

## Editorial

Dear Readers,

Some time ago I learned of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), which since 1997 has had considerable success in recording archaeological finds made by the public in both England and Wales and has drawn up clear rules on how such found objects should be handled. I was instantly won over by this scheme, which seems to me to provide a constructive and pragmatic solution to the thorny issue of how we should treat objects not found in the course of official archaeological excavations. The PAS has transparent rules governing ownership and the extent to which such finds can be marketed. Because these rules encourage detectorists to have their finds expertly recorded, they ensure that scholars and archaeologists benefit as well. I was therefore delighted when Michael Lewis, Head of Portable Antiquities & Treasure at the British Museum, agreed to explain the PAS in this edition of *Cahn's Quarterly* (see pp. 4–5).

I am firmly convinced that the suppression of opinions is the wrong way to go. Rejecting dialogue is always unwise and does not serve anybody. Title to objects found in the ground should not be prohibited, as people quite naturally feel the need to possess a piece of their own heritage, whether because they love art or because they are interested in history. This, however, calls for clear and practicable rules and conditions. As an incredibly intelligent scheme that quite obviously grew out of a culture of listening, the PAS answers this purpose perfectly and should be adopted by other countries, too, including Switzerland.

*Jean-David Cahn*



A CELTIC HEAD. H. 38 cm. Sandstone. Celtic, ca. 1st–2nd cent. A.D. or later. PAS Database number LVPL-79EA4E. Sold by Cahn International at the Biennale Paris 2017.

### The Debate

## Answers to A Moral Dilemma (2)

In our previous issue of *Cahn's Quarterly* we published some letters from readers commenting on the problem posed by the ban on publishing objects without a secure provenance that was raised in the Editorial of CQ 3/2017. Here, with the author's permission, we are publishing another letter received in answer to the issues raised there by Jean-David Cahn.

Dear Jean-David

Although I myself am not an art dealer, I am taking the liberty of replying briefly to the dilemma posed by the official ban on publishing undocumented antiquities, that is to say, to the question of why institutions of renown, and hence of relevance to the market, should not be allowed to say anything about objects whose legal origins cannot be proven and for which the only written sources date from after 1970.

To cut to the chase, I would like to see more of us courageously drawing a distinction between academic and commercial interests. As you rightly say, there can be no

grounds whatsoever for withholding an interesting object from scientific inquiry. On the contrary, if academic teaching and research are truly free, then they must be free to engage in the academic study of so-called "occult" finds. Such study may close gaps in what is known of the object's provenance and provide deeper insight into its cultural and archaeological context – irrespective of the legal issue of whether the object under discussion might have been stolen or looted from a tomb. Academic teaching and research may be free, but they are still governed by a code of ethics, which in matters of provenance, especially, is bound not by commercial opportunity but solely by the

truth. The German Archaeological Institute has the choice between describing a given masterpiece in scholarly terms and flagging the fact that its legal provenance has not been fully cleared, is not beyond reproach, or might not be legally unimpeachable. In the latter case, it could quite legitimately be argued that a serious institution would be well advised not to say anything at all about such an object, thereby giving the legal aspects precedence over the academic. I myself, however, am of the opinion that even where there are doubts concerning the legality of an object's origins, academic descriptions and speculation should not

## The Debate

be censored, since the illegal procurement – the looting of a tomb, in other words – cannot be undone by remaining silent on the art-historical value of a work. The art trade has little to gain from this, since a work without a faultless provenance is all but impossible to sell, even if it has been the subject of scholarly research.

As to the question of inadequate proof of provenance, my plea would be in favour of free trade; that is, proof of legal origins should be deemed lacking only in the absence of *all* sources predating 1970 – in other words, not just written sources but also photographs and evidence provided by the object's conservation history. Where such sources are missing entirely, or where there are good grounds for assuming the object to have come from an illegal excavation, the restrictions on publication mentioned above may indeed help curb the trade in artefacts of dubious provenance. The prevailing views on this question nevertheless remain controversial.

Sincerely,  
Thomas

Thomas Christ  
*Member of the Foundation Board of the  
Basel Institute on Governance*

### Some Remarks on Thomas Christ's Contribution

I would like to thank Thomas Christ warmly for sharing his thoughts with us on this complex topic. As the column "The Debate" provides the opportunity to discuss controversial topics, it does at times occur that my stance differs from that voiced by the authors contributing to this column. I would therefore like to point out that in my opinion it is too categorical and too simple to assume that an object has no legal provenance if there is no pre-1970 documentation. The presumption of innocence should hold for such objects, too. It is easily possible that an object was offered on the art market or entered a collection in an absolutely legal manner, even if no documents that prove this have been preserved. Furthermore, I am convinced that the detrimental effect on the illicit art trade of a publication ban for objects with no pre-1970 documentation is greatly overestimated and is by no means commensurate with the considerable loss of knowledge that such a ban entails.

*Jean-David Cahn*

## Discovered for You

## Clay Rattles from the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age

By Ariane Ballmer



*Clay rattles of the Silesian Lusatian culture, Late Bronze to Early Iron Age, ca. 1st half of 1st mill. B.C. Back row from left to right: A BULBOUS RATTLE. H. 4.4 cm. CHF 1,200. A VESSEL-SHAPED RATTLE. H. 7.3 cm. CHF 1,800. TWO RATTLES. H. 4.5 cm and L. 8.5cm. CHF 2,400. Front row: A CUSHION-SHAPED RATTLE. L. 6.8 cm. CHF 1,800. All formerly Coll. Siegfried Zimmer, ca. 1950.*

Prehistoric objects often seem strangely static and cut off from the sensory world to which they once belonged: they are immobile, odourless, and silent. Besides the fossilized and often patchy archaeological situation, the absence of writing means that the relevant circumstances cannot even be reconstructed through textual sources. A few categories of archaeological object nevertheless afford us direct access to the deliberately produced and experienced sounds of the past. Among these are rattles, in other words rhythm instruments.

