

C H A R L E S E D E

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Introduction

Antiquities are easily described in just a few simple words: 'objects, buildings or works of art from ancient times'. This perhaps rather stark definition, although true, fails to capture the elusive magic that one can experience in the presence of something thousands of years old.

Often whilst examining an antiquity, turning it about in our hands, it is not unusual to encounter a moment of illumination that brings it to life. This sudden revelation may be caused by a dribble of paint (the result of a too-full brush), the short parallel marks of the sculptor's chisel on stone, or the thumbprint the potter left when the clay was still wet. At such instances something remarkable happens: the centuries roll away and we are next to the ancient artist or craftsman, someone just like ourselves in many respects but living in an utterly different world. This is a strangely moving experience, unnerving, direct and personal; more immediate than walking through archaeological sites, temples or tombs. Time contracts and we become part of a great continuum. It is akin to listening to music or seeing a great painting and one of the thrills of civilisation.

Used as we are to seeing antiquities locked inside glass cabinets in museums, it is easy to forget that, whether part of the paraphernalia of funerary rites, votive offerings or luxury goods for a wealthy elite, they were familiar elements of daily life in the ancient world. It is naturally a privilege to possess these objects which have, through accident or good fortune, survived the ravages of age. We are delighted that they are momentarily ours and hope you will be enthused to own them yourselves.

Each of the pieces in this catalogue is possessed of something exceptional: the elegance of its form, the finesse of its workmanship or its rarity. They are survivors from the great cultures of ancient Egypt, Greece and the Roman empire and span a period of nearly four thousand years. The earliest, a remarkable Egyptian flint 'fish-tail' knife dates to around 3500 BC, whilst the most recent is an impressive Roman basalt over-life size torso from the 2nd century AD.

'Works of art from ancient times' they certainly are, yet across the millennia each object talks to us still, we just have to listen and look.



Catalogue

Egyptian fish-tail knife

Predynastic-Early Dynastic Period,
Naqada II-2nd Dynasty,
c.3500-2686 BC
Flint
Height 11cm

With minutely serrated edges on the upper half, a smooth edge to the lower, and delicate bifacial knapping, the profile remarkably thin.

The lower half of this knife would likely have acted as a handle and been covered in a perishable material such as leather or cord. It has been suggested that fish-tail knives were implements used for cutting the umbilical cord after childbirth, or alternatively, an early example of the pesesh-kef, a tool used during the 'Opening of the Mouth' ceremony.

Provenance

Alton Edward Mills (1882-1970), La Tour-de-Pelix, Switzerland; thence by descent

Comparanda

Winifred Needler, *Predynastic and Archaic Egypt in the Brooklyn Museum* (New York, 1984), p. 267, no. 162



Egyptian conical vase

Old Kingdom, 5th-6th Dynasty,
c.2500-2200 BC
Alabaster
Height 23cm

The slender, pointed body with gently rounded shoulder, broad flaring collar and flattened lip. Horizontal banding to the translucent alabaster, surface polished.

Provenance

Private collection, France; acquired
prior to 1970

Comparanda

Barbara G. Aston, *Ancient Egyptian Stone
Vessels: Materials and Forms* (Heidelberg,
1994), p. 137, fig. 127



Egyptian hieroglyphic relief fragment

Old Kingdom, 4th-6th Dynasty,
c.2613-2181 BC
Limestone
Height 23cm, width 38cm

The crisply carved hieroglyphs in raised relief read 'Master of Secrets'. Dividing lines below and above, partial hieroglyphs in the lower register seemingly include a bread bun (denoting a feminine gender, or the letter 't'), the white crown of Upper Egypt, and possibly a cartouche. The enigmatic title 'Master of Secrets' may well refer to the jackal-headed Anubis.

