

## Editorial

Dear readers

This year we had a very full programme with two auctions and four fairs, although I had originally intended to devote more time to the artworks themselves. I strongly feel that it is essential to handle ancient works of art with great care, respect and attention. Less is more, as ancient art, in contrast to much that we encounter today, is not superficial. Rather, these artworks reveal ever new facets to the attentive beholder, depending on which questions and attitudes he approaches them with. The artworks that we present are, after all, monuments of our own cultural roots, even if they are increasingly enshrouded in Olympian mists owing to our insufficient command of their languages, Latin and Greek. The systematic destruction of such monuments makes us painfully aware of this. The elegant torso of Venus depicted here is exemplary of the aesthetic ideal of Antiquity, which has shaped our concept of beauty from the Renaissance to the present day. Unfortunately, this form of permissiveness is not accepted in other cultures.

It is important to us to enable you to participate in our discoveries. In the coming year, therefore, we intend to show you how we work with the objects, how they are shipped, go through customs, are photographed and are studied by our archaeologists and restorers. Furthermore, our website will be more dynamic, updating you regularly on our activities.

I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

*Jean-Jacques Cahn*



A TORSO OF APHRODITE (CNIDIAN TYPE). H. 32.5 cm. Marble. Roman, 1st-2nd cent. A.D. CHF 76,000

### Auction

## Auction 10: Magnificent Antiquities in the Wenkenpark

By Yvonne Yiu



The tent in which the auction was held.

This year, our Auction 10 was held in a tent that was set up especially for this purpose in the Wenkenpark, in the immediate vicinity of the Basel Ancient Art Fair (BAAF). In its comprehensiveness, the auction preview re-

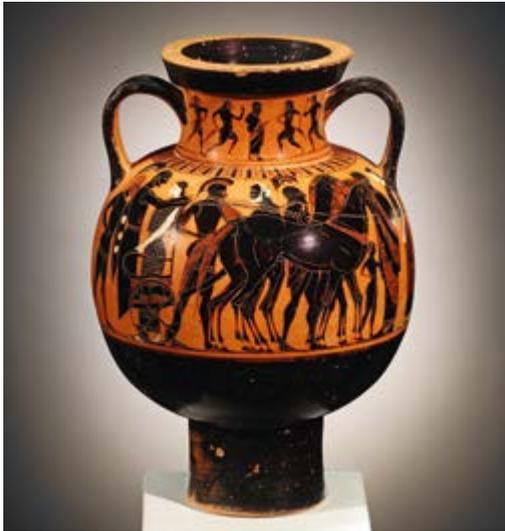
sembled an exhibition at a fair. All important periods and cultures were represented, with a magnificent section on Greek ceramics – featuring over twenty rare vases of exceptionally high quality – taking pride of place.

Not surprisingly, the unusually shaped psykter amphora was the top lot of the auction, fetching CHF 125,000 premium (lot 53, starting bid CHF 68,000). There was fierce bidding for the neck amphora of the Leagros Group (lot 52, 48,000 / 87,500)<sup>1</sup>, the pelike with Demeter and Persephone (lot 65, 65,000 / 106,250), and the two outstanding lekythoi from the Circle of the Pan Painter (lot 62, 34,000 / 81,250; lot 67, 26,000 / 50,000).

Many objects with a low starting bid were sold for prices significantly above the re-

serve. A Roman bowl made of blue, ribbed glass was much sought after, selling for more than six times the starting bid (lot 118, 1,400 / 11,875). The Oxyrynchus fish was knocked down for three times the starting bid (lot 148, 1,500 / 5,625), and both the Aphrodite holding a dove as well as the kore's head antefix more than doubled their reserve (lot 41, 2,800 / 7,500; lot 35, 2,400 / 6,250).

A significant number of objects, especially those at the upper end of the price scale, were knocked down. This was the case, for instance, with one of the Bactrian goddesses (lot 21), the archaic griffin protome (lot 38), and the Roman marble bust of a lady (lot 194) which was acquired by a museum.



Inclusive of the after sale, more than half of the lots were sold. In view of the current difficult political and economic situation, this can be regarded as a sound result. We would like to say a warm thank you to all our loyal clients!

<sup>1</sup> All prices in Swiss francs. The first number is the starting bid, which is identical to the reserve; the second number is the price, including premium, for which the object was sold.

The top lot of Auction 10: AN ATTIC PSYKTER AMPHORA, lot 53, sold for CHF 125,000.



Precious glass: A LARGE RIBBED BOWL, lot 118, sold for CHF 11,875.

In Honour of Herbert A. Cahn's 100th Birthday

## Herbert A. Cahn as Composer

Yvonne Yiu spoke with Jean-Jacques Dünki about the compositions of Herbert A. Cahn



Herbert A. Cahn, *Es hat die warme Frühlingsnacht*, composition sketch, not dated.

YY: Dear Jean-Jacques, thank you very much for looking at the compositions by Herbert A. Cahn. As a pianist and composer, I am sure that you can easily recognize what is interesting about these works. Jean-David Cahn found them in the estate of his late father a couple of years ago. It was a great surprise for him, for he had no idea that his father had composed music. Herbert A. Cahn appears never to have spoken about them, although he stored the manuscripts carefully.

JJD: Let us get a general overview of the material. On the one hand, there are fair copies, which are dated, with an opus number: *Kurze Suite für drei Violinen*, Op. 1, 1932; *Streichquartet*, Op. 2, 1932; *Fünf Gesänge für gemischten Chor a cappella nach griechischer Chorlyrik*, Op. 3, Christmas 1932; *Sonate für 2 Violinen und Klavier*, Op. 4, 1935, as well as sketches and preliminary versions of these pieces. Furthermore, we have fair copies of two pieces without opus number: *Fünf*

*Kanons für 2 Violinen*, and a setting of an excerpt of Friedrich Hölderlin's *Hyperion*, without title (1946). On the other hand, there is a large number of unfinished works. The earliest dated sketch is a setting of a poem by Heinrich Heine, which Herbert A. Cahn wrote in 1929. The voice part is very high and the piece as a whole is more instrumentally conceived, rather than vocal.

