

## My Choice

# A Cycladic Head

By Jean-David Cahn

The idols that were made on the Cycladic Islands in ancient times are especially fascinating for us today because of the perfection with which their forms are pared down to the essentials. The idols mostly represent reclining women, and more rarely men, children or musicians. Because of their formal properties, they are assigned to certain types, but nonetheless the scope for variation within a given type is enormous. There are also differences in terms of craftsmanship and artistic quality.

Of course, our appreciation of these works of art reflects the visual experiences made by us today, and I would like to present to you an extraordinarily balanced head from a large idol that I find particularly satisfying to behold. It was sculpted in the period that we term Early Cycladic II (ca. 2600-2500 B.C.) and most likely belonged to an idol of the Spedos Type from Naxos. No matter from which angle you look at the head, it is equally interesting and harmonious, something that is not always the case. The silhouette of the face gently swells out at either side, the top of the head slopes back and the chin is softly rounded. What I find most refined is that the small nose, which is little more than hinted at, is very slightly slanted to one side, thereby creating a subtle tension in the face. The corroded surface of the coarse-grained, Cycladic marble has taken on a beautiful brown colour due to the many millennia that the object lay buried in the ground.

The head is a real hand-charmer and truly a pleasure to hold. Indeed, by turning it and looking at it from different viewpoints you constantly discover new aspects. I was reminded of a childhood memory of the Swiss sculptor Max Bill (1908-1994), who collected Cycladic idols: Before deciding to buy an object, he always took it from its pedestal and held it horizontally in his hands. Indeed, the convention of mounting Cycladic idols



A HEAD OF AN IDOL. H. 10.2 cm. Marble. Greek, Cyclades, Early Cycladic II, 2600-2500 B.C. CHF 34,000

in an upright position is not congruent with the manner in which they were meant to be viewed in Antiquity: The relaxed manner in which the feet and toes of many figures point downwards clearly indicate that they were represented as lying on their backs. Likewise, the modern practice of illuminating them with a strong light from above is at odds with the flickering light from below that was employed in ancient times. As a result, we behold and experience these sculptures in a completely different manner today. Intact idols are the exception. Most Cycladic idols were ritually broken and buried in votive pits with hundreds of other idol fragments.

This important head was sold by the legendary art dealer Nicolas Koutoulakis (1910-1996) in the 1960s. It belonged to a Belgian private collection in the 1990s and later to a private collection in Connecticut, USA, before being acquired by the previous owner in London in 2012.

## My Choice

# A Miniature Hydria

By Jean-David Cahn

Quite some time has elapsed since I last selected an Attic vase for this column; but the moment I held this little masterpiece in my hands – an exceptionally finely crafted miniature hydria near to the Shuvalov painter – I knew that here was an object that warranted special mention. The scene shows a richly clad woman sitting on a klismos. Wearing an expression of impatience, she extends her right hand imperiously. A young woman rushes in from left to answer her bidding, her fluttering robe and the diagonal lines of her finely pleated chiton accentuating her haste. To judge by her small stature and short bob haircut, she is probably a maidservant. With an animated gesture she holds aloft the object her mistress has been demanding so vehemently, which is barely visible to us.

What fascinates me most is the painter's ability to fashion a whole story out of these few narrative fragments. We would so much like to know what it is that the maidservant has forgotten – a necklace or a veil perhaps? – and why her mistress needs this object so urgently. With the aid of a magnifying glass, the discerning viewer can discover many an exciting detail: for example the serpent bracelet that the seated figure wears on her left wrist, which although no more than a curved line is instantly recognizable as an identifiable item of jewellery; or the maidservant's footwear: on her right foot she is wearing a sandal rendered as carefully painted-on red parallel lines, whereas no such lines are apparent on her left foot. It is as if in her haste to obey her mistress, the young woman had had no time to put on her second sandal.

The drawing as a whole is remarkable for its singular combination of meticulous routine



MINIATURE HYDRIA NEAR TO THE SHUVALOV PAINTER. H. 14.5 cm. Clay. Greek, Attic, ca. 430-420 B.C. CHF 28,000

on the one hand and a certain stiffness on the other. It seems to me entirely possible that this could be a work of the painter's old age – possibly even of the Shuvalov painter himself. Apart from a small restoration on the rim, the vessel is intact. Also noteworthy is the red lacquer seal on the underside of the foot attesting to the vase's provenance from the Regno delle Due Sicilie that was reigned by the Bourbon kings between 1816 and 1861.



## My Choice

# A Geometric Warrior

By Jean-David Cahn

This bronze statuette of a warrior from the Geometric Period makes a monumental impression. The figure has been pared down to its essentials, the outline of the body clearly delineated. Our gaze follows the long, muscular legs up to the slim waist and from there to the breast rendered as a broad triangle and along the vigorously raised, multiply angled right arm. Captured in this remarkable gesture is the instant at which the warrior thrusts the lance originally held in his drilled-through hand. His helmet is an Illyrian helmet of the first type. His hair and beard are rudimentarily articulated; the nose and chin project out from the face and the expression is one of fierce, almost aggressive, determination.

The lowered left arm is only partially present and the feet, too, are missing. This raises the question of whether they have been lost – in which case the left hand perhaps held a shield originally – or whether they were never executed at all, but rather deliberately left as stumps. After all, there is no sign of breakage on the left arm and legs, which on the contrary have rounded termini.

The size of the bronze is unusual, as statuettes of this kind are normally about half the size of this one. These statuettes were made in centres of production near the Pan-Hellenic sanctuaries of the 8th century B.C., where they were purchased by visitors and subsequently consecrated. The position of the arms, the drill hole through the hand and the style of our figure link it to a statuette from the Acropolis in Athens (21 cm high), which is now in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens (inv. no. 6616). Our statuette probably adorned a bronze tripod or a cauldron originally.

I am drawing your attention to this important early bronze because pieces of this size and quality so



STATUETTE OF A WARRIOR. H. 18.3 cm. Bronze. Greek, Geometric, ca. 800–700 B.C. Price on request

rarely turn up on the art market. Most representations of humans from this period are found in vase painting; those made of terracotta are rarer and those in bronze rarer still. This particular object comes from a major private collection built up by the book printer Henri Smeets (1905–1980) of Weert in the Netherlands and was published in 1975 (E. Godet et al., *A Private Collection*, Weert 1975, cat. no. 146).

## My Choice

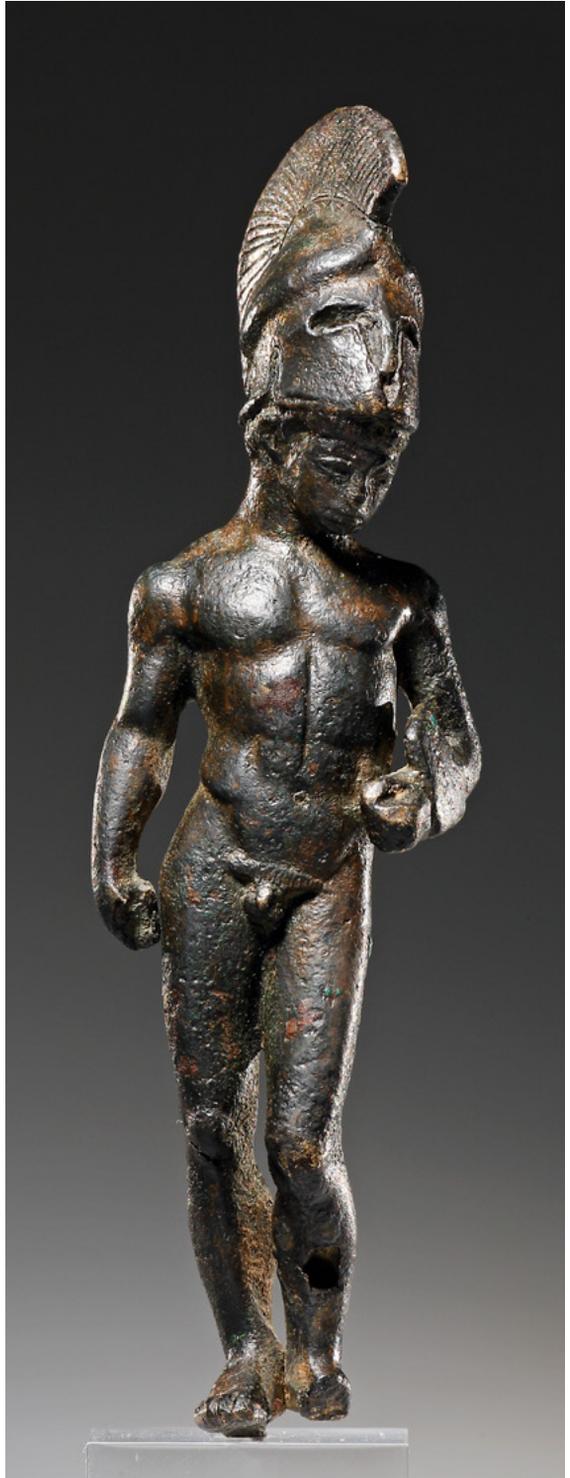
# A Pyrrhic Dancer

By Jean-David Cahn

This nude athlete in bronze with a raised Corinthian helmet is an exceptionally rare, three-dimensional representation of a Pyrrhic dancer. The Pyrrhichios was an armed dance performed to the sound of the aulos, an ancient Greek wind instrument. From vase painting we know that the nude dancers were armed with shield and spear, and so it is likely that our athlete originally also held these. The Pyrrhic dance was probably characterised by brisk, light movements, given that the pyrrhic metre used in poetry, which is derived from this dance, consists of two short, unaccented syllables, making it the shortest metrical foot of all. Describing the dance in his *Nomoi* (815a), Plato observed that “it represent modes of eluding all kinds of blows and shots by swervings and duckings and side-leaps upward or crouching; and also the opposite kinds of motion, which lead to active postures of offence, when it strives to represent the movements involved in shooting with bows or darts, and blows of every description.”

The Pyrrhichios, which Achilleus is said to have danced around the pyre of Patroklos, played an important role in the Panathenaia, with dancers competing against each other for the prestigious prize awarded to the winner. Furthermore, the dance numbered amongst the gymnastic exercises practiced by young men in the palaestra and was considered military training. As such, the dance also had a very serious meaning. This aspect is taken into account by the slightly inclined head of the young man and his pensive facial expression. For me, the uniqueness of this statuette lies in its many striking contrasts – for example, the contrast between the mighty helmet and the slender physique of the youth, or the tension between his athletic musculature which speaks of decisiveness and vigour, and his serious, contemplative face. It is as if the young man wanted to convey to us that he is aware that he may be dancing the war dance for the last time.

The statuette was possibly a votive gift and was modelled with great care.