Provenance

Mr Ezeldeen Taha Eldarir, Egypt; acquired
17th June 1941 from Salahaddin Sirmali

Private collection, New York, USA;
by decent from the above

Comparanda

For the hieroglyphs see Mark Collier
and Bill Manley, *How to Read Egyptian
Hieroglyphs* (London, 1998), p. 157





Egyptian arm from a statuette

Middle Kingdom,
c.2400 BC
Wood
Length 22.2cm

The long, slender left arm with relaxed musculature, straight fingers and concave palm. A bracelet painted on the wrist in alternating red and white stripes with traces of blue pigment to the central rectangular element. Traces of white paint on the carefully sculpted fingernails, the surface lightly polished. A square indent on the reverse of the shoulder would have attached the arm to the body using a dowel.

Provenance

Michel E. Abemayor (d.1975), New York, USA

Dr. Malcolm Hardy, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA; acquired 1965 from the above

Abemayor was a prominent New York City dealer and scholar. Many of his objects can be found in the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum, The Royal Ontario Museum and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Comparanda

For a smaller example which shows painted nails and bracelet see George Steindorff, *Catalogue of the Egyptian Sculpture in the Walters Art Gallery* (Baltimore, 1946), pl. XVII, no. 86



Egyptian polychrome fragments from a box of Amenhotep II

New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty,
c.1427-1400 BC
Cedar wood, ebony, ivory, gold
Height 9.5cm and 4.5cm

Two adjoining fragments from a circular box. The upper fragment decorated with alternating papyrus stems and lotus buds. The ivory papyrus stems stand proud of the polished wood surface, whilst the lotus buds of ochre coloured paste are inset. A three layered horizontal gesso band showing traces of gold runs across the top. The matrix is of ebony wood (*hebeny*). The lower fragment has the same horizontal band across the top, beneath which strips of ebony and ivory form a rectangle around a partially remaining red-stained ivory segment.

These fragments are certainly from the box found by Alexander Henry Rhind in the mid-19th century, now in the National Museum of Scotland. The museum describes the box as 'one of the finest examples of decorative woodwork to survive from ancient Egypt'. In the 1950s Cyril Aldred created a detailed watercolour of the museum's fragments prior to the restoration of the box, showing that the lid, base and back of the box are missing. Fascinatingly, our fragments introduce a new, previously unknown element; that of red-stained ivory.

The materials indicated the vast reach and wealth of Amenhotep II's empire, and emphasised the relatively recent unity of the two Egyptian kingdoms. The ivory inlays come from the tusks of either a hippopotamus or an elephant; if from the latter, it would have been imported from the south, as elephants are not indigenous to Egypt; gold was generally mined in Nubia or Egypt's Eastern Desert; the cedar came from trees originating in Lebanon, whilst the ebony veneers were likely brought by trade from the land of Punt. The lotus and papyrus motifs refer to Upper and Lower Egypt respectively, and in ancient Egyptian iconography their combined use signifies the unity of Egypt under a single pharaoh.

Provenance

Private collection, Germany; acquired c.1965

Comparanda

For the rest of the box see National Museum of Scotland acc. no. A.1956.113



Egyptian sarcophagus panel for Hesimut

Third Intermediate Period,
21st-22nd Dynasty,
c.1070-750 BC
Painted wood
Height 26.6cm, width 34.5cm

The scenes and hieroglyphs thickly painted in vibrant colours on a yellow background. The outer face shows a central vignette with seven deities, two of which are enthroned. The scene is framed by a shrine on either side, the left with a *kheker* frieze, the right with a row of cobras on its roof and containing a seated god. The scene displays an offering table, hieroglyphs and religious symbols. Above is a bordered frieze of hieroglyphic text, the uppermost register contains a band of rearing cobras with sun discs. The bottom register composed of alternating *djed* pillars and *tyt* knots.

The inner face depicts an enthroned baboon-headed god, probably Hapi, holding an *ankh* with both hands. An offering table in front is laden with breads, fruit and vegetables, two Nile birds tied and hanging below. Columns of vertical hieroglyphic text frame the scene, containing a prayer to the god and requesting that he provide a good burial for the sarcophagus owner, a woman called the Lady of the House, Hesimut, or Ishesimut.

