



The Old World Archaeologist

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Exarchate Excursion – Vignettes of Ravenna, Italy By Gerald J. Gallagher

Each OWASU member is a traveler, in time, in place, and in the imagination. Among the lesser known, but highly evocative, locales in Italy is Ravenna, near the Adriatic coast, south of Venice (Fig #1). The early years of town history are unclear, though there is speculation that the name derives from Etruscan. In 89 BCE the settlement became a Federated Town with the Roman Republic (Fig #2).



Fig #1; Cancel Ravenna, Sept 29, 1990, Scott #1292

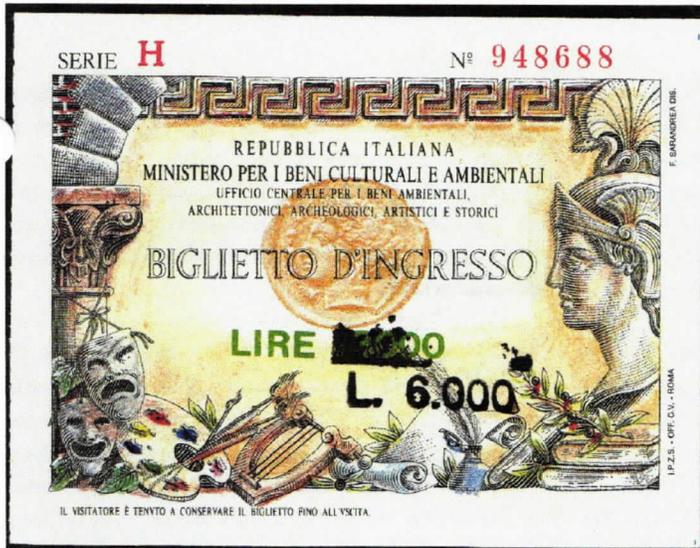


Fig #2; Ticket issued by the Ministry of Culture Architecture, Archaeology and Arts

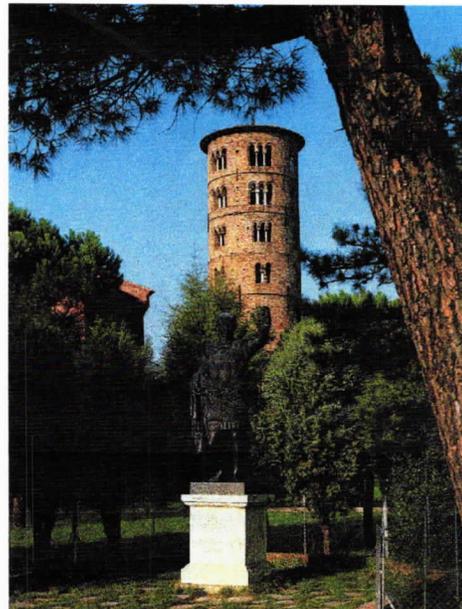


Fig #3; Statue of Caesar Augustus and steeple of St. Apollinare in Classe Basilica

Prominence came under Augustus when the then coastal marshes and town became the largest Roman naval base for the Classics Ravennatis (Roman Fleet), now known as Classe (Fig #3). This fleet patrolled the Adriatic and Mediterranean. The area is now a few miles inland but still under the watch of Augustus near the Basilica of Saint Apollinare in Classe (Fig #4).

The mosaics of the 6th century church include winged images of the Four Evangelists based upon angelic designs in an Athenian church (Fig #5).



Fig #4; Italian East Africa, Scott #21, Apr 25, 1938

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From the Editor:

I got an I-Pad for Christmas! I spent about 2 hours at the library, getting it to work. I bookmarked some of my favorite sites. First my two email accounts, then www.owasu.org. The external links are quite interesting. American Institute of Archaeology among them, the Theban Mapping Project, Egyptian Post Office, and many other sites. Though the link for Heindorffhus is in Danish and leads nowhere. A site I use often to check for additional stamps about a topic is <http://heindorffhus.motivsamler.dk/> World Culture on Stamps is my favorite site to obtain stamp illustration from. You can find anything there, and lots of ideas for stories about archaeology. The UNESCO site is readily accessible. The American Topical Association is bookmarked on my I-Pad, but I forgot to do the APS. Sorry, will get to that later. I also bookmarked the American Quilters Society, I suppose now I have to make a quilt for the darned thing.