YY: This means that Herbert A. Cahn already started composing at the age of 14. In 1932, the 17-year-old musician seems to have experienced a kind of breakthrough, finishing three works which he regarded worthy of an opus number. Shortly afterwards, however, his artistic drive began to slacken, and in the 1940s he stopped composing altogether. This might have been occasioned by biographical reasons.

The Cahn family belonged to the Frankfurt intelligentsia, and took part actively in the cultural life of their time. Both Herbert's father and grandfather were enthusiastic amateur musicians, and in his *Curriculum vitae* (1988) Herbert's brother Erich wrote: "Special emphasis was placed on music in our house, where it was cultivated and practiced in the form of chamber music." We can safely assume that Herbert A. Cahn who, as an adult, played the viola, took violin lessons as a child, and that Erich, whom we encounter as an enthusiastic harpsichord player in later years, originally learnt the piano. Such a home surely provided the young composer with a stimulating and supportive environment.

The rise of the Nazi regime brought about dramatic changes for the Cahn family.

Fearing the worst, 18-year-old Herbert and 20-year-old Erich were sent to Basle in 1933 where they founded the *Münzhandlung Basel* with the aid of art dealers and coin collectors who were old friends of the family. While working as a coin dealer, Herbert studied Classical Archaeology, Ancient History and Musicology at Basle University. He graduated in 1940 with a superb monograph on the coins of Naxos in Sicily. Possibly the manifold challenges posed by his demanding profession and university studies, as well as by the difficult political situation, left him too little creative freedom to compose.



Herbert A. Cahn, *Kurze Suite für drei Violinen*, Op. 1, 1932.

JJD: Let us take a look at the *Kurze Suite für drei Violinen*, Op. 1, 1932. The melodic line reveals a thorough knowledge of string instrument playing techniques. In *I. Ouvertüre*, the imitation of the voices and the asynchronously distributed dynamics are superb. On the one hand, he wanted to show off his command of baroque counterpoint technique; on the other, he chose the unusual 5/4 time signature. Such strategies to break through conventional boundaries are characteristic of the avant-garde of the 1920s. Evidently, Herbert A. Cahn admired the music of Paul Hindemith. In *II. Menuett*, he permits himself little impertinences, such as the hard-to-play tritone, and the dissonances in *III. Gavotte* are very interesting. In *IV. Sarabande*, Herbert A. Cahn uses a strange enharmonic notation; the movement could have been written in a simpler way. *V. Rondo* is colourful and witty, and reveals the influence of Igor Stravinsky and Arnold Schoenberg. In the last movement of the suite, *VII. Passacaglia-Fuge*, the composer shows his good taste and education.

The *Streichquartett*, Op. 2, 1932, is very ambitious, especially the double fugue with

which the quartet ends. In this movement, Herbert A. Cahn marked the principal subject in red and the secondary subject in blue pencil crayon. In a preliminary version of the fair copy, he writes: "The principal subject must be played so that it stands out clearly; the secondary subject must also be played in a more forceful manner than the accompanying voices." This method of marking out the principal and secondary subjects in colour, and of creating a hierarchy of voices, was introduced by Schoenberg. As a whole, *Streichquartett* possesses much of the impetus of the 1920s; the influence of Hindemith is evident in this piece too. It is an outstanding achievement for a 17-year-old.

Herbert A. Cahn wrote the *Fünf Gesänge*, Op. 3, 1932, for a setting with which he had little experience. In contrast to his works for strings, he didn't really know what was suitable for voice. The soprano part is very demanding with long passages in an extremely high pitch (b"- d"); the piece was probably never performed. Nonetheless the combination of phrasing and articulation slurs in the second song – something that is found in works by Max Reger – reveal a highly musical spirit.

The *Sonate für 2 Violinen und Klavier*, Op. 4, 1935, which was composed in Switzerland after a longer pause represents the nadir of Herbert A. Cahn's compositional work. The style of the piece is not as advanced as that of the earlier ones. The second movement is slightly more interesting, but not well structured and somewhat tedious. In the *Fünf Kanons für 2 Violinen* from 1939 the fingering is carefully written in and there are also pencil notes, indicating that the piece was performed, probably in a private setting. From a musical point of view it does not represent a step forward. The latest dated piece by Herbert A. Cahn in this collection of autographs is a setting of a poem by Friedrich Hölderlin (untitled) for voice, violin, viola and cello (1946). Again, this piece draws on past achievements.

YY: On looking through the notebooks, it becomes evident that Herbert A. Cahn continued to experience a great urge to compose even after his emigration to Switzerland. He scribbled down musical ideas on hotel stationery and on exhibition invitations. Furthermore, he experimented both with larger musical forms, such as the concerto (*Konzert für zwei Hörner und Streichorchester*, 1936/37), and with unusual instrumental formations: *Rilke: Cornet* (1933), is written for an orchestra with woodwind, brass, strings, percussion, harp and voice. These ambitious pieces, however, did not go beyond the draft stage.

JJD: It is striking that many sketches are

abandoned abruptly. This is a sign of crisis, or possibly also of a lack of time. *Es hat die warme Frühlingsnacht* is, for instance, a brilliant sketch with extremely interesting leaps; it is experimental and witty – but the piece is truncated after only 16 bars. Every child prodigy – and Herbert A. Cahn was close to being one – experiences a crisis sooner or later. It is not atypical that Opus 1 and 2 are the best pieces. Difficulties follow, and these need to be overcome; it is essential not to lose spirit and to keep on writing – *nulla dies sine linea*.

YY: Do you think that it would be worthwhile to perform *Kurze Suite für drei Violinen* (Op. 1) and *Streichquartett* (Op. 2)?