A STATUETTE OF A PYRRHIC DANCER. H. 13.1 cm. Bronze. Greek, late 5th cent. B.C. CHF 24,000

Much attention was lavished on details such as the engravings on the helmet and pubic hair, and the incised nipples. This bronze is a rare masterpiece of museum quality which, moreover, has an excellent provenance, having once belonged to the collection of the Swiss professor of law and economics, Maurice Bouvier (1901-1981).

## My choice

# A Minoan Bull

By Jean-David Cahn



STATUETTE OF A BULL. L. 10.5 cm. Steatite. Late Minoan (LM I), ca. 1600-1450 B.C.

Price on request

Recently I noticed a small sculpture of a bull that seemed almost to burst with power. It was immediately clear to me that it could not be anything other than a masterpiece of the Late Minoan culture. Its appearance as a whole is defined by the striking contrast between the vigorously arched and distinctly constricted sections of the body. The elongated rump, the pronounced bulge at the back of the neck, the compact chest and shoulder musculature, the heavy dewlap, the enormous eyes with glowering gaze as well as the expression of ease and inner harmony that pervades this representation of a potentially dangerous beast are all features highly characteristic of Cretan art from around 1500 B.C. Close parallels can be found in the glyptic arts as well as in goldsmithing. Two examples to point to are the Minoan intaglios that were discovered recently in a warrior's tomb near Pylos and the

famous cup from the tholos tomb of Vapheio in Laconia (figs. 1-2).

It is an exceptional stroke of good luck to encounter such an object, all the more so as it has an illustrious provenance. The bull belonged to the important collector couple Charles Gillet (1879-1972) and Marion Schuster (1902-1984) and was listed as no. 131 in their art inventory. Gillet was a major player in the chemical industry in France and was also endowed with great artistic insight. His coin collection was one of the most outstanding in the world, and my father, Herbert A. Cahn, had the honour of auctioning a part of it in 1974. It is no coincidence that Gillet was attracted to this bull, for in the fineness and precision of its design it is absolutely in tune with the aesthetics of a numismatist. Furthermore, as a sculpture in the round it is monumental from all sides.



Fig. 1: Minoan seal stone from the warrior's tomb near Pylos, ca. 1500 B.C. Photo: [magazine.uc.edu/editors\\_picks/recent\\_features/warrior\\_tomb](http://magazine.uc.edu/editors_picks/recent_features/warrior_tomb). Site visited on 15.4.2019.



Fig. 2: Minoan gold cup I from Vapheio, ca. 1500 B.C. Photo: S. Marinatos, *Kreta, Thera und das mykenische Hellas*, 2nd ed., Munich 1973, fig. 200.

## My Choice

# A Royal Portrait

By Jean-David Cahn



A DOUBLE LIFE-SIZED ROYAL PORTRAIT, POSSIBLY PTOLEMY III EUERGETES. H. 31 cm. White, crystalline marble. Egypt, Ptolemaic Period, 3rd century B.C. Price on request

When I first saw this monumental royal portrait – a splendid sculpture in double life-size – I was immediately captivated by it. The oval face with its smooth, taut flesh appears ageless, and the calm facial features are imbued with serene majesty. Detached and inscrutable, this idealised head reaches beyond the distinction between male and female: depending on which part of the face one focuses on it seems at times more masculine, at times more feminine, a strange phenomenon that is also encountered in other portraits of the Ptolemies. Intriguingly, despite its high degree of idealisation, the sculpture conveys a distinct impression of individuality. The relatively close-set eyes framed by heavy lids, the small mouth with soft, sensual lips and the broad, almost fleshy transition from the chin to the neck tell us unequivocally that here, a specific person is represented. Indeed, there are close physiognomic similarities be-

tween our head and the two portraits in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, inv. no. 573, and in the Louvre, Paris, inv. no. 3030, which were identified as Ptolemy III Euergetes (ca. 284–222 B.C.) by Helmut Kyrieleis, the distinguished specialist on Ptolemaic sculpture. Two large dowel holes and holes for pins indicate that the royal portrait once wore an elaborate coiffure and headdress, possibly a crown of Helios or a vulture cap. Due to the high quality of its workmanship, there can be no doubt that it was made by a Greek sculptor active in Egypt.

It is a rare stroke of luck that the family which owned this portrait from 1946 onwards kept the sales contract. It is reproduced on the page opposite with excerpts in translation. The head has been in the USA since 1948 and the original customs and shipping documents have also been preserved.



Reproduced in slightly  
reduced scale (H. 31 cm)



نظاره خاصه للملك  
مكتب النظر  
عقد إتفاق ومبايعه

لانه في اليوم الرابع من شهر ديسمبر الموافق عام ألف  
وتسعمائة وستة وأربعون ميلادياً ١٩٤٦ م.  
بيننا نحن سعادة / صلاح الدين صرماني بك  
الى سعادة / عز الدين طه الطير بك  
مجموعه من الآثار المصرية و الأثريه والرومانية والإغريقية  
القديمه والمؤرخه بحرفه كبير أضاء دار الآثار المصرية  
وغير الآثار الأستاذ / حسين راشد  
وذلك بمبلغ وقدره ألف وسبع مائة جنيهاً مصرياً  
فقط لا غير ووصفها كالتالي :-  
- ثلاث قطع من الخشب عبارة عن الجزء العلوي من  
خطاه تاجوت وأهدالها كالألوان ١٦ م، ٧ م، ٨ م.  
من حقه عصر الدولة المتأخرة.  
- خمسة قطع خشبية بحارس المقبرة الإله أنوبيس على شكل  
التعليق بأطوال مختلفة من عصر الدولة المتأخرة.  
- قطعة من الرخام الأبيض يونانية ملك من ملوك  
البطلمية عبارة عن الرجاء وجزء من التاجس ناقصه  
الجزء الرقبه وصولها ٣١ م.

- قطعتيه من عصر ما قبل الإسارت عبارة عن آنية  
زخرفيه من الحجر الأعوج وطولها ٢٠ سم، لاقي من  
الحجر الرمادي طولها ١٣، ٦ م.  
- قطعة من الحجر شبه الكريمة على شكل رأسه كبش  
تمثل الإله خانوم من العصر البطلمية عرضها ٥، ٣ م.  
- آنيته كحل من عصر الدولة الوسطى بنظام  
واحدة من الحجر المرمر طولها ٣ م والأخرى من حجر  
الركام الأحمر طولها ١٨ م.  
- خمسون خاتم من عصر الدولة المتأخرة مصنوعة من  
البرسلية بالاعظم والعقيق منقوش عليها كتابه  
هيروغليفيه وأشكال وخرطوش  
- مائه إناء من النحاس بأشكال واحجام مختلفه  
بعضها ملونه.  
- صندوق أوشابتي من الخشب ملون ويحتوي على  
أوشابتيات داخله مصنوعة من البرسلية من عصر  
الدولة المتأخرة. طولها ٥٥ م وعرضها ١٨، ٥ م.  
- عدد ثلاث مائه أوشابتي من البرسلية بأشكال  
واحجام مختلفه بعضها ملون والبعض عليه كتابه  
ومن منه عصر الدولة المتأخرة.  
- قطعتيه من البازلت الأسود عليهم نقوش ورسم  
- رأس تمثال مكسرة من حجر البازلت طولها ٦، ٦ م  
ومن من عصر الدولة المتأخرة.

Contract and Sales Agreement between Salahaddin Refik Sirmali Bey and 'Izz al-Din Tah al-Darir Bey, dated 4 December 1946, detailing the sale of "ancient and excavated Egyptian, African, and Roman antiquities under the supervision of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities."

The list of antiquities is comprised of sixteen lots, some detailing large quantities of Egyptian finds including: "a hundred pottery utensils in various shapes, sizes, and colours", "approximately three hundred ushabti, of 'porcelain', in various shapes and sizes and a range of colours, some of these are inscribed, and they date from the New Kingdom", "twenty-five wooden fragments of multi-part human figures in different shapes and sizes, some of them standing upright, and others seated, from the Middle Kingdom" and "twenty pairs of wooden hands and feet in different sizes from the Late Period".

The Ptolemaic head is described as item number three: "One fragment of Greek white marble of the king of kings Ptolemaios, that is, the face and a part of the head, the hair and neck incomplete, measuring 31 cm."

The document is signed by both parties on page three and by the officer of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities who supervised the transaction.

Overleaf: A DOUBLE LIFE-SIZED ROYAL PORTRAIT, POSSIBLY PTOLEMY III EUERGETES. H. 31 cm. White, crystalline marble. Egypt, Ptolemaic Period, 3rd century B.C. Price on request

- قطعة من الحجر الجيري للوجه من عصر الدولة  
القديمه عليها جزء من فرطوش ملكي طولها ١٥ سم.  
- قلادة تمثال من الحجر الجيري طولها ٢٠ سم من عصر  
الدولة المتأخرة.  
- خمسة وعشرون قطعة خشبية لرجال المركب بأشكال  
واحجام مختلفه بعضها واقف والأخرى جالس من عصر  
الدولة الوسطى.  
- عشرون زوج من الأيدي والأقدام الخشبية بالحجم  
مختلفه من عصر الدولة المتأخرة.

البايع / صلاح الدين صرماني بك  
المشترى / عز الدين طه الطير بك  
الخبر المضمون  
الأستاذ / حسين راشد

## My Choice

## A Laconian Kouros

By Jean-David Cahn



A HANDLE IN THE SHAPE OF A KOUROS. H. 21 cm. Bronze. Greek, Laconian, ca. 570 B.C.

Price on request

A short while ago I made an exciting discovery: an unusually large handle in the shape of a youth that probably belonged to a patera, or maybe to a mirror. This superb sculpture was erroneously described as Western Greek and assigned far too late a date. It is, in fact, a very rare piece of Laconian bronze metalwork.

The body of the youth is remarkably slender but powerfully built with broad shoulders, strong thighs and taut buttocks. The abdominal muscles are precisely incised and each one is slightly domed. The shins are accentuated by a fine ridge which transitions into bud-shaped knee caps similar to those found in the Early Archaic sculptural group of Kleobis and Biton dating from ca. 580 B.C. The reverse was crafted with equal care and precision. The thick, stepped hair cascades down the youth's back, ending in finely knotted

strands. A further decorative accent is provided by the delicately engraved lotus bud on the back of the crescent-shaped element into which the rim of the patera was inserted.

The face is characterised by a bulbous nose, broad lips, almond-shaped eyes and sharp-edged eye brows. The facial features are arranged paratactically, but form a compact whole. The two snakes held up like whips are a remarkable and intriguing feature, all the more so as only the heads and necks are actually represented. Lillian Stoner will explore their meaning in greater detail in CQ 1/2019.