I got some quilting books, all nice easy designs; along with one titled Archaeology Step-by-Step, which studies some of the discoveries from around the world. They came from yet another book store that has bitten the dust during the past year. Soon all that will exist will be Barnes & Noble and anything you can find online.

Early in January the northeast was hit by a nice blizzard. I happen to like blizzards! I open the freezer and pantry for food – there is usually enough for 3 months put away in November – and since I take public transportation to work I do not need to dig out my car. Then check out what stamps are piled on the side to go through and maybe turn on the computer to do some research, what more do you need? Oh yeah, electricity.

We have a new utility provider because of the after effects of Hurricane Sandy last year. Many people were out 2 weeks, some were still out after a month! New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo is a Long Islander and he decided to close down the Long Island Power Authority. So we have traded, once again, the devil we know for the devil we don't. Geographically we are a sand bar, thus only the northern part of the island can have natural gas, we have some rock and soil. That's why the southern part was carved up for housing after WWII for returning veterans.

I have to venture down to the post office later today to stock up on "forever" stamps to get us through the bulk of the 49c postage – sticker shock. Which reminds me, you may have noticed dues for OWASU are still only \$15.00. Other groups I belong to have gone from \$15 to \$18 and are now \$20 or \$22! The price of ink keeps going up. Even paper – I can no longer manage to find 2/\$10 and now am lucky to get it for \$11.49/ream. You have to read those coupons very carefully. At one time I used 2 printers for the Journal, my old Epson died and I just use a nice new Epson. I took a year to switch over the systems but it's done now.

Caroline

Exarchate Excursion – Vignettes of Ravenna, Italy

By Gerald J. Gallagher



Fig #5; (above left) Greece Angel Mosaic from Daphni Church Athens, 11th Century, Scott #792 issued June 10, 1964 for Byzantine Art Exhibit (also exists imperf.) Fig #6, (above right) Mausoleum of Odoacer & Theodoric

With the transfer of the imperial capital to Constantinople in the early 4th century, Italy underwent an economic and political decline due to the pressure of barbarian invasions. Ravenna, with its harbor and defensible surrounding marshes, became capital of the Western Empire in 402 CE, retaining the status under Ostrogothic rulers from 476, Odoacer and Theodoric (d. 526). His mausoleum (Fig #6) is formed of two decagons of Istrian stone, covered by a single stone block approximately 35 feet in diameter. The porphyry urn in which he once rested remains in the second storey chamber.

Best known of Byzantine Emperors, Justinian I (r. 527-565) led a re-conquest of parts of Italy in the Gothic War (535-554) during which, in 540 Ravenna was retaken by Flavius Belisarius (c. 500-565). Strategos (Field Marshal) of the Eastern Empire, Belisarius in 534 was the last to

be honored with a Roman Triumph for his victories over the Vandals in North Africa. His high status is evidenced by his inclusion in mosaics of the Imperial Household in the Basilica of San Vitale (consecrated in 548), which contains the finest examples of Byzantine art in Western Europe. He stands between the Emperor and Bishop Maximilian who dedicated the structure (Fig #7). The retinue of Empress Theodora includes Belisarius's daughter, Princess Ioanna (Fig #8). Her image has entranced visitors for fifteen centuries, with life size replicas available from the local mosaic workshop, and lingering glances in several PBS documentaries. The Basilica is among the notable examples of Romano-Byzantine architecture, being one of eight Ravenna area sites on UNESCO's World Heritage list. Its mosaics are the most extensive and best preserved outside Istanbul.