In Europe, rattles made of clay begin to appear here and there from the Early Bronze Age onwards, i.e. from the 2nd millennium B.C., especially in the Danube-Tisza region. The scope of their distribution broadens noticeably as of the Late Bronze Age. Most prehistoric clay rattles found in Central Europe date from the period between ca. 1050-500 B.C. The objects presented here were

discovered in Silesia (south-western Poland), which was also the heartland of what we define as Lusatian culture. The material remains of Lusatian culture fall in the period between ca. 1400-500 B.C., in other words the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age, when it was the predominant cultural group in eastern Central Europe. Its highly developed metallurgical skills and extensive exchange networks reflect its cultural pre-eminence. The Lusatian culture is further characterised by large, multi-generational burial fields containing grave urns flanked by a lavish array of ceramic vessels by way of grave goods.

A wide range of rattle shapes is known from the Lusatian culture's sphere of influence. These are either stylizations of motifs drawn from everyday life (e.g. animals, ceramic pots, or edible plant parts such as fruits, vegetables, roots and tubers) or abstract geometrical shapes. In principle they

were made using fine clay. In order to create a cavity, the two halves were moulded by hand and then joined together. The seams of the examples shown here have been carefully smoothed over and hence are barely visible. The hollow bodies were filled with small, mobile elements such as tiny pebbles or little balls of clay. The amplitude and clarity of the sound to be produced were determined by factors such as the volume of the sound box, the thickness and hardness of the walls, and the size, weight, and number of rattling particles. In some cases the sound was further optimized by the addition of little sound holes in the sound box. What is especially striking about all these rattles is the quality of the sound produced by the moving particles colliding with the inside of the sound box: it is fine, clear, and surprisingly quiet. The pitch and timbre naturally vary from rattle to rattle.

Clay rattles are the only clearly identifiable sound instruments to have survived from the Lusatian context. Various utensils and ornamental objects that might double as sound-producing instruments are a regular feature of the object spectrum, however; this explains the bronze "clappers" attached to rings, chains, and belts endowed with an acoustic function, for example. Musical and sound-making instruments from pre-historic Europe – or rather what remains of them – are certainly known, especially percussion instruments like drums or wind instruments like pipes, flutes, or horns. Late Bronze Age lurs (wind instruments made of bronze sheet) from the Nordic context occupy an especially important place in musical archaeology.

Even if we can, and indeed must, assume that the deliberate and controlled production and reception of noises and sounds played an important role in people's lives during that period, concrete evidence of this in the form of archaeological finds remains remarkably rare. This could well be the result of the preservation conditions and with them the improbability of such objects being discovered (since many instruments would have been made of organic materials). This makes the clay rattles all the more important.

To interpret these rattles merely as children's toys would undoubtedly be too simplistic, bearing in mind the archaeological situation. As a matter of fact Lusatian clay rattles are frequently found in children's graves, however, not exclusively. Many adults' graves were also furnished with rattles. The fact that most of the rattles found among the remains of the Lusatian culture were discovered in a burial context, whereas scarcely any at all have turned up in set-



Clay rattles of the Silesian Lusatian culture, Late Bronze to Early Iron Age, ca. 1st half of 1st mill. B.C. Left: A BIRD-SHAPED RATTLE. H. 5.5 cm. CHF 2,200. Right: A BIRD-SHAPED RATTLE. H. 4.8 cm. CHF 2,200. Both formerly Coll. Siegfried Zimmer, ca. 1950.

tlements might be interpreted as indicative of a deliberately carried out practice. That they played a role in the ceremonial funeral feast seems likely. In fact, rattles might at the same time have been put to use in everyday life, for example in cultic or magic domestic rituals entailing communing with spirits, warding off evil and such like – the range of possibilities is very wide indeed.

But as stylized and miniaturized references to objects of daily use or animals, rattles are also *symbols*. Many are furnished with holes or a flat base bespeaking a need to hang them up or stand them in a specific place when they were not actively in use. This alerts us to both the aesthetic and symbolic value of these pieces, which apparently were to be legible as symbols even when at rest. Alongside abstract forms and shapes borrowed from ceramic vessels, the large number of bird-shaped rattles seems worthy of note. Depictions of birds were a key element in the mythological iconography of the Central European Bronze Age, in which images tended to be few and far between. Its main theme was the cyclical journey of the sun, which was drawn across the firmament by a vehicle – either by a ship, a chariot or by a bird. Bronze Age cosmology thus credited an (aquatic) bird with the ability to mediate between different levels of the cosmological order. Such a bird could move between the realms of the living and the dead and the supernatural. The symbolically charged motif of an (aquatic) bird was thus used very restrictively and was reserved for

selected carriers only. That in this period the bird should have been objectified in the form of a sound-making instrument is further evidence pointing to the elemental link between music and cult, and with it of the important role played by acoustic stimulation in ritualistic ceremonies.

