray, Henri Le Secq and Charles Nègre were commissioned to travel across France recording ancient monuments before their restoration under Napoleon III. The show features photographs of these landmarks, such as Reims Cathedral, the Château de Chenonceau, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Louvre Museum, the Place du Carrousel and an albumen silver print of the amphitheatre at Nîmes (below) made in the 1850s by Édouard Baldus.

**Getty Center**

+1 310 440 7300

(www.getty.edu)

Until 27 November 2016.

**The Shimmer of Gold: Giovanni di Paolo in Renaissance Siena**

Showcasing the quattrocento Siense manuscript illuminator and panel-painter Giovanni di Paolo's stunning *Branchini Altarpiece* of 1427 (which is presented together for what is probably the first time since its dispersal) this exhibition also examines the artist's technique of working with and on gold to create glittering works both on panels and parchment.

**Getty Center**

+1 310 440 7300

(www.getty.edu)

Until 8 January 2017.

**NEW YORK, New York**

**Fragonard: Drawing Triumphant – Works from New York Collections**

Unlike many Old Masters, Jean Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806) embraced drawing in chalk, ink and wash to create works of art in their own right rather than as preparatory sketches. His imaginative, experimental and exuberant style was particularly suited to the more convenient medium of chalk or wash on paper. New York is a centre for collecting Fragonard's drawings, and this exhibition brings together over 100, from the Met's own collections and those of other museums and from private collections across the city. Ranging from spontaneous sketches to studio pieces intended for display, the works cover the entirety of Fragonard's career and are representative of all the subjects he depicted, including young



lovers, Biblical episodes, scenes from literature and landscapes. Among the highlights are the complete suite of works on paper (three drawings, an etching and a gouache) related to his famous painting *Le petit parc*, and four recent acquisitions by the Met, including *Rinaldo in the Enchanted Forest*, 1763 (above).

**Metropolitan Museum of Art**

+1 20 27 37 45 15

(www.metmuseum.org)

Until 8 January 2017.

**WASHINGTON DC**

**Red: Ming Dynasty/Mark Rothko**

The Sackler is debuting a new acquisition, a rare Ming dynasty,

Xuande period (1426-35) copper-red-glazed dish (below) – the first of its kind in their collection – in this exhibition that looks at the colour red, a hue particularly celebrated in China. Monochrome porcelain is highly prized, especially the difficult copper-red glaze. The richness of this object is complemented by another red work,



created five centuries later in 1959 by Mark Rothko, which demonstrates the artist's own complex methods of dealing with red pigments. By pairing these two works, the power of the colour red, its abstract qualities, its universal symbolism, and its ability to transcend time and place, are all made apparent.

**Arthur M Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution**

+1 202 633 1000

(asia.si.edu)

Until 20 February 2017.

**Drawings for Paintings in the Age of Rembrandt**

The meticulous detail and striking appearance of immediacy and authenticity of still lifes, scenes from daily life, and landscapes painted by Dutch artists in the 17th century often give the impression that the works were painted from life. In fact, they were painted in studios and often based on drawings. Some 100 works by prominent Dutch Golden Age artists, such as Jan van Goyen and Rembrandt van Rijn, have been brought together, including paintings, sketchbooks, individual figure motifs,



THE J PAUL GETTY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES

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PURCHASE-FREER ENDOWMENT AND FRIENDS OF THE FREER AND SACKLER GALLERIES



TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART. PHOTOGRAPH: CHRIS RIDGWAY



broad compositional drawings, counterproofs and ruled construction drawings. These pieces, together with the drawings made on panels and canvas supports before working in paint, show the diverse ways in which Dutch artists employed preliminary drawing in the painting process.

**National Gallery of Art**  
+1 20 27 37 42 157 15  
(www.nga.gov)  
Until 2 January 2017.

## DENMARK

### *Unruly Nature: The Landscapes of Théodore Rousseau*

Landscape was the fertile soil for wild innovation by the artist Théodore Rousseau, one of the great figures of mid-19th-century French painting. Rousseau entered the art scene when landscape painting became recognised as one of the most popular and experimental around. Landscapes offered infinite painterly potential with their array of natural phenomena, capricious weather and changing light. Rousseau's work was rejected by the Paris Salon so many times that he became known as *le Grand Refusé* but all this changed and, later, his popularity grew. This exhibition, which has been on show at the Getty Center, features 56 of Rousseau's paintings – including the atmospheric *Evening (The Parish Priest)*, 1842-43 (above) – drawings from 29 museums, private collections, and also from the Glyptotek's own collection. It is the first large-scale exhibition of Rousseau's work to be staged in Scandinavia.