Fig #7 Ivory Chair of Bishop Maximilian

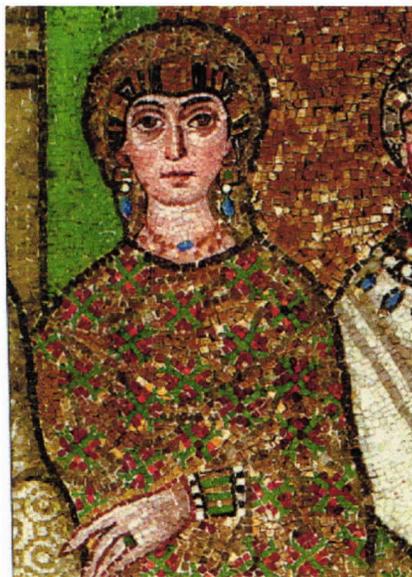


Fig #8 Detail of the court of Theodora

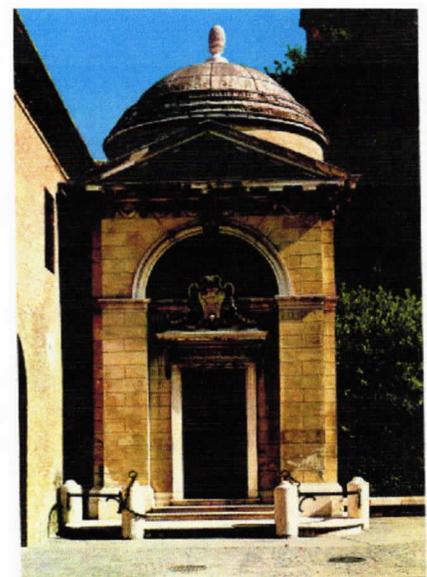


Fig #9 Dante's Grave

Ravenna is a walker's delight, with the important sites within a small downtown, except for Classe, three miles distant. Among the places to have a brief rest, Peace Park continues the mosaic tradition (Fig #9). A few blocks from Piazza del Popolo is the Tomb of Dante (Fig #10). Florentine by birth, Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) rests outside the Church of San Francesco, in a neo-classical mini-temple erected in 1780 (Fig #11). On a bus ride to the port area on the Adriatic, Dante's forest cabin can be viewed in its bucolic setting.

(cont'd on pg 4)

Exarchate Excursion – Vignettes of Ravenna, Italy

By Gerald J. Gallagher



Fig #10, Italy, Mosaic detail, Scott #1816, issued May 19, 1990



Fig #11, Italy, Dante Alighieri Society Centenary, (1265-1321), Scott #1815, Issued May 12, 1990



Fig #12, Italy, Sculpture; the Lombards in Italy, Scott #1817, Issued May 19, 1990



Fig #13, Greece, Bulgaroctonus; coin of Emperor Basil II, Scott #788, Issued June 10, 1964

In 568 CE the Lombards (Longobardi) brought the next wave of Germanic invasion to Italy, establishing their capital at Pavia (Fig #12). Emperor Tiberius II raised Ravenna to the status of an Exarchate, one of five overseeing the discontinuous lands held by Imperial forces. Ravenna's authority included the northern Adriatic coast, along with a diagonal territory in the eastern Apennines. Despite the campaigns of the Lombards, the Exarchate had economic advancement based upon the fumes, locally struck, "Solidus" (Fig #13), the gold coin of the Byzantines which became the trusted medium of exchange for centuries.

Political and religious turmoil led to the Exarchs becoming proto-feudal, autonomous rulers, and with the passing of the last, in 751, Byzantine authority waned. The region was given to the Papacy by Pippin, King of the Franks, who had conquered much of Lombard territory, becoming the foundation land of the Papal States.

Ravenna is Italy at its best on the small scale. Air service in nearby Venice and frequent trains make it a pleasure to embark upon an Exarchate excursion.

Angkor Wat, Discovered 1586-9 by Antonio da Magdalena

By Caroline Scannell

In 1586 Antonio da Magdalena, a Capuchin Monk from Portugal, traveled to the far east for new souls. While traveling in the jungle interior his entourage came upon a ruined city. Though Angkor had only been abandoned about a century when it was "discovered" by da Magdalena, it was overgrown strangler figs.

Built between the 9th to 15th Centuries, the massive construction bears Hindu as well as Buddhist symbols. The complex consists of several major temples; Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, Banteay Srei and the Temple of Bayon, built on the Siem Reap River



Cambodia issued this set depicting an Apsara and 2 Goddesses in 1973, Scott #312-4

Upon reaching the enclosures of the temple, in the middle of a paved court, there are 3 sanctuaries guarded by Apsaras, Dancing Goddesses and various Deities.

(cont'd on pg 5)

*Angkor Wat, Discovered 1586-9 by Antonio da Magdalena
By Caroline Scannell*



Several views of Banteay Srei issued by Cambodia 1997, Scott #1621-3.

In the 10th Century Jayavarem V built Banteay Srei for Brahman religious services.