The rattles presented here broaden our archaeological understanding of Lusatian culture by adding a sensory component, namely that of acoustic experience. In the Late Bronze Age, rattles may have been transcendental media that permitted contact to the supernatural. Today, some 3,000 years later, they have the capacity to bridge the gap to a bygone reality by enabling us to hear the sounds of a now lost culture.

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# Preserving the Past: Recording Archaeological Finds Made by the Public

By Michael Lewis



Metal-detecting in Hertfordshire as part of an archaeological survey.

Antiquities law in Great Britain is amongst the most liberal in Europe. Searching for antiquities is legal, and since archaeology is unlicensed, anyone can do it. In England and Wales, it is the landowner, not the State, that normally has best title to anything found on their land. It might seem that this situation puts at risk the historic environment, but in fact the story over the last 20 years is more positive. Although there are unscrupulous individuals, many people searching for archaeology, most being metal-detectorists, work within the law and report their finds.

The main mechanism of the State to protect archaeology is through the “scheduling” of ancient monuments (Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979) and the Treasure Act 1996. In England alone there are almost 20,000 scheduled monuments, and it is an offence to excavate such sites without a licence; this restriction includes the use of metal-detectors. The State also requires anyone (including archaeologists) finding Treasure to report these finds.

The Treasure Act states that all objects at least 300 years old with at least 10 per cent gold or silver must be reported. Also, all coins from the same find (two or more), provided they are at least 300 years old are Treasure; there

must be at least ten of them if the coins are base-metal. All objects found in association with Treasure are also potential Treasure, as are prehistoric base-metal assemblages, and finds that would have been Treasure Trove.



Copper-alloy Anglo-Saxon “Winchester style” strap-end from Dorset (PAS: DEV-264F62), recorded by the PAS.

The purpose of the Act is to enable museums to acquire the most important archaeological finds. In such cases a reward, equal to the market value of the find, is paid to the finder/landowner: usually split 50/50. The value is recommended by the (independent) Treasure Valuation Committee to be agreed by the Secretary of State. Treasure finds not acquired by museums are “disclaimed” and returned to the finder/landowner. Since the Act became law, the number of cases reported has increased from 201 in 1998 to 1268 in 2017.

In 1997, the Government established pilot schemes to encourage the voluntary recording of all archaeological finds not covered by the Act. This happens through a national network of archaeologists known as Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) working for the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). The Scheme is managed by the British Museum and the National Museum of Wales, and funded through Government grant-in-aid and local partner contributions.

The primary aim of the PAS is to advance knowledge by recording archaeological finds made by the public. Its 40 FLOs are based in museums and other heritage organisations, and to date have recorded over 1.3 million finds: see <http://finds.org.uk>. Although this data is made publicly available online, precise findspot information is only shared with archaeologists and *bona fide* researchers. Most of these finds are discovered through metal-detecting, the majority coming from cultivated land where they are at risk from agricultural activity.

At least 615 research projects have used PAS data to date, including 127 PhD students. Research using PAS data has included a project to examine “hoarding practice” in Iron Age and Roman Britain (University of Leicester) and “EngLaId” (Oxford), which analysed change in the English landscape between ca.1500 B.C. and 1086 A.D. Current PhD topics include Rob Webley (York) characterising metalwork of the Anglo-Norman period, and Sam Rowe (Huddersfield) exploring the condition of metal artefacts in the plough-soil. PAS data are also used by Historic Environment Records for development control and other archaeological work.

It is a major advantage for the PAS that its FLOs are based in local museums or other heritage organisations. FLOs regularly visit metal-detecting clubs and local societies, give talks, and organise local outreach events. Anyone might discover archaeology, so it is important for the FLOs to reach out to all. Since 2015, through the Heritage Lottery funded project “PAsT Explorers”, the PAS has also been providing opportunities for people to volunteer with the Scheme and learn more about archaeological finds.



The PAS promotes best archaeological practice. Metal-detecting can be damaging to archaeology, so finders are encouraged to follow the *Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales*. This outlines what finders should do before, while and after metal-detecting. It is a voluntary code, so does not have any weight in law, but some landowners require finders to follow it. Likewise, it is a condition of land under stewardship (where landowners are paid subsidies to manage their land) that finders must follow the Code. The PAS also works closely with the police and other law enforcement authorities to combat illegal metal-detecting.

Although some archaeologists would like all archaeological finds to end up in museums, most museums are selective in what they acquire. It is even the case that many Treasure finds are not acquired. The reasons for this are complex. It is usually the case that unwanted objects are poor examples or common types, but sometimes museums do not acquire because the costs are too high. The PAS, therefore, has an essential role in preserving a record of the past.



Gilded brooch made from a silver penny of Aethelred II (978-1016) from the Isle of Wight (PAS: IOW-A6DB92), reported Treasure via the PAS.



Dr Michael Lewis is Head of Portable Antiquities & Treasure at the British Museum. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, a Member of the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists, and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Art Scholars. He has a particular interest in the material culture of the Middle Ages.

## My Choice

# A Pelike with a Dipinto

By Jean-David Cahn



RED-FIGURE PELIKE. H. 14.4 cm. Clay. Attic, 2nd half of 5th cent. B.C.

CHF 28,000

Just recently I acquired a small, Attic, red-figure pelike in an excellent state of preservation. The vase itself is intact, the glaze a deep blue-black, and the painting wonderfully fresh. On each side is a youth. Although separated by the handle, the two young men are shown facing each other and are deep in conversation. The one standing upright, his whole body concealed underneath his cloak, seems to be the one leading the conversation. The other is looking down, lost in thought. His insecurity or indecisiveness is reflected in the instability of his pose: with one foot set back, he is leaning forwards, supporting himself on his Attic staff. What might they be talking about? Unfortunately, we can do no more than guess at the topic of discussion.