This wonderful bronze with a beautiful grey-green, shiny patina was acquired before 1976 by the late Elsa Bloch-Diener (1922–2012), a collector and art dealer from Berne whom I knew very well.

and building activities. Possessing such objects is strictly forbidden, but these people are poor, so in all probability they sell the objects quickly to merchants. It would be far more productive if the law allowed the regulated sale of unimportant chance finds. Authorities would not have to punish these people, but could reward them for reporting their finds, thereby helping to create a viable registered database of objects. The state should give the honest finder a fair share of the proceeds, say 25% of estimated market value. In this way people would be encouraged to co-operate and support correct reporting procedures.

Yes, I do strongly believe that the sale of unimportant chance finds should be allowed in source countries, following the example of the UK and The Netherlands. The current restrictive regime with severe penalties clearly fails to prevent trafficking, as history has shown, so why not try something else? Source countries could hugely benefit from following the example of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in the United Kingdom, which has enjoyed twenty years of success already. To give you an idea of the numbers, I quote from the 2016 report: "81,914 finds were recorded; a total of 1,303,504 on the PAS database to date. (...) 90% of finds were found on cultivated land, where they are susceptible to plough damage and artificial and natural corrosion." Such numbers could never have been achieved without the help of the population and I believe people will be happy to help. Reported and recorded finds that are not important could even be exported with a licence, and the proceeds used to finance excavations on behalf of the state.

I proposed during the EU workshop that the European Union, with the help of UNESCO experts, should create a task force to support source countries with setting up the systems needed for this vital protection of archaeological sites.



Vincent Geerling began collecting ancient art 40 years ago. In 1995, he turned his hobby into his profession by founding Archea Ancient Art in Amsterdam. He has been a board member of IADAA for many years and its chairman since 2013.

## My Choice

# A Cypriote Head

By Jean-David Cahn



A VOTIVE HEAD OF A YOUTH. H. 12 cm. Limestone. Cypriote, 1st quarter of 5th cent. B.C. (Cypro-Achaic II). Formerly Coll. Louis de Clercq (1836-1901), Oignies, France. Thereafter, Swiss priv. coll., acquired in the 1960s. Published: A. de Ridder, *Collection de Clercq, Catalogue Tome V, Les Antiquités Chypriotes*, Paris 1908, no. 66. CHF 36,000

Cypriote sculptures have a fascination all of their own which is in part due to the unique way in which Levantine and Phoenician influences blend with the art of Greece to form an independent artistic language. It would, therefore, be wrong to locate Cypriote art on the periphery of that of Greece. As there were no marble quarries on Cyprus, sculptors used limestone, a softer and more brittle material that required a somewhat different working technique. Despite the constraints posed by this more humble stone, the Cypriote artists succeeded in creating great masterpieces.

I would like to present this well-preserved Archaic head, not only because it is of exceptionally high quality but also because it has a superb collecting history. It formed part of the collection of Louis de Clercq (1836-1901) which was published in 1908 by André de Ridder, the then conservator of Greek and Roman art at the Louvre. The fine, soft

face with sharply drawn, almond-shaped eyes and distinctive smile is offset by the energetically and somewhat more summarily sculpted hair that is adorned by a wreath of upright laurel leaves. The sculpture was made about a generation after the Archaic Style had passed its peak in Greece, as this style flourished in Cyprus slightly later. The head captivates the eye on account of the almost perfect balance of its overall shape and the visual excitement engendered by the contrasts in its design, such as the tension between the delicately modelled face and the abstract rendering of the hair.

This artwork is a lucky find as it is absolutely on a par with Greek sculpture. Greek marble heads of the Archaic Period of a comparable artistic quality and state of preservation – not to mention provenance – are all but non-existent on the art market. I can therefore warmly recommend this Cypriote head.

base, is of an exemplary character. In Switzerland coins are documented in such a way – albeit only to a certain degree. Since 1992, the internationally networked "Inventar der Fundmünzen der Schweiz" (IFS, Inventory of Coins Found in Switzerland), a venture of the Schweizerische Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften (SAGW, Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences) has documented all numismatic finds – both old and new – in a central database and publishes the annual bulletin IFS ITMS IRMS. In this organ all newly found coins in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein are published. The IFS may, however, make data on the coins available online only with the explicit permission of the cantons in which the finds were made.<sup>5</sup>

Links:

- 1 <http://www.archaeologie.ch/d.htm>
- 2 [http://www.archaeologie.ch/archaeologie\\_richtlinien\\_ehrenamtliche\\_version%2010-2013.pdf](http://www.archaeologie.ch/archaeologie_richtlinien_ehrenamtliche_version%2010-2013.pdf)
- 3 [http://www.archaeologie-schweiz.ch/fileadmin/user\\_upload/customers/archaeologie\\_schweiz/Partner/H2015/Arbeitsgruppen/Guidelines\\_Arch\\_20151102.pdf](http://www.archaeologie-schweiz.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/customers/archaeologie_schweiz/Partner/H2015/Arbeitsgruppen/Guidelines_Arch_20151102.pdf)
- 4 <https://www.prospektion.ch>
- 5 <https://www.fundmuenzen.ch/dienstleistungen/datenbanken/muenzen.php>



Peter-Andrew Schwarz is Vindonissa Professor for Provincial Roman Archaeology at Basel University and as part of his teaching and research activities has carried out various prospection projects in Cantons Aargau, Baselland, Jura and Obwalden. He is *inter alia* member of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Prospektion Schweiz (AGPS), the Commission of the Inventar der Fundmünzen der Schweiz (IFS) and the Commission du Patrimoine Archéologique et Paléontologique (CPAP) of Canton Jura.

## My Choice

# A Hand of a Kouros

By Jean-David Cahn



A HAND OF A KOUROS. L. 16.5 cm. Marble. Greek, Archaic, ca. 550 B.C. CHF 18,000



KOUROS OF TENEA (Detail with left hand). Ca. 560 B.C. From: G.M.A. Richter, *Kouroi*, 1988, fig. 249.

Surviving Archaic sculpture is very rare and generally in a poor state of preservation. Notwithstanding this, the sculpture of this period has provided us with some of the finest works of art created in Antiquity. The intensity and sheer energy of the sculptures testifies to the skill of the craftsmen who made them and surprises and moves us despite the often corroded and battered condition of the pieces. Take, for example, this life-size left hand of a kouros who was depicted in the typical pose, striding forward energetically. The hand originally touched his left thigh – the contact area is clearly visible – and it is clenched to form a fist in a gesture of strength and youthful potency. But see how elongated the hand is with its refined fingers and slender thumb! Power and elegance are in perfect harmony with each other.

Dating a fragment like this hand is not easy due to the rich local variety of landscape styles, but I would suggest a date of ca. 550 B.C. It is particularly close to the kouros of Tenea in Munich, who has slightly shorter fingers but the same inwardly curled finger tips. Possibly sculpted on one of the Greek Islands, the hand appears to have been broken

off in Antiquity as the fine iron-oxide patina covers the entire surface including the areas of breakage.

Archaic sculpture is very rare on the market and this is also reflected in the limited museum holdings outside Greece. It is therefore considered exquisite to be able to show Archaic sculpture, which in view of its artistic quality is undoubtedly a match for Classical sculpture – I personally prefer Archaic over Classical art. From a historical point of view, the Archaic Period is extraordinarily interesting. It was an aristocratic society in which something akin to an awareness of its own intellectual identity began to emerge. This was the period when the oral tradition was increasingly fixed in writing and when the Iliad and the Odyssey were first written down. Preceding the period of radical social change that followed in the wake of the catastrophic Persian invasion of Greece, it appears to me as a still slightly innocent world, lacking a single dominant centre of power and without the ambition to totally destroy its enemies on the battlefield. This fragment representing the hand of a kouros thus speaks to me of the almost Arcadian time before the loss of the Archaic smile.

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.





Fig. 4: A VOTIVE STATUETTE OF A SWADDLED INFANT. H. 47.7 cm. Clay with dark inclusions. Etruscan, 3rd-2nd cent. B.C. CHF 6,000

ascertained. To answer that question we would have to know more about the origin of the piece and the deity to whom it was dedicated. The choice of material is unusual. Normally reserved for sculpture and buildings, tufa was in such plentiful supply that it constituted a cheap alternative for votive gifts, too.

A more concrete instance is that afforded us by Gallery Cahn's swaddled infant with pretty, cherubic face (fig. 4). Little terracotta votive statuettes like this one were dedicated at the sanctuaries of the Italic birth deities and kourotrophoi (the gods who protected children) by expectant women or parents, either as "personified" thanks for offspring, or to solicit good health, well-being, and divine protection during pregnancy, delivery, and motherhood, and the life of the child. The contrast between the compact, swaddled body – the edges of the swaddling bands actually stand out on some statuettes – and the emphatically three-dimensional modelling of the shoulders, neck, and head is characteristic of these pieces. Occasionally, as with our statuette, the cloth is pulled up to the back of the head to expose the feet. The faces, either hand-modelled or mould-made, in some cases show features that go far beyond those of an infant and are almost adult-like. Not until the Hellenistic Period did the representation of little children as children become standard.

Anyone who investigates churches and chapels in Greece and Italy these days is sure to come across little relief plaques with anatomical images on them here and there. These prove that certain elements of this very graphic, powerfully visual cult practice have indeed been preserved over the centuries and are consciously cultivated even now.

## My Choice

# A Hellenistic Theatre Mask

By Jean-David Cahn

This exceedingly finely made theatre mask is remarkable for its bulbous eyes under bulging eyebrows reaching deep into the furrowed brow, a wide-open mouth, hair rolled up into a speira encircling the forehead like a wreath, and a finely stranded, fanned-out beard. This small-format version was probably intended as a votive offering, for example for a sanctuary of Dionysos. Since all the aforementioned characteristics are redolent of representations of satyrs or Silenus, some connection to satyr plays like those performed following the three tragedies at the Great Dionysia is certainly conceivable. Another possible interpretation is that of a slave in the New Comedy. A tiny hole at the top of the mask probably indicates that it was suspended originally. The reddish clay and outstanding workmanship are a pointer to Myrina as the mask's place of origin, Myrina being where all the best terracottas were made. The quality of the piece is borne out by the meticulous attention to detail. The model must have still been quite fresh, lending the mask an almost metallic clarity. It was worked while still in a leathery state and then coated in a white clay slip before being painted with red paint.

When I saw the piece for the first time, I felt magically drawn to it. That expression of high drama with bulging eyes and hair standing on end – there is a hint of madness to it! And when I hold the mask in my hand, it is almost as if I could hear the droning iambs streaming out of its open mouth. This is a far cry from the "noble simplicity and serene grandeur" so often associated with the culture of the Ancient Greeks. But Greek society could also be bawdy and blunt and had a penchant for the boisterous and the grotesque.