Provenance

Private collection, Westchester County, USA

Christie's New York, Antiquities, 18th
December 1996, lot 81

Private collection, The Netherlands







Egyptian shabti for Udjarenes

Thebes, Late Dynastic Period,
late 25th-early 26th Dynasty,
c.670-650 BC
Serpentine
Height 18.5cm

The mummiform shabti is depicted wearing a plain wig with extended lappets, tucked behind large ears. The broad face has precisely carved details including cosmetic lines and eyebrows. Folded arms with hands protruding from the wrappings hold the usual agricultural implements of crook and flail, a seed bag over the left shoulder. Seven lines of hieroglyphic text to the body, dedicating the shabti to Mistress of the House, Udjarenes, and quoting Chapter Six of the Book of the Dead.

Udjarenes was the wife of Mentuemhat, the Fourth Prophet of Amun, who had considerable political power at Thebes during a period of instability. The tomb of Mentuemhat was one of the largest in the Theban private necropolis, and had some of the very finest reliefs in archaizing style of the Late Period. Udjarenes, the daughter of Piankhy-Har and granddaughter of Piye, the second king of the Nubian dynasty, was also Priestess of Hathor and Singer of Amun; evidently, a woman of great importance.

Provenance

Alton Edward Mills (1882-1970), La Tour-de-Pellex, Switzerland; thence by descent

Comparanda

A small number of Udjarenes' shabtis are known, two of which are in the British Museum; EA68986 and EA24715, and a further one in the Berlin Museum; acc. no. 10663

J.-F. and L. Aubert, *Statuettes égyptiennes* (Paris, 1974), p. 200-1 and M.L. Bierbrier, 'Udjarenes rediscovered', *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, Vol. 79 (London, 1993), p. 274-5





**Egyptian sculptor's
trial piece of a
pharaoh as sphinx**

Late Dynastic Period, 26th-30th Dynasty,
c.664-343 BC
Limestone
Length 7cm, height 4.1cm

The body of typical sphinx form, tail curling up and over the crouched right leg, front legs extended in front, set on an integrated rectangular base. The head of the pharaoh looking forwards, wearing the Nemes headdress, the facial features finely carved. Traces of blue pigment at the nape of the neck and on the lappets of the headdress. Rare.

Provenance

Private collection, Ohain, Belgium; acquired prior to 1983



Egyptian head of a falcon deity

Late Ptolemaic-Roman Period,
2nd century BC-1st century AD
Basalt
Height 14.5cm

The wide eyes with cosmetic lines are set far apart in the broad face, a style typical of this later period. The finely striated wig frames the face, hooked beak and facial markings. The polished surface brings out the rich colour of the stone.

In Egypt, the divine living pharaoh could be personified by a sculpture of a falcon-headed man; the present example may have been from such a statue. Alternatively, it could represent Montu, the falcon-headed war-god.

Provenance

Private collection, Brussels, Belgium;
acquired 1960s

Comparanda

C. Fluck, G. Helmecke and E.R. O'Connell
(eds.), *Egypt: Faith after the Pharaohs*
(London, 2015), p. 65, no. 62



European dagger blade

1300-1200 BC
Bronze
Length 28cm

Elaborate ribbed and grooved decoration stretching the length of the blade with gently sloping shoulder, a central tang with three rivet holes at the base. Lustrous mottled-green patina.

Provenance

Sir Richard Ground (1949-2014),
Grindleford, UK



Greek black-figure kyathos with Herakles and Acheloos

Athens, probably by the
Group of the Vatican G57,
c.515-505 BC
Pottery
Height 14.8cm

Black-figure on a white ground with details in added red. The central composition shows Herakles with the Nemean lion headdress, wrestling the river-god Acheloos. Herakles holds him in a ladder-grip, 'klimakismos', Acheloos has raised his right arm to club Herakles with a fish, his left arm grabbing at the hero's thigh hold, a dolphin leaping behind Herakles' left leg. A pair of eyes and two sirens either side of the main scene, ivy tendrils weaving throughout. A conical knob on the high arching handle, flanked by a raised rib, terminating in a palmette. Reserved line on shoulder of the torus foot, fine red line to the edge, resting surface reserved, interior black-glazed.