Especially worthy of note is the outline drawing scored into the clay, which is still clearly visible on both figures. These lines show the outline of their nude bodies and even the folds of the drapery in places. They would have served as guidance for the artist, who nevertheless took certain liberties when executing the paintings. The identity of the painter eludes us, but he was undoubtedly a very accomplished one.

But the real surprise becomes apparent only when the vase is turned on its head, for on the underside of the base is a caricatured face, first finely engraved and then drawn over! This is most unusual. The fleshy lips, bulbous nose and jutting chin suggest that this is a specific individual – possibly someone from the workshop or perhaps even the artist himself? The vase belongs to the period that saw the first tentative ventures into the art of portraiture. Thus it might serve as a good starting point for a discussion of how caricatures perhaps contributed to the development of this new genre, given that they, too, represent a shift away from canonical idealization to likenesses that emphasized the subjects' individuality – albeit by exaggerating their most distinctive features.





## A Colourful World: Polychromy in Antiquity

New Artworks Monthly  
on [www.cahn.ch](http://www.cahn.ch)

A MOSAIC WITH EROS SAILING. H. 62 cm. White, dark grey, brown, yellow, red, green and black stone tesserae. The child-like, winged Eros stands on the neck of a slender transport amphora on which he sails to left across an expanse of water richly populated by fishes and a squid. He holds two of the corners of the rectangular sail, which swells in the wind, in his hands. The other two corners are fastened to the handles of the amphora. Fragment of a floor mosaic, probably from a triclinium. A few tesserae missing, some lacunae filled with mortar. Set in light beige cement with a white metal frame (modern). The representation of edible fish was the decoration of choice for triclinia throughout the Roman Period. It is very fitting that the shape of the amphora is reminiscent of the Italic type Dressel 1, which was used to transport wine. Formerly French priv. coll., acquired before 1970. Thereafter Belgian priv. coll. Roman, 2nd-3rd cent. A.D. CHF 38,000



A BOTTLE WITH TRAILING. H. 14 cm. Aubergine glass. This globular vessel is decorated with a white glass thread that spirals up the body from the centre point of the base, becoming ever finer. Its structure eventually disappears in the lower third of the long, tubular neck. Flared mouth with turned-in rim. Beginnings or remains of another glass thread on the neck. Body undamaged. Formerly priv. coll. Martin Wunsch, New York, 1980s-1990s. Roman, Eastern Mediterranean, 1st-2nd cent. A.D. CHF 4,600



A PILGRIM FLASK. H. 15.8 cm. Faïence. Flat, circular body with short, tubular neck flanked by two small loop-shaped handles. Turquoise glaze. Fissures in the base. Minor losses of glaze. Formerly priv. coll. New Jersey, USA; acquired in the 1990s. Near Eastern, 1st-3rd cent. A.D. CHF 2,400





AN OINOCHOE WITH LION'S HEAD APPLIQUE (GNATHIA WARE). H. 21.7 cm. Clay, black glaze, red, white and yellow paint. A pear-shaped, black-glazed jug with trefoil mouth and flat, profiled ring foot. The neck is adorned by a white-yellow tendril from which a female theatre mask, red fillets and white-yellow twigs are suspended. The transition of the handle to the rim is enlivened by a plastic, polychrome lion's head applique. A reddish, reserved band above the foot. Paint abraded in places. Mouth slightly worn. Formerly Coll. A. Raifé (1802-1860). Publ.: F. Lenormant, Description des antiquités composant la collection de feu M. A. Raifé, Paris, 1867, 181, no. 1420 (old collection label on the underside of the vase). Thereafter Paris priv. coll., acquired 1990. Western Greek, Apulian, Last quarter of 4th cent. B.C. CHF 15,000



A JAR. H. 10.5 cm. Aubergine glass. Squat, rounded body on conically pushed-up base with pontil mark. Short, broad neck. High mouth with central constriction and inward-curving lip. Rainbow iridescence. Intact. Formerly Priv. Coll. Martin Wunsch, New York, 1980s-1990s. Roman, Eastern Mediterranean, 3rd-4th cent. A.D. CHF 4,000



AN AMPHORISKOS. H. 10.9 cm. Aubergine glass. The body tapers towards the base, transitioning fluidly into the ring foot moulded out of the wall. The short, tubular neck widens into a flared mouth with turned-in rim. Slightly concave base with remains of a pontil mark. Two separately attached handles connect neck and shoulder. Encrustation on the handles and on the inside. Crack through the neck. Slightly iridescent. Formerly priv. coll. Martin Wunsch, New York, 1980s-1990s. Roman, Eastern Mediterranean, 3rd-4th cent. A.D. CHF 2,400



EPICHYSIS (GNATHIA WARE). H. 18.3 cm. Clay, black glaze, white and yellow paint. Piriform; beaked spout; high loop handle, profiled foot. Decorated figuratively with vine motifs; ornamental friezes. Head appliques at the handle's point of attachment. Body undamaged; handle fragment reattached. Formerly Swiss art market, before 2014. Western Greek, Apulian, 3rd quarter of 4th-early 3rd cent. B.C. CHF 1,200