JJD: Absolutely! But it is imperative that these pieces be played by professional musicians. They are very demanding technically, especially with regard to intonation. By contrast, I find the other compositions less rewarding. Nonetheless, this collection of autographs is very interesting from a historical point of view and I strongly recommend it to be conserved, documented and evaluated by specialists.

YY: Dear Jean-Jacques, many thanks for this very interesting discussion.



Jean-Jacques Dünki, pianist and composer. Born in Aarau, Switzerland, in 1948. He studied piano in Basle and, amongst other places, in Paris and New York. In 1981 he received the Arnold Schoenberg Award in Rotterdam. He is active internationally as a soloist and chamber musician and has recorded 24 CDs, including premiere recordings of works by Berg, Reger, Schreker, Webern and Zemlinsky. He has composed ca. 80 pieces, mainly for keyboard instruments and chamber ensembles. Since 1984 he has headed a class for piano and chamber music at the Academy of Music, Basle.

Herbert A. Cahn (born 28 January 1915, died 5 April 2002) would have celebrated his 100th birthday this year. With a series of articles in this magazine we would like to pay a tribute to this remarkable numismatist, scholar and art dealer.

## The Debate

# On the Advantages of Archaeology for Ancient Historians

By Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg



*Tomba dei Rilievi with stucco decoration. Banditaccia necropolis, Cerveteri. 3rd quarter of 4th century B.C.*

If, following Herodotus, we understand “history” to mean the inquiry into “human achievements” (and sufferings), then archaeology, being concerned with the material remains of those achievements, is first and foremost a special field within the same discipline. Of course it has now become much broader in scope. Having focused initially on all things spectacular – temples, palaces, art objects – archaeologists these days are more interested in, for instance, the development of crafts, domestic animals and crops, studied with scientific exactitude.

For historians, however, it is the written sources that remain paramount, whose very existence marks the boundary between “prehistory” and “protohistory”. A good example of the latter are the Celts and Germanic tribes whose history we know only from “outsiders”, specifically from Greek and Latin sources. In the absence of any written sources the ruins of Great Zimbabwe and the graves of the Celtic princes (Glauberg, Hochdorf, Vix) remain forever silent, for all their splendour. *Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona multi* – “Many brave men lived before Agamemnon” Horace reminds us

(*Carmina*, 4,9,25–26); yet we know nothing of them because “they lack a sacred poet”.

In that particular instance, Heinrich Schliemann’s excavations in Troy and Mycenae, and those of other archaeologists in Knossos and Pylos, did indeed unearth a world “before”, and contemporaneous with, Agamemnon – the world now known to us as the Minoan-Mycenaean Age, which thanks to the deciphering of the Linear B tablets has begun speaking to us. It was archaeologists, moreover, who found the “World of Odysseus” in the Geometric Period of the 9th/8th century B.C. and with it the true age of Homer – albeit one in which memories of a glorious Mycenaean past lived on.

This was the world of the nobility, whose competitiveness and passion for sports, leisurely banquets (symposia) and cult of the dead are familiar to us not only from the Homeric epics and the works of the first poets (Archilochos, Alcaeus, Sappho), but also – in colour! – from the fine arts and countless vase paintings. An example: Before Odysseus wreaks revenge on the suitors, he and Telemachus first have to take down their helmets, shields

and spears from the walls of the *megaron* in which they customarily dine (*Odyssey*, 19, 31–33). And it is those same items adorning the wall of a banqueting hall (Frg. 140 V) that Alcaeus invokes to inspire his fellow symposiasts to take up arms against the tyrant: “The vast room gleams with bronze ... with sheen of casques ... Bright greaves of bronze ... new-made linen vests and hollow shields ... along with swordblades from Chalkis ...” (trans. Anne Pippin Burnett).

Yet only archaeology could render such banqueting halls visible. Similarly magnificent interiors, festooned with arms and other artefacts, were typically prepared for deceased Etruscan nobles as late as the 4th century, as the *Tomba dei Rilievi* in Cerveteri (Caere) and some of the tombs in Tarquinia such as the *Tomba Giglioli* and the *Tomba degli Scudi* show. Alcaeus could have sung his poems right there – albeit while partaking of the funeral feast.

The custom of adorning noble houses with arms survived even longer in Rome, where many of the weapons on display were war booty seized from defeated enemies. In the year 121 B.C., for example, M. Fulvius Flac-



*Inscribed bronze breastplate, seized as booty in Falerii, 241 B.C. Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum L.80. AC.37*

cus of the party of Gaius Gracchus armed his followers for the last desperate battle against Consul L. Opimius and the Senate using weapons from his triumph against the Ligurians, Vocontii and Salluvii in 123 B.C., which since then he had kept in his own home (Plutarch, *Life of Caius Gracchus*, 15).

In the absence of an archaeological context, however, it is impossible to say where the bronze breastplate that turned up as an anonymous loan to the J. Paul Getty Museum in 1986 was originally displayed. Its inscription names the two consuls of the year 241 B.C., Q. Lutatius and A. Manlius, and identifies it as booty seized from the Falisci at Falerii, which the said consuls had just conquered. As it was made in the 4th century, however, it might already have been on display in a noble house in Falerii – perhaps even then a war trophy? – and to judge by its good state of preservation was furnished with the inscription only before being placed in the tomb of its new owner.

The grave goods found in the tombs of the Celtic princes, among them the monumental Vix Krater, also take us back to the aristocratic symposium culture of the Mediterranean and the costly artefacts to which it gave rise. What would we give to know the stories that were told and the poems that were sung at the courts of these princes!



Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg studied History and Latin in Munich and Freiburg im Breisgau. He habilitated in 1974 at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg with a thesis on Capua in the Second Punic War, focussing on Roman annalistics. From 1978-2007 he was Professor of Ancient History at the University of Basle. Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg is Honorary Professor of the Universities of Haute Alsace (2000), Riga (2002), and Tartu (2005). His research interests include the Roman Republic, Baltic History and the History of Science. Furthermore, he was co-editor of the *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* in the new Jacob Burckhardt Edition.

## My Choice

# A Celtic Longsword

By Jean-David Cahn



CELTIC LONGSWORD. L. 88.6 cm. Iron. Central Europe, Middle to Late La Tène, 2nd cent. B.C. CHF 24,000

This Celtic longsword from the Middle to Late La Tène Period is a masterpiece of the art of metalwork. The blade and tang were forged from a single piece of iron. I am enthralled by the elegance and precision of the stippled decoration with which the blacksmith adorned the double-edged blade: a band of flat, alternating triangles runs along each of the fullers flanking the raised central ridge. Towards the tip of the sword, the triangles give way to a delicate linear pattern resembling the twigs of a tree. Such stylized vegetal designs are typical of the La Tène Period.

The elegantly curved element at the end of the blade is notched on one side and was forged separately. It is highly unusual and most impressive that the pommel is crafted in the shape of a Celtic helmet adorned with triangles and peltae inlaid with red enamel. These are reminiscent of the famous helmet of Amfreville (4th cent. B.C.). The Celts greatly favoured the combination of iron and enamel for their luxury weapons, a marriage of materials that in turn inspired Roman craftsmen, especially makers of fibulae.

The nicks on the cutting edges of the blade testify to the sword's actual use in battle. The blade narrows sharply at the tip, indicating that it was used not only to slash but also to stab. This comes as a surprise, as the Celts

generally fought on horseback, wielding their swords in expansive, slashing movements. Julius Caesar mentions this method of swordsmanship in his description of the Battle of Bibracte. It is not possible to stab from the back of a moving horse, as the rider would be thrown off his steed.

Having spent many years studying weapons, I never cease to be amazed by the technical perfection of Celtic weapons, which in many aspects surpasses that of those produced by the Greeks and Romans. The sword presented here, too, is perfectly balanced and superbly formed.

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## Animals in Antiquity

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

A STATUETTE OF A HORSE. H. 5.5 cm. L. 5.8 cm. Bronze. This statuette of a horse is remarkable for its finely modelled, naturalistic forms. The horse holds its front right leg raised and its head turned slightly to one side. The mane is articulated as a row of knots, while the slim muzzle features a clearly defined mouth and nostrils. The eyes are punched and were possibly inlaid originally. Right front leg restored in places. Fine green patina. Formerly Priv. Coll. R. Wagner, MA, USA, 1970s. Greek, Hellenistic, 3rd-2nd cent. B.C.

CHF 9,500



A DRAPED FEMALE RIDING A MULE. H. 12.5 cm. L. 12 cm. Terracotta. The mule is depicted with its head slightly raised, walking to the right with a young woman riding side saddle on its back. The woman's chiton and himation cling to her body in ample folds, covering her almost completely so that the viewer can glimpse only the eyes, forehead and part of her fine nose. Mould-made, firing hole on the reverse. Remains of white clay slip and pale blue paint. Reassembled out of large fragments. Relatively rare motif, though examples from Boeotia are known. Formerly Collection H. Hoek, Riehen, Switzerland. Greek, Hellenistic, 3rd-2nd cent. B.C.

CHF 9,600



A STATUETTE OF A CAT. H. 5.4 cm. Bronze. The slim animal crouches upright on a small plinth. The elegant line of its body is seen to best advantage in profile. The long tail curls round to the front at the right. The pointed head with wide-open, almond-shaped eyes and finely engraved muzzle is crowned with large, pricked ears. The ancient Egyptians were masters of the representation of animals in art. They stylized heavily, or at least showed a preference for the silhouetted forms and poses now considered typical of them. The impression made by such Egyptian animals is shaped more by the elegance of their contours than by anatomical exactitude. Beautifully preserved. Formerly priv. coll. France. With P. Bergé, 2007. Egypt, Late Period-Ptolemaic, 7th-3rd cent B.C.