This scene does not represent one of Herakles' labours, but rather a fight for love. Dejanira, the daughter of King Acheloos, was said to be the world's most beautiful woman. Acheloos set a contest to find her a husband wherein the successful suitor must defeat the king in a wrestling match. Herakles, being the strongest mortal, accepted the challenge with confidence and, despite Acheloos metamorphosing into various earthly creatures, kept the river-god pinned to the ground until he succumbed, winning the hand of Dejanira.

Provenance

Rumiko Onogi, Tokyo, Japan; acquired 1980s

Private collection, California, USA

Comparanda

For examples of similar kyathoi by the Group of Vatican G57 compare *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum, Fissile, Collezione Constantini*, Vol. I, 18, pl. 2547, no. 35.1-2.

For the scene compare Judith Swaddling, *The Ancient Olympic Games* (London, 1980), p. 61, BMC Vases B 494





Greek funerary stele for Dorias

c.350-325 BC
Marble
Height 78cm

The tall stele has a scene in shallow relief showing a woman with bound hair, wearing a chiton and himation, seated on a cushioned diphros, her feet resting on a foot-stool. A young woman stands before her, similarly fashioned, the pair reaching their right hands forward, fingertips touching. Between the two a young girl with short hair and chiton is kneeling, lifting both hands to the seated figure. This tender scene is set beneath an inscription, DORIAS POSEIDONIOU, 'Dorias, daughter of Poseidonios'. Surmounted by a simplistic pediment with acroteria.

Provenance

Found in Chalcis, Euboea; recorded in the travel notes of Eduard Schaubert, the State Architect and Director of Public Works at the court of Otto, the first king of modern Greece.

Private collection, France; acquired prior to 1994

Published

A.R. Rangabé, 'Mémoire sur la Partie Méridionale de L'Ile D'Eubée', *Mémoires présentés par divers savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres de L'Institut de France, séries 1, Vol. III* (Paris, 1853), pp. 197-201

A.R. Rangabé, *Antiquités Helléniques ou Répertoire D'Inscriptions et D'Autres Antiquités*, Vol. II (Athens, 1855), no. 2476c

E. Ziebarth (ed.), 'Inscriptiones Euboeae Insulae', *Inscriptiones Graecae Insularum*, Vol. XII, fasc. 9, (Berlin, 1915), no. 1012

Comparanda

'Grave stele for Mynnia, circa 370 B.C.', *The J. Paul Getty Museum* (Malibu), inv. no. 71.AA.121



Greek red-figure fish-plate

Apulia, attributed to
the Sansone Painter,
c.4th century BC
Pottery
Diameter 20.2cm

The central depression with encircling rays, around which two wrasse and a torpedo fish swim in an anticlockwise direction, their mouths slightly open, the bodies detailed with black spots highlighted in added white. A series of strokes in the background to represent water, waves on the outer rim.

Provenance

Private collection, Geneva, Switzerland;
acquired 1960

Comparanda

For the Sansone Painter see Christian
Zindel, *Meterstäben und Jenseitsfahrt: die
Fischteller der Sammlung Florence Gottet*
(Zürich, 1998), p. 112, no. 34



Roman head of Tyche-Fortuna

1st century BC
Marble
Height 17,5cm

The goddess wears a mural crown with laurel wreath, the wavy hair centrally parted and drawn back in a bun. The head tilted to the right, an expression of calmness spread across her oval face, lines of Venus on her neck. The Hellenistic influence evident in the subtle modelling of her brow and nose. After the Tyche of Antioch by Eutychides.

Fortuna, the Roman equivalent of Tyche, was commonly the recipient of a cult, being worshipped throughout the classical world. In return, the goddess watched over those cities which venerated her. The crown represents the defensive walls of a city, reiterating her role as their guardian, whilst the wreath which surrounds it personifies the fortune and fecundity she will bring the city.