This mask invites us to partake in the world that produced it. It is a powerful piece, the best possible clay carving one could wish for. And it also supplies but further proof of how artistic value and commercial value may



A THEATRE MASK. H. 11 cm. Terracotta. Greek or Western Greek, 3rd-2nd cent. B.C. CHF 12,000

be miles apart. The mask is not obliging; on the contrary, it makes demands of us and requires background knowledge. But for lovers of Antiquity, it also promises a lot of art for very little money.

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statue types and, even more importantly, by uniting almost all the sculptures from the Parthenon of Athens, the originals of which are dispersed amongst various museum collections.

All these projects make the Skulpturhalle a museum of plaster casts that is unique worldwide. It is important to remind ourselves of this fact, especially in this year which has seen the introduction of massive cost-cutting measures, forcing the Skulpturhalle to significantly reduce its opening hours and activities.



Fig. 3: Achilles and Pentesilea. Ernst Berger's reconstruction, made in 1964, unites plaster casts of fragments from Roman marble copies of the Hellenistic bronze sculpture: Head of Achilles in the Prado, Head of Pentesilea in the Antikenmuseum Basel, Torso of Achilles in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, Torso of Pentesilea in the Museo Nazionale Romano. Skulpturhalle Basel, Inv. SH 1135A.



**Thomas Lochman** studied Classical Archaeology in Basel and earned his doctorate with a thesis on Roman art in Phrygia. He has been director of the Skulpturhalle since 1993 and curator in the Antikenmuseum since 2013. From 2000-2016 he was president of the International Association for the Conservation and the Promotion of Plaster Cast Collections. Lochman's research focuses on ancient sculpture (Greece, Rome and the Eastern Provinces), the reception of Antiquity in modern times and the history of plaster cast collections.

## My Choice

# A Head of a Paniska

By Jean-David Cahn

Paniskas are very rarely represented. The type probably emerged shortly after 400 B.C., possibly around the time when the artist Zeuxis created the Taurines. Our charming Paniska was probably sculpted during the reign of Emperor Augustus. She turns her head back slightly and smiles at the beholder with parted lips. Her features are girlish, but the face is still imbued with an idealized femininity. Small bumps on her forehead indicate the horns and her pursed lips reveal pointed teeth; thus, all elements that characterize a Paniska are present. Her thick, curly hair is drawn to the back of her head, where it was held together in a now lost chignon.

The fine crystalline marble is of high quality and has some slight discolourations. Probably the head belonged to a full-length sculpture of a Paniska which once adorned a garden in the City of Rome, evoking a rural idyll within the orderly framework of the atrium. City gardens were often decorated with motifs from nature such as swans, rabbits, nymphs, satyrs and the companions of Pan, whose purpose was to create the impression of a different, happy state of being.

I acquired the sculpture in France. It comes from the estate of the well-known sculptor Paul Dubois (1829-1905). He did well to keep this sculpture either in his house or his workshop, for on longer contemplation the exceptionally sensitive and elegant modelling of the surface becomes manifest. The tip of the nose, which was restored in plaster, and the somewhat cool, classicist pedestal date from the 19th century. We did not remove them, since, together with the head, they form a convincing whole. Furthermore, these additions are representative of the period in which the piece was collected.

Paniskas are the companions of Pan and difficult to define. Their behaviour is erotically charged – albeit of a purely heterosexual nature – and they help the gods at their symposia. They are probably best understood as female counterparts of Pan's robust sexuality.



A Head of a Paniska H. 16.5 cm. Marble. Roman, late 1st cent. B.C.-early 1st cent. A.D. CHF 34,000

In any case, something very attractive is suggested here in a subtle manner. I can well imagine that the sculptor Dubois was afforded much pleasure by this piece.

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## My Choice

## A Royal Inscription

By Jean-David Cahn



A FRAGMENT WITH A ROYAL INSCRIPTION. H. 9.3 cm. Grey limestone. Achaemenid, 5th cent. B.C. CHF 36,000

This fragment comes from the upper end of a monumental, bell-shaped column base which was roughly 120 cm in diameter. It may have

graced the throne room of an Achaemenid royal residence. Preserved are the resting surface for the column, part of an ancient

Persian inscription, and the decoration encircling the outside, which consists of pointed leaves with central ribs. The inscription can be translated as "... Great, King of Kings...".

Why do I like this object so much? Even the material in its own right is fantastic: smooth, dense, and of a wonderfully deep, almost black colour. The masterly graphic design which focusses on the pure essentials also greatly impresses me. The frieze of pointed leaves is delicately sculpted with flowing transitions between the convex and concave surfaces. The ornamental inscription in a late cuneiform script is fragmentary like the object itself. It speaks mysteriously to us, like an oracle, about a king whose name is not given. The fragment does not give away its secret and thus excites the imagination. We wonder if maybe King Darius the Great is meant – one of the most important figures in Persian history who held a great fascination for the Greeks, too.

It is enthralling to possess such an artwork – a personal piece which one can put on one's desk and which unites aesthetic pleasure with historical import.

## Sources:

The Egyptian Independent: <http://goo.gl/EbfgZj>  
 Egyptian Streets: <http://goo.gl/HV8gK4>

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AN IMPRESSIVE STATUETTE OF AN IBIS. L. 46.5 cm. Wood, stucco, black colour. Egypt, Late Period, 26th-30th Dynasty. Formerly Collection Pierre and Claude Vêrité, Paris, acquired between 1930 and 1960, ie. during a period of time in which Egyptian artefacts could be exported legally. Accompanied by a European passport and a French export license as required by Swiss law since 2005. Sold at TEFAF New York 2017

## My Choice

# A Sabaean Head

By Jean-David Cahn

The velvety surface of the alabaster derives a subtle vitality from being slightly translucent, rather like human skin. The Sabaean head thus becomes a haunting, but strangely elusive, presence – an impression enhanced by the stylized facial features aligned along the horizontal and vertical axes. The schematic reduction evident in the slightly bulging eyes, which would have been painted originally, in the elongated nose with gently rounded bridge, the remarkably small mouth and the somewhat oversized ears, as also in the block-like shape of the head and neck are powerful visual signals that seem to bespeak a mysterious, inscrutable inner life.

This modern response to a work of ancient art that is over 2000 years old has naturally been shaped in part by our visual experience of the sculptures of Brancusi and Modigliani. Yet that is precisely where the fascination of ancient art lies: in its continued capacity to touch us in ever new ways.

Our head almost certainly stems from a sepulchral context, as do most of the alabaster and limestone statues, busts and heads that are among the leitmotifs of ancient Southern Arabian art. The closeness and the remoteness radiated by this piece are entirely fitting for a representation of a human on the threshold of the afterlife. The coarse, but clearly visible smoothing of the underside of the neck indicates that both head and neck were conceived as part of a statue right from the start. Similar examples are known from the necropolis of Ma'rib (cemetery of Awam), where the busts were inserted into the top half of a funerary stele made of limestone, fixed in place with plaster, and the stele then inscribed along the top with the name of the deceased.

This impressive work from a private collection in Bonn was included in the 1987 show "Jemen: 3000 Jahre Kunst und Kultur des glücklichen Arabien" at the Staatliche Museum für Völkerkunde Munich.



HEAD OF A MAN. H. 35 cm. Alabaster. Southern Arabia, Sabaean, 3rd cent. B.C. CHF 28,000

excavation of Troy, and Hermann Born, head of the Berlin museums' restoration workshops. The surface of the earring was studied first with a scanning electron microscope. It was then subjected to electron probe microanalysis (EPMA) and further imaging using an energy-dispersive X-ray spectrometer, the most accurate method of material analysis then available.

The analysis yielded an almost perfect match in both material and technique between those few gold items that were known to come from the Schliemann finds and the earring



Fig. 3: Anatolian jewellery of the late 3rd-2nd mill. B.C. is only rarely available on the art market; one exception is this pair of gold earrings, L. 5.6 cm, sold by Gallery Cahn.

from Pforzheim. It follows that both the gold mines and the goldsmithing workshops in both cases must have been very closely related, if not identical. This chance to take a closer look at one of our most cherished treasures was most fortuitous, such analytical methods being prohibitively expensive as a rule and hence reserved for pieces of exceptional importance or to allay grave doubts.

Independent of its stylistic and material attribution and the findings of the technical analysis, this earring is as intricate as it is exquisite and a magnificent example of the early art of goldsmithing. Our only regret is that the *Pforzheim Jewellery Museum* is in possession of only one of these earrings. The original pair was separated and the matching piece now belongs to a private collection. Only once, for the great Troy exhibition of 2001, "Troy: Dream and Reality," were they briefly reunited.

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Cornelia Holzach was born in Reutlingen. After an apprenticeship as a goldsmith she studied jewellery design at the University of Applied Arts in Pforzheim and art history in Karlsruhe. She was an academic staff member at the University of Applied Arts in Pforzheim as well as at the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna. She has been on the staff of the Pforzheim Jewellery Museum since 1997 and its director since 2005.

Over the centuries, sculptors optimized and refined all of these tricks and techniques, eventually becoming so skilled at them that not even the modelling and assembly of a colossal statue like that of Constantine the Great in Rome was beyond them.