CHF 7,400

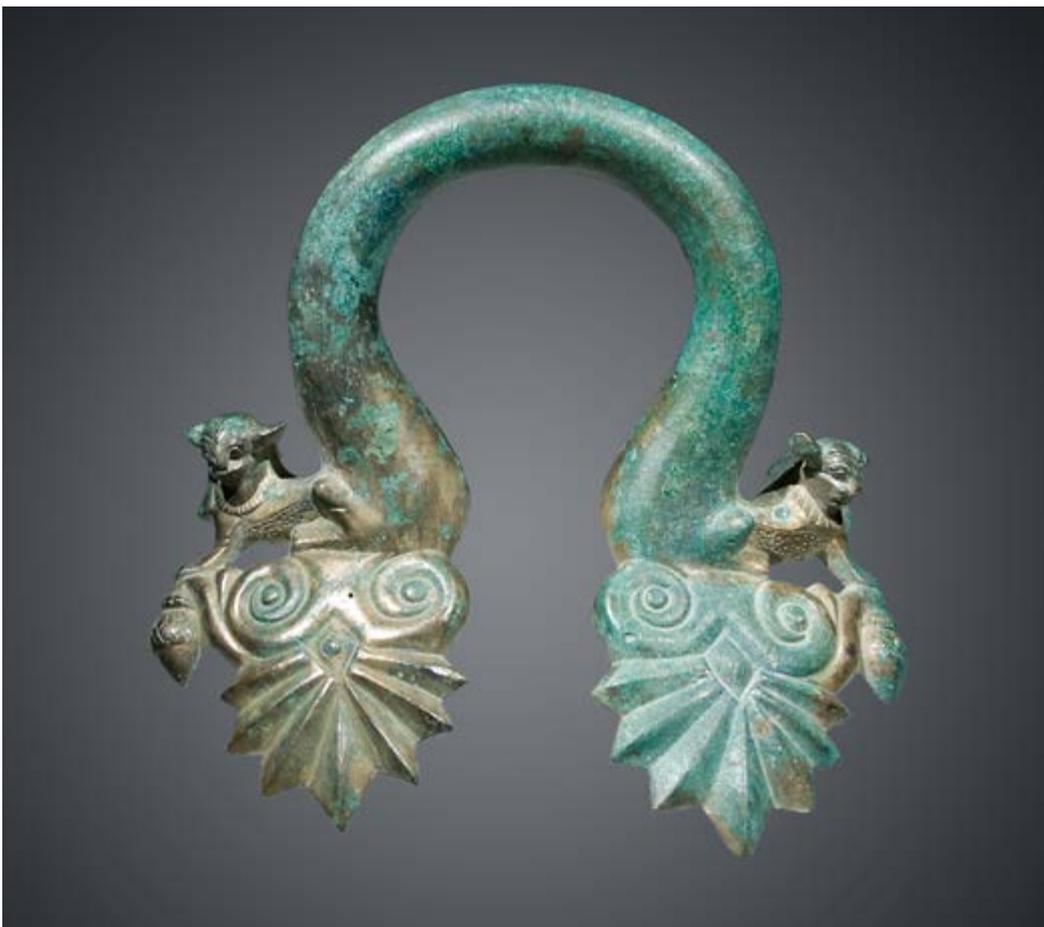


A CROUCHING RABBIT. L. 3 cm. Bronze. Crouching on the ground with its long ears pricked up, this delightful little fellow is completely preoccupied with a lucky find, the berry or nut that he is holding between his paws and greedily gobbling up. Ring-punched eyes. Undamaged. With Antiquarium, Ltd. New York, acquired in 1994 on the European art market. Roman, 1st-3rd cent. A.D. CHF 3,400

A WOODEN STATUETTE OF A CAT. H. 16.5 cm. Wood. Slender feline squatting on its hind legs. The elegant line of its body is seen to best advantage in profile. Even the slightly stiff-looking forelegs trace a harmonious curve when viewed from the side, making them a perfect match for the lean, sinewy body. Long tail curled round to the front right side of the animal. The ancient Egyptians were masters of the representation of animals in art. They stylized heavily, or at least showed a preference for the silhouetted forms and poses now considered typical of them. The impression made by such Egyptian animals is shaped more by the elegance of their contours than by anatomical exactitude. The cat counts as a symbol of the pacified, appeased goddess. Several fissures and a few chips. Only half the tail preserved. Formerly Coll. P. R., The Netherlands. Thereafter Dutch art market, 2015. Egypt, Ptolemaic, 3rd-1st cent. B.C. CHF 4,600



A WEIGHT IN THE SHAPE OF A BOAR. L. 6.8 cm. Bronze. The boar rests its head, which is turned slightly to the left, on an elongated plinth. Its forelegs are bent and its hind legs angled. The ears are raised attentively. Anatomical details such as the eyes, tusks, crest, curly tail and cloven-hoofed feet are naturalistically modelled. The structure of the fur is carefully rendered by finely incised dots and lines. A loop on the boar's back indicates that it served as a weight. Base hollow and with square recess. Fine dark green patina. Intact. Formerly priv. coll., Portugal, acquired on the German art market in the 1980s. Roman, 1st-3rd cent. A.D. CHF 2,800



A HANDLE OF A HYDRIA. H. 12.5 cm. Bronze. Curved handle ending in two hanging palmettes, each with a pair of rolled-up leaves. The palmettes served to attach the handle to the vessel. The fixation holes are still visible on the reverse. One rivet is preserved. A feline crouches in each of the two corners formed by the handle and the palmettes. It rests one of its forelegs on an acorn, the other paw is raised. There is a smooth transition from the back of each feline to the handle. The details of the fur and face are rendered by incisions. Surface slightly corroded. Formerly priv. coll., Great Britain. Etruscan, late 6th-early 5th cent B.C. CHF 12,500



A FINIAL WITH MONKEY ATTACHMENT. H. 8.5 cm. Bronze. Central, vertical pole to which small discs are connected by horizontal bars, the whole surmounted by a stylised, sitting monkey who holds both hands close to his mouth. An incised X at the back of its head. Three horizontal lines in the middle of its back, fish-bone pattern above and below. Slightly worn. Formerly Coll. K. S., Cologne. Northern Greek, Geometric, 2nd half 8th cent. B.C. CHF 2,400



A BRONZE STATUETTE OF A CAT. H. 8.5 cm. Bronze. Slender feline sitting upright on a base which is shaped like a menit, a cultic instrument emblematic of the lion or cat as pacified goddess. The elegant line of the body is seen to best advantage in profile. Long tail curled round to the front at the right. The ancient Egyptians were masters of the representation of animals in art. They stylized heavily, or at least showed a preference for the silhouetted forms and poses now considered typical of them. The impression made by such Egyptian animals is shaped more by the elegance of their contours than by anatomical exactitude. Part of the tail reattached. Part of the base lost. Formerly Coll. Léon Rodrigues-Ely (1924-1973), Marseille, France. Egypt, Late Period, ca. 500-300 B.C. CHF 12,000



A WEIGHT IN THE SHAPE OF AN APE. H. 2.8 cm. Bronze. The eating ape sits upright on a small plinth. His face is framed by hair from which the ears protrude. The arms rest on his knees. Intact. Formerly Coll. L. Mildenberg (1913-2001). Publ.: A. S. Walker, *Animals in Ancient Art from the Leo Mildenberg Collection. Part III* (1996) no. 94 with illus. Greek, late 6th cent. B.C. CHF 3,200