Provenance

19th century collection, Europe

Private collection, Geneva, Switzerland;
acquired prior to 1974, thence by decent

Comparanda

For the Tyche of Antioch in the Vatican
see J.J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*
(Cambridge, 1986), p. 3, fig. 1







Roman male torso

Eastern empire,
c.2nd century AD
Basalt
Height 96cm

The striking, over life-size figure rests his weight on his left leg causing the hip to jut out, the right leg slightly forward, the right shoulder higher, as though the arm were raised. The musculature is powerfully modelled, with well-formed pectorals, pronounced iliac crest and prominent buttocks with side dimples.

Provenance

Mathias Komor, New York, USA

William Froelich, New York, USA;
acquired from the above in 1968

Private collection, Switzerland

Comparanda

I marmi colorati della Roma imperiale (Rome, 2002), p. 305-307 for an example identified as a giant. Compare a satyr's torso in basalt at the National Archaeological Museum, Parma, Italy. Also compare a statue of Herakles with strong musculature and no pubic hair; Nikolaos Kaltsas, *Sculpture in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens* (Athens, 2002), p. 264, no. 553. A sculpture from western Asia Minor has well defined musculature, exhibiting the strength of a fully adult male, yet also lacks pubic hair, and has been described as a young god, Hero or athlete; Mary B. Comstock and Cornelius C. Vermeule, *Sculpture in Stone: the Greek, Roman and Etruscan Collections of the Museum of Fine Art Boston* (Boston, 1976), p. 99, no. 153







Roman torso of a nymph

2nd century AD
Marble
Height 39.4cm

Sculpted in bright white marble, the nymph stands with legs crossed and right arm raised, exposing her youthful figure. The large hand of a satyr pressing the folds of a mantle against her left shoulder and upper back in a strong embrace. Remains of a support to her right buttock.

Provenance

Private collection, Switzerland; acquired prior to 1980

Comparanda

For the embrace and scale compare M.B. Comstock and C.C. Vermeule, *Sculpture in Stone, the Greek, Roman and Etruscan Collections in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston* (Boston, 1976), no. 194



Greek core-formed alabastron

2nd-1st century BC
Glass
Height 11cm

Elongated body and cylindrical neck with two small handles at either side. Dark blue matrix with white and turquoise trailing, dragged with tongs in alternate directions to form a feathered pattern. White trailing around the lip and neck.

Provenance

Peter and Traudi Plesch, UK; acquired
Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 26th
October 1972, lot 16

Comparanda

V. Arveiller-Dulong and M-D. Nenna, *Les
Verres Antiques*, Vol. I (Paris, 2000), p.73, no.
71, E 23688



Roman spherical cinerary urn

1st-2nd century AD
Glass
Height 25.5cm

The body free-blown in pale blue-green glass, with cylindrical neck, folded everted rim, underside indented. The surface with attractive rootilation.

Provenance

Saeed Motamed (1925-2013), Stuttgart, Germany; acquired 1950s-early 1990s

Comparanda

Arveiller-Dulong and M-D. Nenna,
Les Verres antiques du Musée du Louvre,
Vol. II (Paris, 2005), p. 160-3





Roman unguentarium

Eastern Mediterranean,
c.1st century AD
Glass
Height 10.2cm

With folded rim, and piriform body,
the cylindrical neck constricted.

*The craftsman fused then blew white
and blue horizontal canes to create a
marbled effect.*

Provenance

Private collection, New York, USA;
acquired New York, June 2002

Comparanda

Yael Israeli, *Ancient Glass in the Israel
Museum* (Jerusalem, 2003), no. 245



Credits

Published March 2016
In an edition of 1200

Coordination
Martin Clist
Charis Tyndall

Catalogue entries
Charis Tyndall

Design
Thread
threaddesign.co.uk

Photography
Jaron James

Printed by
GRAFOS, Barcelona

Charles Ede Ltd
1 Three Kings' Yard
London W1K 4JP

+44 207 493 4944
info@charlesede.com
www.charlesede.com

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