## My Choice

# A Veristic Portrait of an Old Man

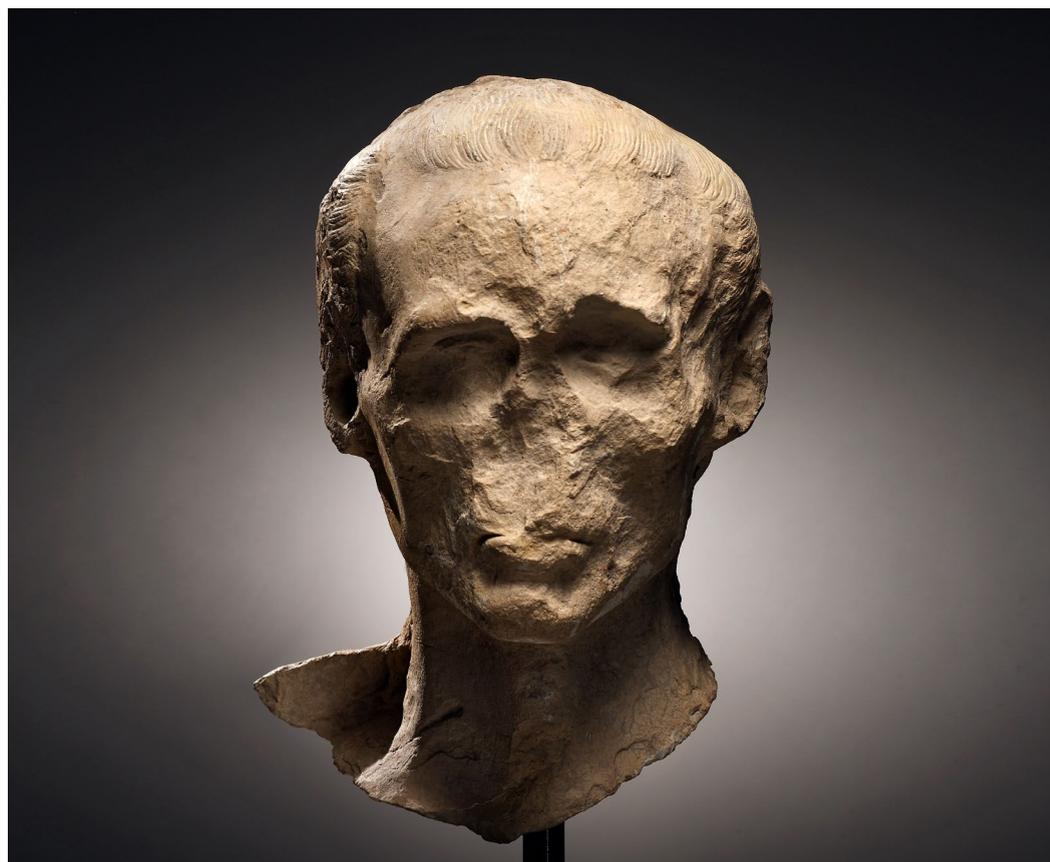
By Jean-David Cahn



Fig. 8: Point of attachment at left shoulder and back of the statuette of Aphrodite or a nymph sitting on a rock, formerly JDC, 2016.



Fig. 9: Connecting faces with traces of ancient adhesive on the head of a portrait of Drusus, RGM Cologne, inv. no. 62, 28, see Salzmann 1990, 168, fig. 61. ©1990 Römisch-Germanisches Museum der Stadt Köln.



A VERISTIC PORTRAIT OF AN OLD MAN. H. 30 cm. Limestone. Roman, 2nd half 1st cent. B.C.-1st cent. A.D. CHF 18,000

Gazing back at us from deep-set eyes is a man who is actually not that old. The face defined by high cheekbones and sunken cheeks is bony, and looks almost emaciated. The hair clinging to the scalp is rendered as finely engraved, individual locks, some of them curled. The high forehead is framed by a receding hairline, and the work ends in an energetic chin and gaunt neck.

Despite its weathered condition, the portrait chiselled in soft limestone makes a very lively impression; its expressiveness is almost uncanny. Whether this somewhat overdrawn realism is called verism or naturalism is a moot point. It is, however, typical of portraits dating from the mid-1st century B.C. – from the Late Republic, in other words. What makes our portrait so fascinating is not just its expressive potency, but also the way its expressiveness is actually enhanced by its reduced condition. It is a timeless piece, reminiscent of Giacometti. The subtlety of the modelling is evident in those details of the corners of the eyes

and the hair that have been preserved, and in the lips, too. The subject rests heavily on known portraits of Gaius Julius Caesar, who at the time was a highly influential political leader. It is tempting to believe that the portrait is a likeness of Caesar himself. But that is not the case. We are instead dealing with an instance of the middle classes emulating the upper classes – a phenomenon typical of this period that Professor Paul Zanker and others investigated in great depth some thirty years ago. Both the provenance of this piece from an Egyptian collection and the soft limestone point to Egypt as our Roman's place of origin. The portrait perhaps reflects the presence of Gaius Julius Caesar in Egypt in the latter days of the Republic, when his amorous adventures with Cleopatra VII fired many an imagination; but that is purely speculative. The portrait has been standing on my table for several weeks now. I am impressed by its powerful, haunting presence, which the depletion inflicted on it by the ravages of time seems, if anything, to have enhanced.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. S. Adam, *The Technique of Greek Sculpture in the Archaic and Classical Periods* (Oxford 1966) 80 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The rectangular hole on the right, which narrows on the inside, was for attaching the statue to the gable background by means of a large, matching tenon.

<sup>3</sup> Inv. no. 1854.0519,168. – See *British Museum Research Database*, search with inv. no. Cf. R. Kabus-Preißhofen, *Die hellenistische Plastik der Insel Kos, Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung*, 14th suppl. (Berlin 1989) 275 f., no. 75, pl. 24,2.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. D. Salzmann, *Antike Porträts im Römisch-Germanischen Museum Köln, Kölner Jahrbuch für Vor- und Frühgeschichte* 23, 1990, 165-168. For many years now, the Max-Planck-Institut für Polymerforschung Mainz and scientists at the Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum Mainz have been engaged in interdisciplinary research into the composition and application of ancient cements and adhesives.

## My Choice

## A Bronze Arm of a Child

By Ulrike Haase



Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), *Apollo and Daphne*, marble, H. 243 cm, 1622-25. Rome, Galleria Borghese



A LOWER ARM OF A CHILD. H. 28.7 cm. Bronze, hollow cast. Roman, 1st cent. B.C.-1st cent. A.D. CHF 26,000



Peter Blome studied Archaeology, Greek Philology and Ancient History at the universities of Basle and Bonn. He obtained his doctorate in 1975 under Karl Scheffold and habilitated under Rolf Stucky in 1982. From 1986-1992 he was curator and from 1993-2012 director of the Antikenmuseum Basel. Under his aegis the museum was expanded to house the Egyptian Department (2001) and the Department Orient, Cyprus and Early Greece (2002). Peter Blome was, furthermore, Professor of Classical Archaeology at the University of Basle.

Looking at this finely modelled bronze-fragment of a lower arm, the viewer is bound to ask to whom it might once have belonged – that tiny hand with chubby, vigorously splayed fingers, impulsively clutching at thin air, which as far as we know is now the only remaining pointer to the appearance and character of the whole.

This highly unusual fragment must have belonged to a life-size statue of a child, and in terms of pose and expression it recalls two magnificent bronzes (undoubtedly made as a pair) each of a little girl chasing a partridge, which not so long ago were sold at auction in New York. Statues of children, especially together with animals, can be found as early as the 5th century B.C., when they were used primarily in sacred or sepulchral contexts. In the Hellenistic Period, however, we can observe a move away from the idealizing thrust of classical norms, and an increased emphasis on the individual, the special, and even the imperfect. The representations of people, and children in particular, become more varied and more like “snapshots,” full of vitality. One vivid example of this is the *Goose Strangler*, a now lost bronze sculpture of the

3rd century B.C., which is known to us only from Roman marble copies and is generally interpreted as a votive offering. In Roman times, these Hellenistic genre figures and figural groups underwent a change of function, serving as decorative elements in luxurious villas and gardens, such as are familiar to us from Pompeii or Herculaneum. That our fragment, too, once belonged to such a context is a plausible – and very pleasing – thought.

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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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quial" language style, which for ancient Athens is nowhere more visibly in evidence than on the vases, is well-known.<sup>4</sup> The philological evidence that the vase-painters were indeed influenced by works of literature has stimulated new lines of inquiry in recent years. On the aforementioned Astarita Krater, for example, the name Menelaus (who, as might be expected, was part of the mission to demand back Helen) is written with a surprising digamma: Μενέλᾱφος, which attests to just such an influence.<sup>5</sup> Such observations are especially instructive on Attic vases, where the appearance of Doric name-forms between ca. 540 and 450 B.C. makes it probable that choral-lyric poems or tragedies were indeed a source of inspiration for the vase painters (figs. 1-2).<sup>6</sup> Thus archaeology has profited from philology and linguistics, just as the opposite is also true.

<sup>1</sup> PBA 43 (1957), 233–244.

<sup>2</sup> He could at most have looked more closely at the "nurse" (τροφός); see the author's work, *Non-Attic Greek Vase Inscriptions*, Oxford 2001, 83–85 and 303f.

<sup>3</sup> Drawing mainly on Beazley's research, Henry R. Immerwahr (1916–2013) amassed a vast collection of data on Attic vase inscriptions, which the author and his team have made available online at <http://avi.unibas.ch/>.

<sup>4</sup> The pioneering work here was Paul Kretschmer, *Die griechischen Vasenschriften ihrer Sprache nach untersucht*, Gütersloh 1894.

<sup>5</sup> See the author, *op. cit.* in note 2, 84 and 336–340.

<sup>6</sup> See the author, "Attische Vasenschriften im Spannungsfeld zwischen Alphabet, Dialekt und Literatur", in idem (ed.), *Töpfer – Maler – Schreiber, Inschriften auf attischen Vasen*, Kilchberg: Akanthus-Verlag, (forthcoming).



Rudolf Wachter of Winterthur, Switzerland, is *Professeur associé de linguistique historique indo-européenne* at the University of Lausanne (since 2006) and also extraordinary professor of Greek, Latin, and Indo-European Linguistics at the University of Basle (since 1997). He holds a doctorate in Latin from Zurich (*Altlateinische Inschriften*, publ. 1987) and one in Comparative Philology from Oxford (*Non-Attic Greek Vase Inscriptions*, publ. 2001). He is specialised in Greek, Latin, and Indo-European linguistics, Greek and Latin epigraphy, and the history of the alphabet.

## My Choice

# Pan Playing His Flute

By Jean-David Cahn



Amongst the artworks that I have acquired recently for my gallery stock, I particularly admire a bronze statuette of Pan. The horned shepherd god stands with his legs crossed, playing on his flute with both hands. Viewed in profile, the undulating line of his softly modelled body is especially striking where the muscular, human thorax narrows drastically to the prominent buttocks, which in their turn transition into the elegantly curved goat's legs, whose animalistic character is further emphasized by the finely incised fur. Viewed from the front, the statuette is no less charming. Only on closer inspection does the viewer notice the subtle shift in the individual body axes, thanks to which this standing motif loses much of its static quality. Meticulously worked details such as the grooved horns, the fine strands of shoulder-length hair, the furred belly and pubis and not least the intricacy of the face, whose bushy eyebrows, eyes framed by large eyelids, a slightly knobbly nose and wide mouth underscore the outstanding quality of this highly unusual bronze. The motif of a figure standing with crossed legs, moreover, is extremely rare and the dark green patina is excellently preserved.

A BRONZE FIGURE OF PAN PLAYING HIS FLUTE. H. 8.5 cm. Bronze. Greek, 3rd-2nd cent. B.C.

Price on request.