A SMALL RED-FIGURE LEKYTHOS. H. 11.4 cm. Clay. Vessel of the Petit Palais Type with slender neck, trumpet-shaped mouth, a body that broadens slightly and disc-foot. Dashes and four palmettes on the shoulder. A meander above the picture field depicting a cloaked youth to left holding a knotty staff. White fillet in the hair. The facial features are typical of the Severe Style. Minor wear retouched, paint partially abraded. From the estate of a Swiss private collector; object acquired 1987 from Fortuna, Zurich. Attic, ca. 480 B.C. CHF 2,800



A BOWL WITH DECORATED RIM. Dm. 17 cm. Yellow-green glass. Bell-shaped bowl standing on a low, flared foot decorated with fine diagonal grooves. Expansively flared mouth whose thick lip is offset by a ridge and furnished with fine puncture marks in places, the effect of which is to lend rhythm to the rim. Thin glass thread trailed round the underside of the mouth at the transition to the body. Silvery iridescence. Intact. Formerly priv. coll. Martin Wunsch, New York, 1980s-1990s. Roman, 3rd-4th cent. A.D. CHF 5,500



A BOTTLE WITH FOUR HANDLES. H. 10.4 cm. Yellowish glass. Squat body with concave base; pontil mark. Broad, flaring neck. The offset lip with central constriction is folded inwards. Four separately fused-on handles connecting rim and shoulder. Body intact. Two handles repaired. Formerly Christopher Sheppard, London art market, 1980. New York art gallery, 1990. Thereafter Priv. Coll. Martin Wunsch, New York, 1980s-1990s. Roman, Eastern Mediterranean, 3rd-5th cent. A.D. CHF 5,800

A VOTIVE GIFT IN THE FORM OF A FOOT. H. 16.3 cm. Beige clay, red paint. Right foot with strikingly careful and precise modelling of anatomical details such as the individual bones and sinews. The foot stands on a thick shoe sole which has two circular perforations on its underside. A further perforation in the centre of the rounded top end of the leg. Extensive remains of deep-hued red paint. Slightly worn. Models of body parts such as eyes, ears, (half) heads, hands and feet as well as of intestines and genitals were popular votive gifts in healing and fertility sanctuaries in the entire Italic region, but especially so in Etruria. They were given as a token of thanks for healing received or to render a request for help more effective. In rare cases the pathological changes to the diseased organ are represented. Formerly Coll. P. C., Nuremberg, prior to 1980. Etruscan, 3rd cent. B.C. CHF 2,800



PART OF A STATUETTE OF A WOMAN. H. 10.3 cm. Terracotta, polychromy. Attractive fragment showing a young woman with melon coiffure. The well-preserved polychromy makes her amiable facial features seem exceptionally life-like. The eyes and eyebrows are painted black, the lips red. The shade of orange selected for the skin extends over the neck and left breast. It follows that that breast is bared, whereas the other is concealed behind a mantle with thick border, which is pulled up over the head and where there are traces of green paint in places. This allows the figure to be identified as the goddess Isis – or Aphrodite, who in Ptolemaic Egypt was equated with her. She might have been a kourotrophos, i.e. a figure cradling a child. Around her neck is a chain painted in red. Large areas of white clay slip and remains of black paint in the hair. Formerly priv. coll. Rhode Island. Ptolemaic Period, 3rd cent. B.C. CHF 1,600







A FRAGMENT OF A PILASTER CAPITAL. H. 28 cm. Marble. A volute curls upwards between two acanthus leaves. Above it, a row of alternating acanthus and lanceolate leaves crowned by a Lesbian kymation. Traces of the original polychromy preserved. Lower right corner slightly worn. Formerly Coll. Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, 1960s-1970s. Previously Coll. Julian Sands. Roman, 2nd half of 1st cent. A.D. CHF 16,000



A COCK. H. 12.5 cm. Clay. Mould-made terracotta statuette of a cock, hollow. The cock seated with extended neck. Surface worn. Ochre clay with traces of red and white colour. Formerly in the collection of The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, California, acquired by the museum in the late 19th-early 20th century, and subsequently sold to benefit the Acquisition Fund. An old label and two handwritten inventory numbers on the belly. Greek, 5th cent. B.C. CHF 1,200



A RED-FIGURE FISH-PLATE. Dm. 18.1 cm. Clay, white and pink paint. On the slightly slanting surface of the plate four red mullets, recognizable by their typical barbels, swim anticlockwise around the deep central well which is adorned by a rosette. Fins and contours are painted in opaque paint. A black wave band adorns the exterior of the overhanging lip. The black-glazed underside rests on a concave, flaring ring foot whose interior is almost entirely coated red. Reassembled from large fragments. Slight wear to ring foot; restoration to lip; joins partially with filler and retouched. Formerly priv. coll. L. S., LA County, USA, acquired prior to 2000. Western Greek, Apulian, ca. 340-320 B.C. CHF 8,800

A MAGNIFICENT FINGER RING WITH EROTES. Dm. max. 1.5 cm. Gold, garnet. Both ends of the curved hoop are adorned by statuettes of Eros which are crafted in great detail. The god is, as is often the case, depicted as a naked, chubby, winged boy. His left arm is raised and he holds a ball in his right hand. A double setting composed of two oval elements, each with a garnet cabochon, connects the heads and wing tips of the two figurines. The representation of Eros as a nude, chubby, winged boy was popular in the Late Classical and Hellenistic Period and is frequently encountered in the jewellery of that time. A very small lacuna on the surface of one Eros, otherwise undamaged. Formerly priv. coll. London, UK, in possession of the family since the 1970s. Greek, late 4th-2nd cent. B.C. CHF 8,800