### **Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek**

+45 33 41 81 41  
Until 8 January 2017.

## FRANCE

### PARIS

#### *The Body in Movement: Dance and the Museum*

Spanning antiquity to the 20th century, this new Petite Galerie exhibition presents some 70 pieces that highlight diverse responses to the challenge of capturing movement in artworks that are, by nature, static. Together, they offer a chance to examine conventions

of the representation of movement and postures, including walking, running, stopping in one's tracks, and even the movement of the soul, for example through fear. The history of artists' attempts to anatomise movement, long before the advent of chronophotography, is told through the work of artists such as Degas and Rodin, and famed dancers, such as Isadora Duncan and Vaslav Nijinsky.

Highlights of the exhibition include Ancient Egyptian figures, such as this ofine example that dates from circa 1800 BC (left), and images on Ancient Greek red and black figure vases. The show includes loans from Musée Rodin, the Musée d'Orsay and the Centre Pompidou.

### Louvre

+33 1 40 20 53 17  
(www.louvre.fr)  
Until 3 July 2017.

## ISRAEL

### JERUSALEM

#### *In the Valley of David and Goliath*

Drawing from excavations carried out between 2007 and 2013 at Khirbet Qeiyafa in the Elah Valley, this exhibition presents archaeological finds from a mysterious 3,000-year-old city to the public for the first time. The excavation shows that the city was carefully planned and arranged in a way that predates other urban settlements in the region and that, unusually for a relatively small city, it was enclosed by a vast wall

with two large gates. Using everyday items, such as cookware, tools and weapons, this exhibition looks at daily life in the city and it also addresses questions such as: were the inhabitants Canaanites, Philistines, or King David's subjects? Also, could this site be the biblical city of Sha'arayim, mentioned in the battle of David and Goliath? Almost all the objects on show were found at the site. They include an inscription – perhaps the oldest writing in Hebrew discovered to date – and a carved stone cultic shrine model, which recalls descriptions of King Solomon's Temple and Palace in Jerusalem from the Bible. Another highlight is the Tel Dan stele, dating from the 9th century BC, the only known inscription attesting to the Kingdom of David.

### **Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem**

+972 2 561 1066  
(www.blmj.org)  
Until 2017.

## SPAIN

### BILBAO

#### *Francis Bacon: From Picasso to Velázquez*

More than 80 paintings by Francis Bacon (1909-92) are shown alongside those of artists who had an influence on his work in an exhibition that pays close attention to his familiarity with both French and Spanish culture. Picasso's work, especially from his Parisian period, was of great importance to Bacon, who turned to painting after seeing *Cent dessins par Picasso* at Paul Rosenberg's gallery in the French capital in 1927. Bacon was also an avid fan of the art of Manet, Degas, Gauguin, Van Gogh, Seurat and Matisse, and the literature of Jean Racine, Honoré Balzac, Charles Baudelaire and Marcel Proust. Besides Picasso, other Spanish artists who inspired Bacon include: El Greco, whose *Saint Francis in Prayer Before the Crucifix*, circa 1585 (above right) is on show, Goya, Zurbarán and, perhaps most significantly, Velázquez's *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (1650).

Bacon owned multiple reproductions of this last painting and re-created it in more than 50 variations on this motif throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

### **Guggenheim Museum Bilbao**

+34 944 35 90 80  
(www.guggenheim-bilbao.es)  
Until 8 January 2017.

## MADRID

#### *Renoir: Intimacy*

The paintings of Pierre-Auguste Renoir tend to stand out for their extraordinarily tactile qualities, which run counter to the common conception of Impressionism as a purely visual style. This aspect of his work comes under the microscope



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# EVENTS



MUSEO DE BELLAS ARTES DE BILBAO

in a show of more than 70 of his paintings dating from across his career. Examples from a variety of genres, including portraits and nudes, group scenes, such as *Bathing on the Seine (La Grenouillere)*, 1869 (below), still lifes and landscapes, demonstrate how he used volume,

material and textures to heighten sensuality and to depict different types of intimacy between friends, family or lovers.

**Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza**  
+34 917 91 13 70  
(www.museothyssen.org)  
Until 22 January 2017.



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## UNITED KINGDOM

### LONDON

#### **Greek Archaeological Committee UK Annual Lecture**

Maritime archaeologist Dr Dimitris Kourkoumelis from Greece's Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities presents new finds and the latest research from the 1802 shipwreck of *Mentor* (the ship on which Lord Elgin sailed with the Parthenon marbles) off the island of Kythera.