This fine statuette is not only remarkable for its artistic quality, but also because of the iconographic and cultural context to which it refers. The bucolic, Hellenistic bronze represents Pan as a sashaying, peaceful, flute-playing shepherd-god, and not as a protective deity. Nonetheless, Pan was the protector of the Attic fleet and a festival was celebrated in his honour in Athens. Furthermore, on occasion, the Kings of Macedonia represented themselves as Pan. Thus, many different aspects of ancient Greek culture become tangible in this exquisite statuette.

ancient vases by Dubois-Maisoneuve, which appeared in several installments starting in 1817 and spanning two decades. Here, as in the painting by van Os, the vessel appears intact, whilst in the CVA damage (incurred in the meantime?) is clearly visible: surface losses and cracks; the vessel is clearly (again?) reassembled from fragments.

The low inventory number (inv. 3) indicates that the object belongs to the oldest holdings of the museum, the "Collection Denon". The art expert Dominique-Vivant Denon, who advised Napoleon on his confiscations and served, from 1802, as head of the Musée Napoléon (the future Louvre), was himself a collector. As of 1778, he held various offices in Naples, where he met the eminent collector of Greek vases, William Hamilton, and succeeded in building up his own impressive collection of ancient vases. These were later acquired by Sèvres to form the core of the museum's collection.



M. Massoul, CVA Sèvres, France 13 (Paris 1934) p. 37, pl. 19.

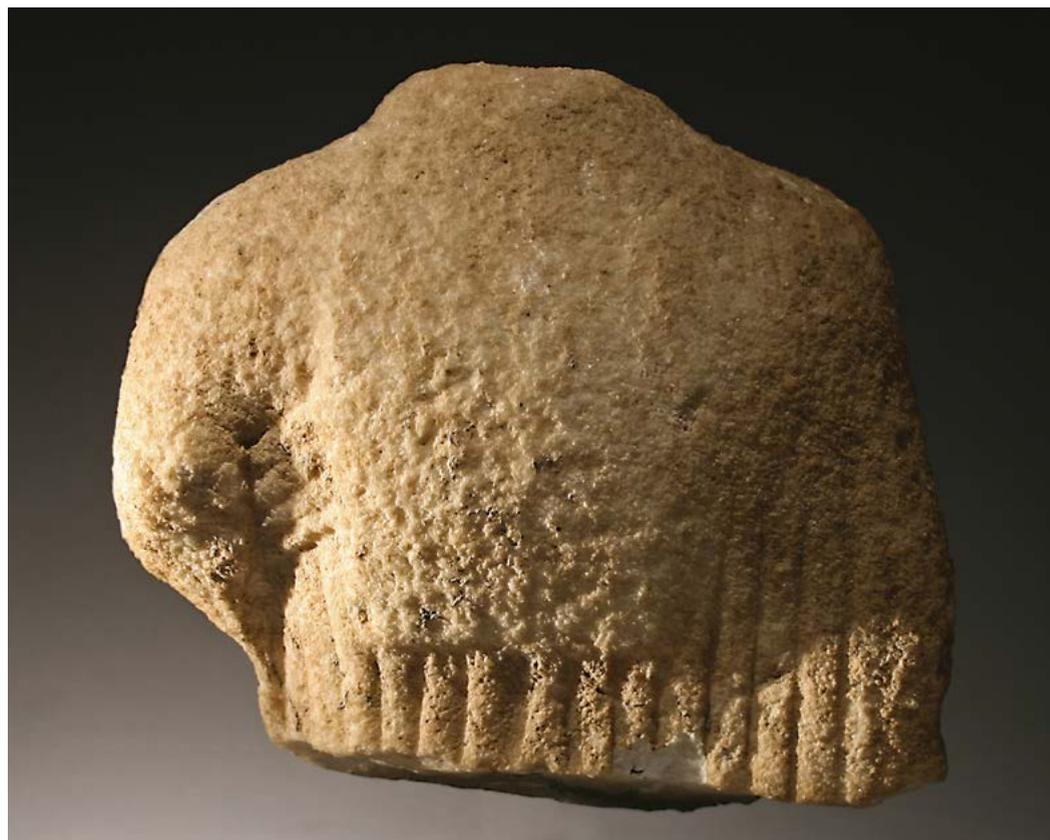
And what are we left with at the end? Just an amusing observation on a minor detail? Perhaps there is more it, after all. There is hardly any secondary literature on the oeuvre of George van Os. It would, however, surely be a rewarding field for research, given his remarkable vita and his close liens to the royal factory as well as to the museum of Sèvres, whose collection served as a source of inspiration and pictorial motifs for him. In view of the fact that similar references to ancient pottery, which van Os could see on a daily basis in Sèvres, abound in his paintings, the result of such a study would certainly be a valuable contribution to our knowledge on the reception of Antiquity. Thus, "debate" arises: a Greek krater is "found again"; it is not located on the art market, no, but its relevance as a museum-piece gains a new significance; its "history" acquires an additional dimension – thanks to a glance across the borders between disciplines. This is something we should focus on learning more intensively.

Martin Flashar received his doctorate from the University of Bonn in 1991, where he studied with Niklaus Himmelmann, and habilitated in 2003 at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau. He teaches at Freiburg University and works as an independent art consultant, journalist and author.

## My Choice

# An Archaic Kore

By Ulrike Haase



UNDER LIFE-SIZED TORSO OF A KORE. Reverse illustrated. H. 20 cm. White, medium to fine crystalline island marble (Paros or Naxos). Greek, last quarter 6th of cent. B.C. CHF 58,000

Perhaps because I am an archaeologist at heart, the objects with the greatest power to captivate me are those that do not reveal the full extent of their character and beauty at first glance.

Patience and sensitivity are required of anyone wishing to properly appreciate the subtle modelling of this torso of a young woman, clad in chiton and himation. Viewed from the front, the work's most striking aspects are the slenderness of the torso, whose lateral contours, clearly visible underneath the drapery, make for a charming contrast with the rather broad shoulders; next the right arm, set slightly apart from the body as an ingeniously asymmetrical element in a work that in all other respects adheres rigorously to the anterior central axis; then the greatly reduced volume of the body when viewed in profile; the accumulation of finely modelled folds sheathing the back; the long hair which, to judge by what remains of it, was originally divided into numerous rows of curls, whose strictly horizontal ends fittingly emphasize the axial system on which the composition is based; and then finally, the pleated hem of the himation emerging from underneath the mass of curls at the back and sweeping under

the left arm to the front, where, logically, it was worn diagonally over the breast right up to the shoulder.

Archaic marbles are very rarely found on the art market and, over the centuries, have managed to retain more or less of their original appearance. So surely it is only right and proper that we give them our attention at least for a fraction of the time they themselves have endured.

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broken, has given way to the interested world citizen of our globalized society. The subject "Classical Antiquity" – to mention just one example – has to economise, for instance, at our universities (at least in Germany) and to look for liaisons with other disciplines of archaeology in order to survive. For many years now, professorships have not been as generously endowed as they generally were in the 1960's. The academic junior staff has, at German universities, been largely eliminated, administrative jobs are subject to cuts, and secretaries who took care of bureaucratic tasks for the department head will soon become entirely a thing of the past. Burdened with administration, the professor or scientific director – if he is active as a field archaeologist – has less and less time to concern himself with adequate publication. Due to the demands of teaching and on-site research, he is left with only a very restricted time budget to present the finds in detail and to ensure their adequate scholarly analysis.

Does this sound defeatist? Things are not quite as bleak as my short sketch would make it appear. Thanks to social media, the younger generation can contact field archaeologists quickly, form networks with international scholars, ask questions regarding finds, receive background information, access otherwise hard-to-get literature with the click of a mouse, and comb through databases. Jealousy and vanity are replaced by interest and idealism: this is my hope! In any case, no one can take from us the intimate relationship to archaeology and also to ancient art.

## My Choice

# A Monumental Lamp

By Jean-David Cahn



A SPOUT OF AN EXCEPTIONALLY MONUMENTAL OIL LAMP. L. 21 cm. Bronze, Roman, 1st-2nd cent. A.D. CHF 22,000

On visiting a colleague in Jerusalem, I, by coincidence, discovered this impressive fragment of a monumental bronze oil lamp, which had formed part of the Baidun Family Collection since 1976. After receiving the export license from the Israel Antiquities Authorities, the object was shipped to Basle.

In its charming, unrestored condition, the fragment displays a crusty, earthy patina. It belonged to lamp with multiple spouts, and is decorated with the mask of a comedian, whose open mouth serves as air vent. The dimensions of the entire lamp were monumental. The spout itself is 21 cm long, and the diameter of the whole object can be reconstructed as measuring 1 m!

The actor gapes at us with furrowed brow, wrinkled nose and erect hair. A rectangular fitting with square cross-section was cast separately and is placed over a peg behind the mask and fastened by a horizontal iron pin. Above it, the flat snout of a dolphin can

be seen. One of the chains with which the lamp was suspended from the ceiling would have been fastened to its tail.

Such ceiling lamps with multiple snouts are only rarely preserved. This spout alone weighs 1460 g! The whole lamp would have weighed over 20 kg.

It was frequently used, as testified by the traces of burning and heat at the tip of the snout. One would like to calculate the quantity of oil used by such a lamp. The lamp was cast in the same manner as were large bronzes, i.e. with the typical rectangular plaques, that were inserted after casting had taken place, in order to correct casting errors.

A lamp of these dimensions would have graced and illuminated a very stately villa, a temple or a bath. It gives us an idea of the now lost extravagance and luxury of the furnishings found in 1st and 2nd century A.D. Palestine.

In any case, as challenging as research can be, in the end there is always the moment of recognition: You are never too old to learn.

And so I am already expecting the new arrivals, true to the motto: "Habent parvae comoda magna morae". Only after passing the controls of the Art Loss Register and Interpol is an object safe enough to be purchased. Only after complying with strict export and import criteria can the object find its way to the Gallery Cahn. Only after this procedure is completed does my work start: not yet knowing the object of desire in the original, I carefully unpack it, have a look at it, turn it around, discuss it with my colleagues. And finally, I do the necessary research work so that it can leave the gallery after the responsible and careful completion of due diligence. At this very moment, I recognise that the years of archaeological studies and training have paid off.

Notes:

- 1) Cf. P. Getz-Preziosi, *Early Cycladic Sculpture*, Cat. J. Paul Getty Museum Malibu (Malibu, 1985) 37 f., fig. 18; J. Thimme, *Kunst und Kultur der Kykladeninseln im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, Cat. Badisches Landesmuseum Karlsruhe (Karlsruhe, 1976) 434, no. 61.
- 2) *Ov. Fast.* 3, 394.

## My Choice

The regal goddess Isis sits enthroned with her son Horus on her lap. With her right hand she proffers her left breast to the infant, inviting him to nurse. Her posture is somewhat stiff; her hands and feet are slightly elongated, and her angular joints form a charming contrast to the delicately sculpted, expressive face with large eyes, and very finely modelled ears and lips. The body is extremely slender at the waist, and its proportions are very elegant. The wig is engraved in remarkable detail, and the individual strands of hair, as well as the feathers of the vulture-hood, are precisely rendered. Likewise, attention is paid to the smallest detail of the Uraeus. The tip of one of the cow's horns is restored. The Horus child has delicate facial features and a splendidly braided curl of infancy.