A DRAPED TANAGRA FIGURINE. H. 13.8 cm. Clay. Standing contrapposto on a small platform is a woman clad in chiton and mantle, her gaze demurely lowered. With her right arm akimbo, she rests her left hand with extended index finger on her left breast. Draped in numerous tiny folds, her mantle is drawn up over her head and covers her whole body right down to the knees, leaving only the finely carved face exposed. Clearly visible underneath the fine fabric of the mantle is the hair knot at the back of her head. The chiton falls down to the ground in lavish folds so that only the tips of the toes can be seen peeping out. Remains of white ground and pale blue and pink paint. Chiton smoothed on the reverse; round firing hole. Front and back made separately. Two minor repairs at the base. Priv. coll., B.-S., Switzerland, acquired from Christian Grand, Zurich, April 1967. Greek, 3rd cent. B.C. CHF 4,400



A RING. Dm. 1.6 cm. Gold, blue glass. The broad hoop is decorated on both sides with fine spiral wire. A blue glass cabochon is set in a circular sheet gold plaque with a raised rim adorned with spiral wire. The setting is framed by two clusters of gold beads, one of which is missing. Minor lacunae in the rim of the setting. Formerly Coll. Michael Michaelides (1923-2015), London, formed in the 1950s-1970s; acquired Sotheby's London, 8 January 1968, lot 162. Roman, 2nd-3rd cent. A.D. CHF 2,400



A PAIR OF EARRINGS. L. 2.9 cm. Carnelian, black glass paste. A horizontal oval carnelian with tapering sides in a bezel setting and a pendant in the shape of a short twisted wire with a double volute above and a glass bead below are attached to the hanger. The end of the original hanger was bent in order to attach a modern fastener. The setting of one of the earrings is slightly squashed in one place. Otherwise excellent condition. Formerly Frank Sternberg, Zurich, prior to 2000. Roman, 2nd-3rd cent. A.D. CHF 2,800



## Recipe from Antiquity

# The Cooking Animal

## On the Origin of Cooking and the Dawn of Humankind

By Yvonne Yiu



Smoked horse meat surrounded by SILEX HAND AXES from the Lower to Middle Paleolithic, ca. 600,000–40,000 B.P. From left to right: L. 11 cm, CHF 1,500, L. 1.3 cm, CHF 2,000, L. 14.6 cm, CHF 1,800.

"My definition of man is, 'a cooking animal.' The beasts have memory, judgment, and all the faculties and passions of our mind, in a certain degree; but no beast is a cook," James Boswell noted in his diary on 15 August 1773, remembering a witty conversation with friends on the "definition of human nature." (*A Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, 1785, 16).

The question of what distinguishes human beings from animals has fascinated people since time immemorial. A multitude of characteristics such as our upright posture and gait, the ability to make and use tools, the capacity for empathy, compassion and ethical behaviour as well as the belief in God have been proposed. In his influential book, *The Descent of Man*, Charles Darwin placed particular emphasis on man's having learned to control fire and so developed the ability to cook: "He has discovered the art of making fire, by which hard and stringy roots can be rendered digestible, and poisonous roots or herbs innocuous. This last discovery, probably the greatest, excepting language, ever made by man, dates from before the dawn of history." (1871, 137).

In the wake of Claude Lévi-Strauss's structuralist analysis of the myths of indigenous tribes in South America, *Mythologiques I, Le Cru et le Cuit* (1964), cooking has been accorded a significance of similar magnitude by cultural historians, who interpret the antithetical relationship between the raw and the cooked as symbolical of the opposition of nature and culture. According to Michael Pol-

lan, for instance, "cooking transforms nature and, by doing so, elevates us above that state, making us human." (*Cooked. A Natural History of Transformation*, 2013, 53).

Sweeping statements like those found in Pollan's book are best met with a degree of scepticism. Remarkably, however, the anthropologists Leslie C. Aiello and Peter Wheeler reached similar conclusions in their "Expensive Tissue Hypothesis" (*Current Anthropology* 36 [1995] 199–211). This hypothesis rapidly found widespread acceptance and it remains to be seen whether the criticism voiced in recent research (e.g. A. Navarete et al., *Nature* 480 [2011] 91–93) will prevail. Aiello and Wheeler started out from the observation that, in comparison to other animals, humans have a high degree of encephalization. Indeed, the average human has a brain that is 4.6 times larger than expected for the average mammal. Furthermore, they noted that the human line experienced a "phenomenal increase in brain size in the past 2 million years." Whilst the australopithecines, who lived some 3.5 to 1.8 million years B.P., had a brain size of ca. 400–500 cc, which roughly corresponds to that of a chimpanzee, modern humans have a brain that is approximately three times larger, with an average volume of 1400 cc. The metabolic cost of such a large brain is considerable. Although the brain accounts for a mere 2 per cent of a modern human's body mass, it consumes ca. 16 per cent of the energy needed by the body at rest. As an animal's basic metabolic rate stands in a precisely defined relationship to its body mass

(Kleiber's Law), there are limits to how much it can rise. Aiello and Wheeler therefore considered the possibility that the expansion of the metabolically "expensive" brain was made possible by the compensatory reduction in the relative mass of another "expensive" organ. Their research revealed that the mass of the human gut was lower than expected and that "the energetic saving attributable to the reduction of the gastro-intestinal tract is approximately the same as the additional cost of the larger brain." Furthermore, they observed that evolutionary changes in the shape of the human rib cage provided further evidence in support of a gradual reduction in gut size. In light of this, Aiello and Wheeler proposed that there was "a coevolution between brain size and gut size in humans," and, based on data gathered from the study of primates, suggested that a higher quality diet would have made the reduction in gut size possible.