**King's College London**  
22 November 2016, 7pm  
www.kcl.ac.uk

#### **Roman Tragedies**

Theatre director Ivo van Hove has reworked Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* into a six-hour show set in a conference centre. *Roman Tragedies*, which turns the audience into citizens and explores politics, power and passion, is performed in Dutch with English surtitles by Toneelgroep Amsterdam.

**Barbican**  
17 to 19 March 2017, 4pm  
www.barbican.org.uk

## VARIOUS LOCATIONS

### *Xerxes*

The English Touring Opera's (ETO) production of Handel's *Xerxes* is set against the backdrop of the Battle of Britain in 1940, in which the Persian king is a pilot jealous of his brother.

**Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden**  
4 November 2016, 7.30pm  
**New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth**  
9 November 2016, 7.30pm  
**Gala Theatre, Durham**  
14 November 2016, 7.30pm  
**Buxton Opera House**  
19 November 2016, 7.30pm  
**Exeter Northcott Theatre**  
22 November 2016, 7.30pm

### *Ulysses' Homecoming*

The ETO also presents Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria (Ulysses' Homecoming)*, which sees Homer's hero returning to Ithaca after an absence of 20 years – thanks to the Trojan War and his arduous and eventful voyage home. He is reunited with his ever-faithful wife Penelope (above), but must confront the many suitors who are overrunning his home.

**Saffron Hall, Saffron Walden**  
2 November 2016, 7.30pm  
**New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth**  
8 November 2016, 7.30pm  
**Snape Maltings Concert Hall**  
11 November 2016, 7.30pm  
**Gala Theatre, Durham**  
15 November 2016, 7.30pm  
**Buxton Opera House**  
18 November 2016, 7.30pm  
**Exeter Northcott Theatre**  
24 and 26 November 2016, 7.30pm  
englishtouringopera.org.uk

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### NEW YORK

#### **Refuge and Refugees in the Ancient World**

Featuring keynote speakers, such as Professor Elena Isayev from the University of Exeter and Professor Demetra Kasimis from University of Chicago, and papers from graduate students, this conference on a very topical subject examines notions of refuge and refugees in the ancient Mediterranean, Egypt, the Near East and the Roman Empire, from the Bronze Age to Later Antiquity.

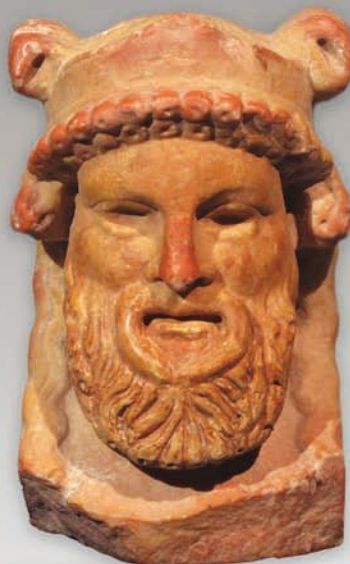
**Columbia University**  
11 to 12 November 2016  
cuancientrefugees2016.wordpress.com



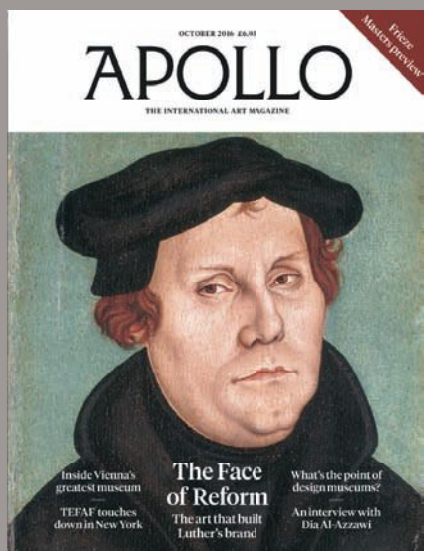
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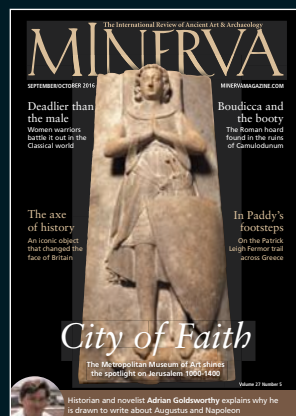
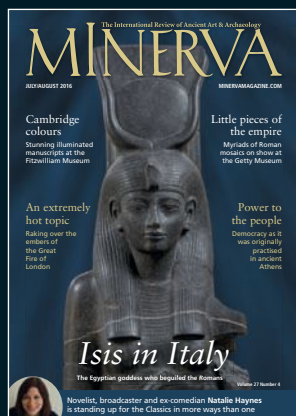
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