A STATUETTE OF A MALE GOAT. H. 2.5 cm. Bronze. Head with punched eyes, pointed muzzle, horns which curve backwards and long beard. The structure of the fur is represented by fine incisions. The goat bears a load on his back and stands on a rectangular plinth. One horn slightly worn. Applique. Formerly Priv. Coll. Garry Owen, Great Britain; from the estate of his father. Thereafter English art market. Roman, 1st-2nd cent. A.D. CHF 2,500



A HORSE. H. 11 cm. Terracotta. Head with rounded muzzle, ridge-shaped mane, spool-shaped body, strong legs and slightly arched tail. Traces of white engobe. Hind legs restored. Formerly Oehl, Munich, 1968; Rosenbaum, Ascona, 1970; Galerie Arete Zurich, Antiquitätenmesse Berne, 1971; Rutschmann, Nidau, 1980; Coll. Weber, Jegenstorf, 1958-2005. Boeotian, 6th cent. B.C. CHF 900



A BLACK-FIGURE SIANA CUP, ATTRIBUTED TO THE GRIFFIN-BIRD PAINTER. H. 10.5 cm. D. 19 cm. Clay. On the interior, within a small tondo whose diameter exactly replicates that of the foot-plate, a komast moves to left in vigorous dance step. He is naked but for the bikini-briefs across the top of his thighs. His sex, however, remains exposed. On each exterior side, overlapping bowl and offset rim, three creatures are disposed heraldically: on A, a siren to right between griffin-birds; on B, a sphinx between frontal-faced panthers. Details in added red and white partially preserved. Reassembled from fragments; breaks retouched. Formerly Priv. Coll. M. H., Ticino, by inheritance, before 2004. Attic, ca. 540-535 B.C.  
CHF 12,000



AN INTAGLIO WITH EAGLE. W. 1.8 cm. Jasper. Horizontal oval, sides tapering to reverse. Eagle with outspread wings, holding its prey animal, a small hare, in its talons. Intact. Formerly priv. coll., Bavaria, 1965-2010. Roman, 1st-2nd cent. A.D.  
CHF 1,800



AN INTAGLIO WITH MYTHICAL CREATURE. H. 1 cm. Carnelian. Octagonal intaglio, sides tapering towards reverse. Mythical creature to left with goat-like body and human head with wreath and horns. Reverse slightly worn. Formerly priv. coll., Bavaria, 1965-2010. Roman, 1st-3rd cent. A.D.  
CHF 2,200



A TURTLE. L. 2 cm. Carnelian. Eyes and carapace finely incised. Mouth drilled. Undamaged. Formerly Coll. P. S., The Netherlands, 1985. Egypt, Late Period-Roman, 5th cent. B.C.-1st cent. A.D.  
CHF 1'400

## Recipe from Antiquity

## Parasite Party

## Table Companions of the Gods and Uninvited Guests in Ancient Greece

By Yvonne Yiu



Lentils and onions in TWO MESOMPHALIC PHIALES. Dm. max. 17 cm. Bronze. Greek, 1st half of 5th cent. B.C., CHF 3,200 (incl. a third phiale). AN ORNAMENTAL ATTACHMENT. H. 7 cm. Bronze. Greek, 4th cent. B.C. CHF 1,200. A SMALL CUP with salt and coriander. Dm. 8.8 cm. Clay. Attic, 5th cent. B.C. CHF 50. TWO SPITS. L. max. 52.7 cm. Bronze. Etruscan, 7th-6th cent. B.C. CHF 900. BULL (front right, the others not for sale), L. 5.5 cm. Bronze. Roman, 2nd-3rd cent. A.D. CHF 1,800.

Last summer, which seemed like one enormous, never-ending heat-wave, there seemed no better way to enjoy the almost tropical evenings than to meet up with friends and to have a grill party. But wouldn't every now and again an unpleasant humming sound be heard? A small bite, an aggravating itch, and, disgruntled, you get up to fetch the insect repellent. These loathsome parasites!

Generally, when we think of parasites, creatures such as mosquitos, fleas and tapeworms which feed on the body fluids of their host, harming but not killing him, come to mind. Plants too, for instance mistletoe, have developed parasitic forms of life, and indeed the term "parasite" in its current sense was first employed by 17<sup>th</sup>-century botanists, such as Thomas Browne and Nehemiah Grew. Parasitism is also found in higher animals, however, and even human beings can be parasites: In his book *Le Parasite* (1980), the philosopher Michel Serres put forward the thesis that man was the universal parasite, and that all human systems were based on the parasitical exchange of something for nothing.

The people of ancient Greece would probably have found Serres's holistic concept of parasitism rather bizarre, for over the course of many centuries, the parasite formed an integral part of their society and had clearly defined tasks and character traits, which

distinguished him from the other members of society.

The term παράσιτος is composed of the words παρά (alongside) and σίτος (grain, food), and is used to designate "a person who eats at the table of another". In the fragments that have been preserved of his book on parasites, Polemon of Athens (2nd cent. B.C) notes: "The name of parasite is now a disreputable one; but among the ancients we find the word parasite used as something sacred, equivalent to one who is a table companion at a cultic celebration." The parasites had to fill certain requirements as to their lineage in order to be elected to this honourable office. In the sanctuary of Apollo on Delos, for instance, they served for one year. Unfortunately, we know very little about the parasites' duties. It is reported that the parasites of Herakles at Cynosarges offered the monthly sacrifice together with the priest, and a law passed by the Archon Basileus required that the parasites of Apollo at Acharnai consecrate barley to the god and also "select from their own share a sixth part of a medimnus barley, on which all who are citizens of Athens shall feast in the temple, according to the national laws and customs". (Ath., *Deipn.*, 6.234d-235d; Preller, Frg. 78).

The most important function of the parasites, however, according to Ludwig Ziehen (RE

XVIII, 1379), can only be deduced from the word παράσιτοι itself. Ziehen refers to the theoxenia – meals which were offered to the gods on days when they were imagined to be present in the city. Even apart from the theoxenia, the practice of offering food or entire meals to the gods was widespread, and holy tables stood in the temples, ready to receive gifts of meat, bread, cakes and fruit (Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 135). Ziehen argues that when the god was invited to dine, the company of the priest alone was not deemed sufficient, and that the parasites were necessary as additional table companions.