According to Aiello and Wheeler there were two major periods of brain expansion, the first correlating with the appearance of the genus *Homo* around 2 million years B.P. (eg. *H. habilis* with a brain size of ca. 650 cc) and the second, in which brain size increased to its modern level, coinciding with the appearance of archaic *H. sapiens* roughly 0.5 million years B.P. Anatomical comparisons revealed that the areas of the brain responsible for thinking, planning, memory and language profited most from brain growth. Aiello and Wheeler suggested that the first marked increase in brain size could have been due to an increased consumption of meat and that "for the second increase the introduction of cooking may have been an important factor." Somewhat tentatively they also proposed that "the exploitation of high-quality foods" would have "required more complex behaviours," which in turn "could have acted as one of the selection pressures for the observed increase in brain size."

In his book with the somewhat sensationalist title *Catching Fire. How Cooking Made Us Human* (2009), the primatologist Richard Wrangham in principle agrees with Aiello and Wheeler's reasoning, with one important difference. According to Wrangham, the consumption of cooked foods was not a cultural innovation contemporaneous with the early *H. sapiens*. Rather, he argues, the origin of



cooking lay in the far distant past, leading to the appearance of *H. erectus* some 1.8 million years B.P. With a brain volume of ca. 1100 cc, *H. erectus* had a significantly larger brain than *H. habilis* and his rib cage was already less prominent, indicating a smaller gastro-intestinal tract. The transition from *H. habilis* to *H. erectus*, moreover, was marked by the “largest reduction in tooth size in the last six million years of human evolution.” This, in particular, Wrangham interprets as a clear sign that *H. erectus* did not eat raw food, but cooked it, making the food considerably easier to chew.

The benefits of cooking are manifold. Amongst other things, it increases the digestibility of foods, thereby providing the body with significant energetic gains; it destroys toxins and pathogens, making foods safer to consume; and it dramatically reduces the time actually spent chewing. A chimpanzee devotes more than six hours a day to masticating his food whereas humans spend between a fifth to a tenth of this time eating. Freed from the constraint of chewing for hours on end, they could use the time saved for other activities. Furthermore, cooking as an essentially communal activity led to a more sophisticated group structure characterised by mutual sharing and the division of labour. Broadly speaking, Wrangham argues that the men out hunting relied on the women in the encampment to gather and cook staple foods, so that they would not go hungry if they made no kill, while the women trusted that the men would share the meat with them if the hunt was successful. This behaviour differs sharply from that of non-human primates, where adults do not share food with one another. Thus, according to Wrangham, “cooking made us human,” not only because it provided the physiological conditions necessary for the development of the “brilliant human mind” but also because it “made possible one of the most distinctive features of human society: the modern form of the sexual division of labor.”

From an archaeological perspective, there is a certain reluctance to embrace such deliberations, not least because there is very little evidence from the Palaeolithic Period for the use of fire for cooking. It is fairly certain that the opportunistic interaction with fire dates back a million years and it is possible that this behaviour may have appeared much earlier. Fire foraging, the search for naturally occurring fires with the hope of benefiting from additional nutritional resources such as birds' eggs, rodents, lizards and other small animals, as well as invertebrates, is documented for various species of animals and it is assumed that early humans also engaged in this activity. The oldest evidence indicative of the controlled use of fire was excavated in East Turkana and in Chesowanja in Kenya and is dated to ca. 1.4 million years B.P. Approxi-

mately half a dozen further early sites have been discovered, but it is assumed that the ability to maintain fires over longer periods of time and to create fire developed around or after ca. 400,000 B.P. (Cf. J.A.J. Gowlett, 2016, doi: 10.1098/rstb.2015.0164; M. Chazan, *Current Anthropology* 58 [2017] S351-S359).

A particularly vivid picture of the use of fire by early humans is provided by an archaeological site dated to ca. 400,000 B.P. in Schöningen, Germany. One day in late summer or possibly already early autumn, a hunting expedition by a group of early humans closely related to *H. erectus* met with extraordinary luck. Armed with wooden throwing spears measuring between 1.8 and 2.5 m in length, and with a range of up to 60 m, they succeeded in killing a herd of wild horses. Prior to this find, it had been assumed that only *H. sapiens* was capable of the systematic hunting of big game animals, because such a sophisticated operation required a high degree of organisational ability, an advanced level of abstract thinking and probably also verbal communication. Some of the meat from the at least 20 horses slaughtered that day was presumably eaten straight away. The remains of at least four hearths and a charred wooden artefact that was interpreted as a spit indicate that the meat was roasted. Furthermore, a number of working “anvils”, mostly radius bones of bison, were found, whose flat dorsal

surfaces were covered with a series of parallel cut marks, inviting the conclusion that the surplus meat may have been preserved by cutting it into strips and then drying it in the open air or smoking it. (H. Thieme, *The Lower Palaeolithic Art of Hunting*, in: *The Hominid Individual*, ed. C. Gamble, 2005, 115-132).