As chance would have it, for once the old-fashioned mount dating from the 19th century with a hand-written label was not removed for aesthetical reasons during the last 30-40 years. The inscription informs us that this statuette was found in Thebes during the excavations by Auguste Mariette (1821-1881). Mariette was the founder of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities and, at the time, it was common practice for excavators to take home finds from a dig, or that a partition agreement permitted them to keep half of the finds. These finds often remained the private property of the excavators.

## My Choice

# An Enthroned Isis Nursing the Horus Child

By Jean-David Cahn



AN ENTHRONED ISIS WITH HORUS CHILD. H. 17.1 cm. Bronze. Egypt, Late Period, 26th Dynasty  
CHF 32,000

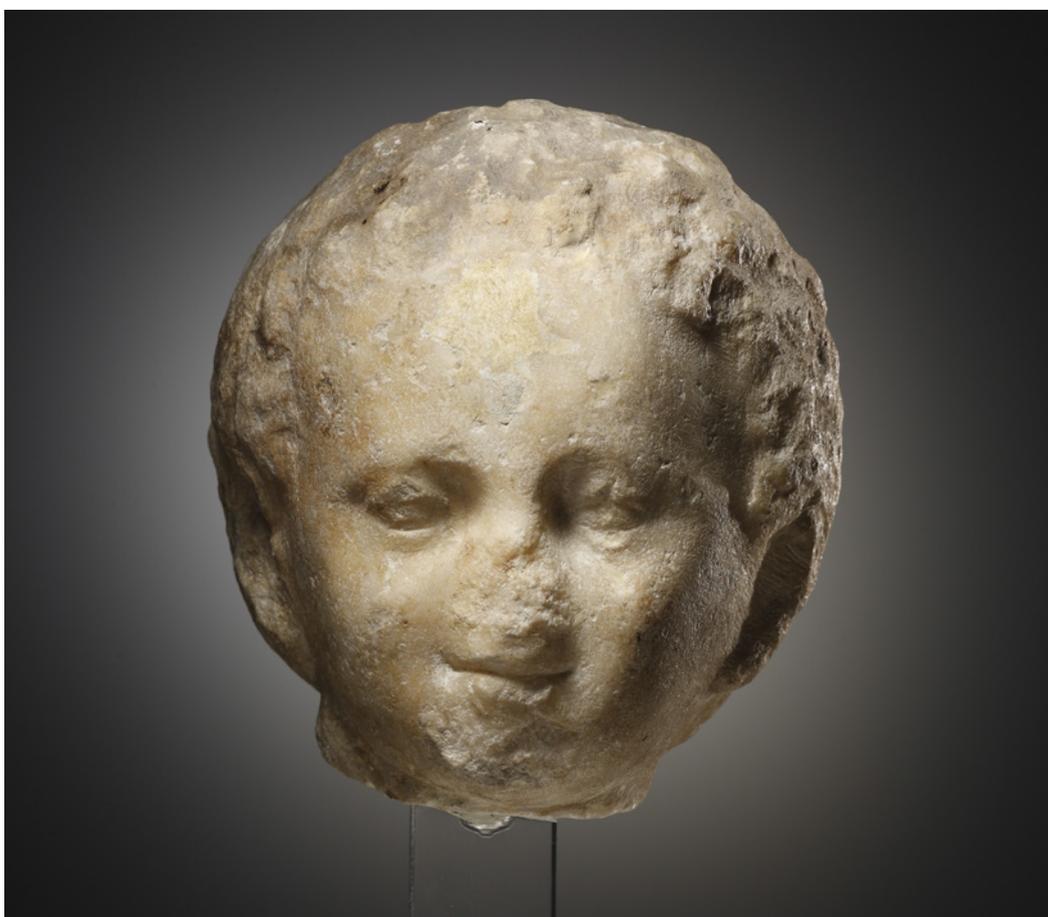
How nice it would be if the provenances of the last decades were known to us. If one had remounted the piece, its old provenance

would have been lost and, under the current strict regulations, a museum would not have the option of acquiring this bronze statuette.

## My Choice

# A Life-size Head of a Child, Found in Aegina 1837

By Jean-David Cahn



HEAD OF A CHILD. H. 15 cm. Marble. Greek, Aegina, 2nd half of 4th century. B.C. CHF 26,000

The immediacy of this work of art is touching, especially the serenity of the sensitively carved eyes. The child looks at us with a shy smile. The proportions, a high, curved forehead and a charming, small face suggest an age of two to three years. The head is slightly inclined and the hair is structured in fluffy bunches. The right ear is carefully modelled, while the left is cursorily carved. This suggests that the child's head was part of a relief. It was carved in the round but shown in three-quarter view. Above the curls over the forehead a sketchily carved groove runs diagonally across the top of the head, indicating a taenia. The rough cross was, at a later date, carved on the forehead that has been reversibly filled in by us. Nose, chin and parts of the eyelids are worn. The break at the neck has been smoothed in order to mount the head on a profiled English marble base.

Our head, more likely that of a girl, was part of a late Classical funerary monument erected around 350 B.C., on which she probably said farewell to her dead mother. Later, the

head was turned into the head of the baby Jesus by the addition of the roughly cut cross. The English base bears the inscription "Found in Egina 1837".

Our child was found in exciting times in a fascinating place. Only ten years earlier, Aegina had been made the capital of independent Greece by Ioannis Kapodistrias, after the fleets of the later guardians France, Great Britain and Russia had decisively defeated the Ottoman fleet at Navarino. The first years of the new state were characterised by economic impotence and chaos; the new country suffered from the tensions between its protectors. Our head was found in these uncertain times and taken as a souvenir to England, where it was elaborately and lovingly placed on a base.

The head was allegedly acquired in Scotland before 1960 and recently sold to an art dealer in Glasgow. One would very much like to know in which philhellenic stately home the head was once housed. Typically, as - alas -



The head of a child before restoration on its original base from the year 1837

too often, its provenance is unknown. Only the base and the cemented dowel bear witness to its history. This is indicative of the widespread problem of lost provenance, where written proof is usually absent, and proof of pre-1970 ownership is only visible on the object itself or on its mount. This is particularly absurd when documentary evidence is required in spite of clear confirmation of pre-1970 ownership on the object, because museums are advised by lawyers and these only function in the sphere of one-dimensional paper documents. However, the UNESCO-Convention of 1970 does not stipulate this in any way; its misinterpretation stigmatises numerous antiquities, although these carry the proof of having been on the market for more than a century. One would simply wish for a little more pragmatism in the discussion, also from the institutions.

For a detailed discussion of these problems, see my article "Hidden Provenances": [http://www.cahn.ch/images/content/press/Hidden\\_Provenances.pdf](http://www.cahn.ch/images/content/press/Hidden_Provenances.pdf)

the International Transfer of Cultural Property (CPTA) in Switzerland. Together with Jean-David Cahn, she acted as an expert for art law for the Council of Europe and was a co-founder of IADAA, which sets the ethical guidelines for the trade in ancient works of art.

Antje Gaiser Cahn became acquainted with the practical aspects of the art market under the aegis of Herbert A. Cahn, the father of Jean-David Cahn, in the 1990's. She assisted energetically at many art fairs, packed and unpacked works of art, helped with the secretarial work, and looked after clients. Her wide-ranging experience in the art world and her legal expertise contributed significantly to the foundation of the Jean-David Cahn AG, which replaced his father's company, H.A.C. – Kunst der Antike, in 1999. To this day, the success of the gallery is owed to a large degree to her advice and direction.



Elfriede Gaiser's involvement in the company also began in the days of Herbert A. Cahn's gallery, Kunst der Antike. In 1997, her son-in-law, Jean-David Cahn, who was then in Oxford, asked the insurance expert whether she would be willing to enter the register of addresses into a computer database. She still has to smile when she remembers that there were 3000 instead of the expected 500 addresses. When Herbert A. Cahn's secretary retired, Elfriede Gaiser took on some of her tasks. After the foundation of the Jean-David Cahn AG, she was entrusted with the accounts, bookkeeping and human resources. She is also responsible for insurance matters. Having spent 20 years with the Neuenburger Versicherungen and having kept abreast with developments in this sector, "she struck fear," so Jean-David Cahn humorously, "in the hearts of the insurance brokers". Elfriede Gaiser regards her work in the gallery as a daily challenge which enhances the quality of her life. What little free time remains, she dedicates to porcelain painting, an art that requires a lot of patience and precision – she once spent more than 400 hours working on a large vase with three figural scenes!

## My Choice

# A Bronze Statuette of a Charioteer

By Jean-David Cahn



BRONZE STATUETTE OF A CHARIOTEER. H. 7.3 cm. Bronze. Etruscan, mid-5th cent. B.C.

CHF 24,000

The bronze statuette of a charioteer presented here is a great rarity. There is no doubt about his role. He wears an ankle-length cloak over a sleeved chiton. The cloak is fastened at the right shoulder by a fibula, and part of his ornate garment is draped over his arm. The straps slung around the upper part of his arms and across his chest and back provide support in the galloping chariot and are typically worn by charioteers. His odd coiffure, short behind and long in front, is also characteristic. A short sword emerges from underneath the cloak. His beardless, youthful face with wide-open eyes and finely engraved eyebrows is remarkable. Our charioteer stands firmly on both legs, and both arms are flexed as he is already racing; his cloak

flutters in the breeze. The best comparisons are the famous marble charioteer of Motya in Sicily and - of course - the Delphi Charioteer. Charioteers are very rarely represented in sculpture, in contrast to vase-painting and reliefs. The delicacy of the execution and the wealth of detail mark this statuette, with its thick, dark olive-green patina, as a masterpiece of the middle of the 5th century B.C. The richly draped garments and the expressive style of the face suggest an Etruscan origin. Many years ago, my father sold this small masterpiece at TEFAF Maastricht to a married couple we are very fond of. It is a great pleasure to be able to offer you this beautiful bronze again.

Pottery, which is Sandro Cimicchi's area of specialisation, has fascinated him from an early age. At school he read Homer's Iliad, which made a deep impression on him, and he learnt many passages by heart. To see his heroes painted on Greek vases was a pivotal experience that made a strong and lasting impact on his life. For Sandro Cimicchi, the sheer beauty of these works of art is a great source of happiness.