The meat of the sacrificial animal certainly formed the main component of these meals. It was customary that the animal was cut into pieces after it had been ritually slaughtered. Some of the meat, fat and bones was burnt on the altar, whilst libations were performed. The rest of the meat was then roasted and eaten (Nilsson, *griech. Religion*, 142). In the Anakeion, a stele records how the meat of the sacrificial oxen was divided: one third was given to the people present at the sacrifice, one third was allotted to the priests, and the remaining third to the parasites (Ath., *Deipn.*, 6.235d).

A passage in Homer's *Iliad* (9.210-217), which describes how Achilles entertained the embassy sent by Agamemnon, provides us with an idea of how the meat might have been prepared: "Automedon held the meat while Achilles chopped it; he then sliced the pieces and put them on spits while the god-like son of Menoetius made the fire burn high. When the flame had died down, he spread the embers, laid the spits on top of them, lifting them up and setting them upon the spit-racks; and he sprinkled them with sacred salt. When the meat was roasted, he heaped it on platters, and handed bread round the table in fair baskets, while Achilles dealt them their portions."

This very basic cooking method may have been necessitated by the improvised conditions in the Achaean camp. It is, nonetheless, typical of the way in which food was prepared in ancient Greece, and it is exactly this simplicity that was highly esteemed and recommended by the master chef Archestratus (4th cent. B.C.), as it permitted the genuine

taste of the food to be savoured (CQ 1/2015). In any case, my “table companions” at the gallery thought that the meat from pasture-raised oxen that we roasted in the manner of Achilles tasted truly delicious.

Why and when the esteemed official who was deemed worthy of sharing his food with the gods sank to the level of a more or less tolerated sponger at the table of the wealthy is largely unknown. Already in Antiquity, it was subject to lively debate as to which poet, Epicharmos or Alexis, first used the term “parasite” in the “modern”, that is, negative sense.

In Middle Comedy, the parasite developed into a clearly defined type: he appears at the feast uninvited, he tries to make himself popular by obsequious flattery, and although he does not contribute anything to the meal, he eats and drinks without restraint. Of course, the comic poets represented the parasite's character traits in an exaggerated and caricatured manner. Nonetheless, they do bear a relation to reality, parodying the spongers that wealthy Athenian citizens, such as Kimon and Kallias, attracted with their extravagant lifestyles, and the flatterers and courtiers that surrounded rulers such as Philip II of Macedon and Dionysos of Syracuse.

In the comedy fragments featuring parasites compiled by Athenaeus (ca. 200 A.D.) in his *Banquet of the Learned (Deipnosophistae)*, their voraciousness is a running gag. In order to satisfy his craving for food, a parasite fears neither being beaten nor being disgraced. The parasite in *The Man from Chalcidicé* by Axionicus declares: “When first I wished to play the parasite while youth did still raise down upon my cheeks, I learnt to bear hard blows from knuckles, and cups and dishes, and bones, so great that oftentimes I was all over wounds; but still it paid me well, for still the pleasure did exceed the pain.” (Ath., *Deipn.*, 6.239f-240a; Edmonds II, 565, Frg. 6). And the parasite in Dromon's *Harp-Girl* confesses: “I was above all things ashamed when I found that I was again to have a supper for which I was to give no contribution.” His buddy, however, comforts him: “A shameful thing, indeed. Still you may see our Tithymallus on his way, more red than saffron or vermilion; and he blushes, as you may guess, because he nothing pays.” (Ath., *Deipn.*, 6.240d; Edmonds II, 533, Frg. 1).

The ingenuity with which the parasites attempt to gain access to a free meal is truly astounding. In *The Exile*, Alexis describes how Chaerephon “goes and stands as soon as it gets light where they let cooking-things out for the night. If any's hired he asks the cook who it's for, and comes first guest if there's an open door”. (Edmonds II, 497, Frg. 257).

And his *Priestess*, Apollodoros of Carystus says: “I'm told he's gate-crashed like a new Chaerephon at Ophelas's when that wedding was on; took flowers and a bag, and just as darkness thickens gets in by saying the bride has sent the chickens; if so, he's had his dinner.” (Ath., *Deipn.*, 6.243d; Edmonds, III, 195, Frg. 24).

It is only rarely mentioned what exactly the parasites ate, and it may well be that for them the quantity of the food was often more important than its quality. The parasite in *The Twins* by Antiphanes the Younger rather garrulously declares: “After a liberal and recherché meal and three healths, maybe four, I came to feel a trifle amorous, having eaten enough for several elephants, say.” (Edmonds, II, 629, Frg. 3). Somewhat more drastically, the flatterer in *The False Accuser* by Alexis dwells on the pleasure of eating so much that he would burst: “I am a happy man. And not alone because I'm going to a wedding dinner, but because I shall burst, if it please god. And would that I might meet with such a death!” (Ath., *Deipn.*, 6.258f; Edmonds II, 485, Frg. 231).

Amongst the foods eaten by the parasites of Middle Comedy, fish and bread were by far the most common, and this accurately mirrors the actual eating habits of the time (cf. CQ 1/2015). Lentil stew (φακῆ), sometimes containing little stones, radishes, cabbage cooked in plenty of oil, and pea soup were common dishes that the parasites were not particularly keen on. The parasite with the nickname Lark would much rather have eaten some of the rich, highly flavoured meat stew (μαρτύη), but unfortunately the bowl was always already empty when it was passed to him, and in *The Parasite* by Antiphanes, the spongers can only dream of delicacies such as cake, cheese, and lamb “embalmed” in a heavily spiced sauce. (Ath., *Deipn.*, 6.239e-246b, 9.370e; Edmonds II, 253, Frg. 183; III, 223, Frg. 2).