In addition to roasting and smoking there are a multitude of techniques with which food could be cooked before the introduction and habitual use of ceramic cooking pots in the Neolithic Period. These include cooking in fire pits, on hot stones, in embers or in clay, and the heating of liquids in containers made from organic materials such as wood or leather by the addition of hot stones. These simple methods can be employed not only to cook in a manner that highlights the food's natural taste but also to create refined dishes with complex aromas. Thus, it is indeed possible that cookery could qualify as an art even as early as the Palaeolithic Period.

#### Rabbit Baked in Clay

Wrap the rabbit meat in herbs and leaves, coat with clay, cover with glowing embers and bake for ca. 40 minutes.



#### Schöningen-Style Smoked Horse Meat



Build a smoking rack by tying together three long sticks and spreading them out to form a tripod. Attach three twigs to its sides. Cut the horse meat into strips, hang them over twigs and place them on the twig triangle. Make a fire. Once the flames have died down, place the rack over the embers and smoke the meat for 12-18 hours. Add wood to the fire when necessary. For a tastier version, cure the meat in brine for 12 hours (80 g salt per litre of water) and then soak in a marinade of your choice for a couple of hours before smoking.



## Highlight

# The Fascination of Snakes

## Vipers, Adders and Ancient Cults

By Martin Flashar

“Snakes played an important role in the lives of the peoples of Antiquity as did no other order of the animal kingdom with the exception of various domestic animals.” Thus begins the entry for “Snakes” in the 1921 edition of *Pauly's Encyclopaedia of the Ancient World* – an entry that runs to an astonishing sixty-three columns of text! Yet no one who has imagined the Mediterranean world as it was 2500 years ago will be surprised by this.

The first century Roman poet Lucan includes a whole catalogue of serpents in his epic account of the civil wars fought between Caesar and Pompey, where in his own rendition of the myth of Perseus and Medusa, the most famous of the three winged Gorgons who have snakes in lieu of hair, he lists no fewer than fifteen different snake species by name. There are two conclusions to be drawn from this key work of ancient literature: First, the ancients' biological knowledge of snakes, starting with Aristotle's *Historia Animalium*, rested to a high degree on their close observation of nature, and second, the reality of the reptile was inextricably entwined with mythological stories.

In a small work of art at Gallery Cahn we see two bronze snakes, each mounted on its own plinth. Their identical finish with a rectangular tang on the underside indicates that they undoubtedly belong together. Their twin-like appearance leaves us in no doubt that they are the work of the same craftsman and the same workshop. But are they really a pair? Undoubtedly! Their modern positioning on separate plinths cannot possibly accord with the original composition of the piece. Since the snakes were in all likelihood not mass-produced, everything – including their shared provenance – speaks for their having originally been inserted in one and the same stone plinth. The longer part of their bodies lies coiled up on the ground, both in a clockwise direction, so that far from being antithetical counterparts, they basically repeat each other. The head and neck of both are aggressively reared up and seem to capture the instant immediately prior to the adversary's actual attack.

Especially striking are the little beards hanging down under their chins. This detail is not reproduced from nature; instead, bearded snake heads frequently featured in representations of the Medusa, for example, as the snake girdle of the Gorgon on the pediment of the Archaic temple of Artemis at Kerkyra/Corfu shows. Python, the dragon-like serpent whom Apollo has to slay, is also generally shown with a beard. Thus iconography can serve to signify divine power.

Are the regular scales of the snakes at Gallery Cahn – the staggered rows of finely incised pointed ovals on the upper side, the parallel ribs on the underside – a reproduction of reality or rather just decoration, an attractive way of finishing the bronze? The answer is probably both. This also has to do with the age in which they were made. The work must have been created at a time when people were



BRONZE VOTIVE: BEARDED SNAKE PAIR REARING UP TO ATTACK. L. max. 11.5 cm. Greek, ca. 450 B.C. CHF 26,000

becoming aware of the artistic merits of naturalistic representation, and at the same time were succumbing to the temptation to overdraw – and so enhance – the beauty of both flesh and skin. The two snakes should therefore be dated to the Classical period of Greek art. The rigorously, if decoratively, incised scales certainly speak for a dating within the 5th century B.C., and later rather than earlier.

Unfortunately, there are hardly any properly dated works that might be referenced by way of comparison. There is a group of bronze *kerykeia* (the caducei carried by the god Hermes), probably from Lower Italy, with extrinsic clues suggesting that it was made towards the end of the 5th century; but in terms of form, the pair at Gallery Cahn seems older. The metope of the Olympian temple of Zeus showing Hercules slaying the Hydra of Lerna is too poorly preserved for us to be able to draw any conclusions from it. Yet there can be no doubt that the concept described above, which rests on the narrative “moment of tension,” to use Luca Giuliani's phrase, belonged to the Severe Style, that is, to the Early Classical period, which saw a broader understanding of the narrative as a sequence of actions through time gradually taking hold.

In closing a few words about the function of the object: Snakes have always provoked – both in reality and in art. We are either fascinated by them or repelled – two poles between which there is very little latitude. This is what the sources tell us too, often exaggerating the malevolence of snakes and hence the danger they pose contrary to reality. It is an undisputed fact, remarked on by the French Structuralists in their discussions of Greek religion, iconography, and mythology, that things that are terrifying or hideous not only appal and repel. They also have the power to transfix the gaze, to cast a spell on us, as it were. This is just as true of the grimacing Gorgon as it is of supposedly deadly snakes. And it is precisely this ambivalence, the snake's venomousness coupled with its ability to shed its skin – implying rejuvenation and renewal – that defines the magic of snakes in Antiquity. These bronze snakes must have been a votive offering!