His enthusiasm for ancient pottery is shared by his daughter Cristiana Cimicchi. As a teenager, she helped in her father's workshop and gradually learnt the art of restoration. She worked for her father for eight years and since 2011 she has been the Cahn Gallery's in-house restorer. Her workshop is, for me, the most mysterious room in the gallery. Shielded from daylight in the darkened room, the objects rest on the shelves lining the wall, waiting patiently until it is their turn. Some vases have already been taken apart, and the fragments lie arranged neatly on wooden trays like the pieces of a puzzle. The simple workbench is covered with tubes of paint, brushes and palette knives. A partially reassembled vase sits in a box of sand like an ostrich egg, and the bone glue bubbles quietly on an electric plate. Cristiana moves a Corinthian oinochoe to and fro in the cone of cold light and sighs. "There are millions of colours in there, it makes me despair!" she explains, and gestures eloquently from vase to palette. At first, I am puzzled, for I see only three colours: the black glaze, the added red and the beige clay. But then I take a closer look at the frieze of tongues on the shoulder and am astounded by the pulsating life in the colour. Countless hues of yellow and green are contained in the red and a silvery blue shimmers in the black: a universe of nuances is disclosed to the patient eye. Maybe this is why the restorers cannot let go of their profession and work on and on, like the aged Renaissance painters Giovanni Bellini or Jacopo Tintoretto, enchanted by the works of art that reveal their innermost secrets only to those who touch them.

## My Choice

# An Archaic Ivory Kore

By Jean-David Cahn



A KORE. H. 6.4 cm. Ivory. Greek, probably Ionic or Samian, late 6th-early 5th century B.C.  
(Drawing by Jean-David Cahn, all images 1:1)

CHF 5,800

Already in the first two editions of *Cahn's Quarterly*, I wrote about works of art from the Archaic Period, an epoch that holds a particular fascination for me. During my university studies, the Basle professor, Rolf Stucky, noted that I had dedicated enough time to Archaic sculpture and that I should, for a change, write a paper on Roman Republican portraiture. Of course, he was absolutely right. Nonetheless, I am captivated by this period, because, due to the ostensibly canonical forms, it expresses itself in the highly differentiated language of regional styles.

Historically viewed, it was a time that one could describe as the "calm before the storm" prior to the great upheavals of the 5th century B.C. Soon, the evolution, and then revolution, leading to so-called radical democracy would ensue in many a polis. With regard to warfare, profound changes in the strategies employed on land and water were provoked by the Persian onslaught and then by the "great war" within the Greek world. Was the Archaic Period, therefore, a happy period? We do not know. But certainly it was a time in which clear principals regulated visual language, philosophy and politics. Possibly this is, however, just my romanticising view of things, given the current tearing pace of change.

A small ivory kore dressed in a chiton and mantle, and holding a fruit in her right hand, fascinates. Although the surface is heavily worn, the graceful and elegant drapery folds and the girl's delicate body become apparent, if one studies the piece carefully and patiently.

It is well worth studying small works of art in detail, but unfortunately we rarely spare the time to do this. Even making photographs is a process that entails a certain distance to an object. Every now and again, I therefore like to take the time to withdraw quietly in order to draw such an object. This permits me, despite the hectic pace of everyday life, to lose myself in this pleasant pastime and contemplation.

When one draws an object, one repeatedly has to examine what one has drawn, and certain weathered areas can only be understood by moving the object back and forth in the light. One has to differentiate carefully between wishful thinking and reality. As with photography, where lighting influences the character of the image, the act of drawing is not free of subjectivity; an absolutely objective rendition is not attainable. The process of drawing does, however, help one to perceive what is not immediately evident and leads to a deeper understanding of the artwork. By adding dots in ink, the drawing is removed a further step away from the original. Thus, a drawing can only serve as an aid to seeing and to interpretation.

This small statuette is particularly charming, because it adopts the formal language of monumental sculpture. Ivory figurines served as precious votive gifts in temples. The very fluid, soft forms of the drapery folds and the volumetry as a whole indicate that our kore, which is reminiscent of the numerous 6th century B.C. ivory finds from the sanctuary of Hera on Samos, could be Ionian.

lating catalogue texts, press relations and advertising. Occasionally, she works on the fairs team in London and Basle. As a contrast to the megacity Hong Kong, Yvonne Yiu and her family enjoy living in the rural Baselbiet, where she leads the Furlen-Ensemble für Alte Musik and takes care of 23 honeybee colonies.



Aline Debusigne joined the team a little over a year ago, and contributes another multicultural accent to the company with her half-French and half-Danish roots. She studied Roman History at the University of Nice and the EPHE Paris. She then spent four years pursuing research on the history of collecting artworks from Roman Egypt in French public collections. Aline Debusigne worked for the Antikenmuseum Basel und Sammlung Ludwig as well as for the Fondation Berger in Lausanne. She deepened her knowledge of the art market at the Sotheby's Institute of Art, London. Aline Debusigne organises fairs and special projects, such as last year's photography exhibition in Rome, for the Cahn Gallery. Furthermore, she works in our gallery in St. Moritz during the summer and winter seasons, and looks forward to welcoming you there.



## My Choice

In the field of ancient sculpture, I most definitely prefer those artworks that were created in the Archaic Period, between ca. 680 and 500 B.C.

# An Archaic Kore

By Jean-David Cahn



A HEAD OF A KORE. H. 16.5 cm. Marble. Eastern Greek, ca. 530 B.C.



CHF 76,000

At first glance, the sculptures carved in this period appear to be divided very canonically into male and female statues, with the exception of architectural sculpture. They all stride forwards; the arms of the men generally hang straight down, whilst the woman often hold up a flower in their right hand. This adherence to the canon forces the sculptor to develop his artistic expression in the rendering of volumes and the surfaces of the eyes, the mouth and the garments. This reduction leads to a concentration on the essential within the framework provided by the canonical forms. Thereby, the local styles and the sculptor's school manifest themselves. A similar phenomenon can be observed in the Romanesque and Gothic sculptures of the Madonna. Unfortunately, these statues of korai and kouroi – that is of maidens and youths – are very rare, because they were used as building material in the course of the Persian invasion of the 5th century B.C., and also later in history, for different reasons. Archaic marbles are, therefore, very rare on the art market. Even the leading European museums often have no more than a handful of sculptures from this period. On visiting the new Acropolis Museum, the only reason why we are confronted by such an unusually large number of these statues is that they were all unearthed in the rubble left on the Acropolis by the Persians. Some of them astound us by the preserved polychromy; this reveals to us how much we have lost. In contrast to Roman sculpture, we are constrained to extract from what has been destroyed, to reconstruct what is missing, and to delight ourselves in

this manner with the fragments that have been preserved.

Our kore forces us to be patient and empathetic when beholding the soft, round face. One can still sense her calm smile on seeing the corners of her mouth and the tender, slightly slanting, almond-shaped eyes, which reveal her to be the workmanship of Ionian sculptors. Her hair is structured subtly by broad horizontal undulations. It is centrally parted above the forehead, and forms irregular waves full of tension. A broad hairband runs pertly behind the small, but pronounced ear. Probably made from coarse-grained island marble, the head's formal structure refers it to a workshop in the Ionian Islands, which was active ca. 530 B.C. It is noteworthy that this beautiful head of a kore comes from a collection in England, which I knew very well, and that she bears witness to the taste of a real dilettante – or cognoscente.



## My choice

Hundreds of artworks pass through Jean-David Cahn's hands every year. Many a treasure lies hidden in this number. In this column, he would like to share some of these remarkable discoveries with you.

## An Archaic Gorgoneion

By Jean-David Cahn



The Canadian Dr. John Robert Guy is a leading expert in Attic vase-painting. He received his doctorate in 1984 for his thesis on "The Early Classical Followers of Douris", Oxford University, where he studied under Prof. C. Martin Robertson. From 1984-1991, he was Associate Curator of Ancient Art at The Art Museum, Princeton University, and from 1992-1999 he held the Humfry Payne Senior Research Fellowship in Classical Archaeology and Art at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Subsequently, he worked as an independent scholar and art advisor in London. Robert has been a close friend of the Cahn family since 1976, engaging in a lively dialogue on Greek art, from his student days onwards, with Herbert A. Cahn. He joined the Cahn Gallery in 2009, where he advises Jean-David Cahn on acquisitions, catalogues the ceramics and is responsible for the due diligence on all artworks, which includes controlling their provenances. In addition to his work for the gallery, Robert is active as a researcher and participates in international congresses. What he likes most about Basle is the remarkable density of cultural institutions, not only in the field of the visual arts but also of music.

Basle gallery and is part of the fairs team. What does she like most about Switzerland? Ulrike appreciates the high standard of living here as well as the friendliness of the Swiss people. Having grown up in the exceedingly flat region of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, she does not wish to miss the opportunity of learning how to ski in the Swiss Alps.



A GORGONEION. W. 11 cm. Bronze. Western Greek, Late Archaic Period, ca. 530 B.C. CHF 12,800

In the year 2009, I, by coincidence, acquired a box of multifarious objects of apparently little value. My gaze was immediately captured by a fragmentary sheet of bronze about the size of the palm of my hand, which concealed an exquisite Late Archaic repoussé design. After partial cleaning by André Lorenceau, an experienced restorer who has worked for the Cahn family for decades, a fierce mask of Gorgo baring her teeth was revealed. The wild facial features were emphasised by finely chased lines and the beautiful, almond-shaped eyes still preserved some of their ivory inlay. Such details are hardly visible on photographs but can be brought to life by drawings, a method I have always employed in my research. What kind of object are we looking at? A fitting, probably from the head-piece of a horse's harness, in Greek, prometopodion, made in about 530 B.C. Such head-pieces are extremely rare and only about eight examples from this period are known (museums in Karlsruhe, Basle, Malibu and Naples).

I was so fascinated by this piece, because I had devoted many years to research on the motifs that were used to decorate weapons. The warriors who wore decorated weapons and armour associated ideas related to survival, the afterlife and determent with these motifs. In contrast to many ancient objects, weapons have a precise function. They protect and inflict injuries, and, on a secondary level, they can be gifted, dedicated etc.

The beholder of Gorgo is petrified, and for this reason Perseus defeated her using her own weapons, namely a mirror. On beholding her own image she herself turned into stone and was beheaded. The horseman hoped for the same effect, namely to instill terror. Furthermore, the multiplication of eyes – those of the horse, the Gorgoneion and the rider – served to confuse the enemy.

Besides wishing to paralyse the beholder by means of apotropaic images, the wearer hoped to acquire invulnerability or even to evade death.

The appeal of this repoussé bronze lies therein, that it cannot be grasped immediately. It needs to be studied carefully and closely in order to appreciate the fineness of the lines and the artwork as a whole. This type of gradually developing pleasure is akin to tasting a good Bordeaux and is for me the most authentic pleasure that can be derived from beholding works of art. Not slow food, but slow art!