Curious about the composition of the lentil stew held in such low esteem by the parasites, we receive help from a rather unexpected corner, namely from the Stoics. Athenaeus informs us that “it is a Stoic belief, that the wise man will do all things rightly, even to the wise seasoning of lentil stew”. In his essay *On the Good*, the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus of Soli (ca. 279-206 B.C.) is quite ecstatic about this dish: “In the winter season, an onion-and lentil stew, how wonderful! For onion-and lentil stew is like ambrosia in the chilly cold.” And even the founder of the Stoic school himself, Zeno of Citium (ca. 333-262 B.C.) did not fail to give instructions on how to cook lentils, “for he said: ‘into the lentil stew put the twelfth part of a coriander seed.’” (Ath., *Deipn.*, 4.158a-b).

At our parasite party in the gallery, such a Stoic Lentil Stew, together with freshly baked barley bread, was an ideal accompaniment to the Roast Ox in the Manner of Achilles.

### Stoic Lentil Stew

Gently fry two finely chopped onions in olive oil. Add 200 g lentils that have been soaked overnight. Season with plenty of ground coriander seeds and with salt and pepper to taste. Add water, place the pot on the embers and simmer gently until done.

### Barley Sourdough Bread

Many households in ancient Greece did not have an oven. Instead, they baked their bread below a domed clay baking cover (πνιγέυς), which they buried under embers. For the dough, knead together 400 g wholemeal barley flour with 100 g sourdough (cf. CQ 1/2014), 10 g salt and ca. 2-3 dl water. Let the dough rise in a warm place until it has doubled in volume. This can take several hours. Bring the dough into the desired shape and let it rise again. Bake for ca. 30 minutes.



## Highlight

# What a Prize!

## A Superb Panathenaic Amphora

By Martin Flashar



A PANATHENAIC PRIZE AMPHORA, ATTRIBUTED TO THE KLEOPHRADES PAINTER, H. 65.8 cm, ca. 500/490 B.C. Formerly Coll. Nelson Bunker Hunt (1926–2014), USA; Sotheby's London, 13 December 1982. Published: D. von Bothmer (et al.), *Wealth of the Ancient World. The Nelson Bunker Hunt and William Bunker Hunt Collections, Cat. Kimbell Art Museum Fort Worth (Beverly Hills 1983) no. 9.* Price on request

The burning desire to have oneself distinguished in front of others is a constant among the aristocratic city-states of ancient Greece. The introduction of the phalanx as a battle formation greatly limited the opportunities for displays of individual valour and prowess on the battlefield, although the images supplied by countless mythical duels, many of them Homeric, went some way to compensate for this loss. In the real world, however, it was sports contests, first and foremost among them the collective “state of emergency” otherwise known as the Pan-Hellenic Games that provided a welcome opportunity to outshine everyone else. The Panathenaia was established as an institution of crucial importance to Athens’ identity as a city-state in 566 B.C.

Wherever winners were to be selected, there clearly had to be rewards and prizes. It was for this purpose that a special amphora with a distinctively bulbous shape was created. Such amphorae, filled with olive oil, were presented to the winners in numbers that varied according to discipline (140 for chariot-racing and 60 for the pentathlon, according to a later source). As most of the athletes thus rewarded sold the costly commodity as quickly as possible, the distribution of their findspots can be read as a reflection of Athens’ trading radius.

The Panathenaic Amphora of Jean-David Cahn AG is remarkable for the superb quality

of the drawing. It is also an excellent piece of pottery, with an astonishingly even body for such a large vase. At just under 66 cm in height and with a volume of 36–37 litres, it was a standard Panathenaic Amphora. The motif on the front is unambiguous: Athena, generally clad in a peplos with Attic helmet and aegis, as she is here, is shown striding vigorously and defiantly to the left, holding a spear in her raised right hand and a shield in her left. The figure of the goddess evokes the type of the Athena Promachos and is thus a symbolic reminder of Athens’ great landmark. The two antithetical cockerels at left and right are an agonistic cipher for the widespread practice of cockfighting. Whether the Doric columns on which they are perched are an oblique reference to the meta inside the stadium, it is impossible to say. The left-hand column is flanked by a vertical inscription: TONAΘENEΘENAΘAON – “one of the prizes from Athens”.

The shields of Athena on such amphorae are typically blazoned with a range of devices. Starting in the 6th and early 5th century, however, it became fashionable for each workshop to use only a single motif, which thereupon became a kind of trademark. Thus the winged horse Pegasus stood for the Kleophrades Painter and his workshop. This exquisite painter was one of the leading practitioners of his art in Athens and worked for the potter Kleophrades (hence the name by

which he is known), the son of the no less famous Amasis. Although he usually worked in the new red-figure technique, Kleophrades and his workshop allowed him to use the older black-figure technique for their Panathenaic Prize Amphorae (of which no fewer than 45 have survived), as was standard practice for this genre of vases.

The reverse of the prize amphorae typically featured the athletic event in which victory was claimed. But what are the two bearded men on the Cahn vase – to the left of them an official observer in a long himation – actually doing? The stooped figure at right, who is also the smaller of the two and seems to be raising a shield in both hands, is wearing a loincloth and is undoubtedly an adjutant. The athlete himself is the figure in the middle, who is holding two shields. The discipline is of course the *hoplitodromos*, a running race in which the runners had to don the helmet, greaves and spear of an armoured infantryman (from 520 B.C. also an Olympic discipline), as is evident from the device on the shield in the middle. The sportsman, in other words, is arming himself in readiness for the race and is captured here at the moment of selecting a shield. The Kleophrades Painter is known to have tried out such atypical iconographies from time to time, as is proven by another prize amphora from a Tarentine tomb showing the preparations for a boxing match. Happy he who can contemplate such art!