In the 12th Century Suryavarman II (r. 1113-50), King of the Khmer Empire, dedicated Angkor Wat to the Hindu god Vishnu.

In the late 12th Century, Jayavarman VII (r. 1182-1206) built a new capital at Angkor Thom.



Cambodia issued these stamps depicting items at Angkor Wat in 1991, Scott # 1134-6, they depict a Garuda (God) from 10th Century, Vishnu reclining from 11th Century and Nandin (Bull God) reclining from 7th Century.



Cambodia issued these stamps in 1990 depicting reliefs from Banteay Srei and the Bayon Temples, Scott #1046-8.



UNESCO Official stamp issued 10/23/93 depicting Buddha.



Cambodia issued these stamps for ASEAN in 2002, depicting Prasat Bayon and Prasat Angkor Wat, Scott #2172-6



Cambodia issued these stamps in 1966 and overprinted them for Tourism in 1967, Scott #174 and 175.

In 1431 the Khmer Empire was attacked by Thai forces and Angkor fell. The capital was moved to Phnom Penh.

This short article is taken directly from a frame made for a special stamp show held in Albany, NY in 2009. The frame makes occasional visits to other stamp shows around the country. As an advertisement for collecting archaeology on stamps it is very good. As an exhibit, it needs work and many more philatelic elements added.

Enough stamps have been issued by Cambodia for these monuments that an exhibit can be made of just this subject. Others have been issued by neighboring countries. A short list follows on the next page.

List of Stamps Depicting the ANGKOR TEMPLES COMPLEX

Date Issued	Scott No.						
1951-2	10	4/27/67	177	4/13/92	1209-11	7/9/02	2172-6
1951-2	15	9/21/70	234-6	4/13/93	1270-2	4/3/04	2210-4
1954-5	23-25	5/5/72	281-8	4/13/94	1353-5	9/27/04	2230-4
1954-5	36-37	7/23/73	312-4	12/14/95	1476	5/16/05	2263-7
1961-1963	94-96	3/15/83	393-9	1996-7	1534-47	6/24/07	2327-30
1961-3	96a	4/12/86	677-83	4/13/97	1621-3	4/3/01	2987-9
6/15/63	119-21	5/15/89	985-8	4/13/98	1748-50	1/18/73	C34-7
2/1/66	152-6	12/2/90	1046-8	4/13/2000	1959-61	2/1/84	C55-8
4/27/67	172-6	4/13/91	1134-8	10/9/01	2140-2	4/4/86	C59-62
						2/18/74	J6-9

Club News

Favorite Articles

Which article voted "favorite" seldom has any correlation to the members' interests. I take whatever becomes the favorite article for the year as a subject that intrigued the most readers. It is the only way I can figure out why all those Egyptians (collectors of Egyptian subjects on stamps) voted for something like . . . Vikings? Looking over the past year's offerings I notice there were no Roman or Greek articles and two Egyptian.

Here's the voting results:

The Vikings by Vince Benkovitz

The Hittites by Pharoa Athena

Life of the Land, Vignettes of Hawaii by Gerald J. Gallagher & Akhenaten by Caroline Scannell

After that was The Mysterious Indus Valley by Alexander R. Borges

Tie for Last Place The Tomb of Tutakhamun, Venus von Willendorf, and The Thracians all by Caroline Scannell

One member wrote her favorite writer is Pharoa Athena. Surprisingly it was not one of the other Nubian Monuments collectors – we have 2 other members who collect that esoteric subject. Perhaps in a few years Pharoa's collection will make another round of stamp shows

Members Interests

We have Prehistoric Rock Art, Mosaics (3 of them!), Egypt and Nubian, Native Americans, Mediterranean Civilizations (this takes in everybody except the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians), UNESCO, Evolution of Writing and Languages, and New World. I keep saying I will print New World if I receive it. I am personally more interested in anything but New World so I have no background in it. I've tried, but everything I do looks more like a term paper than an article. I need to cut down and shorten the subject but don't know enough to understand what the most important thing is. I need some help here.

We have been broadening our world with the inclusion of Hawaii and Easter Island. Oops! Did I just let something slip? Most likely in April a fascinating article of Easter Island. There will be a problem getting that issue out with a first day cancel because the stamp show I attend has been moved from April to March and I do not think I can get it out 3 weeks early.

A Special Thanks to our supporting members:

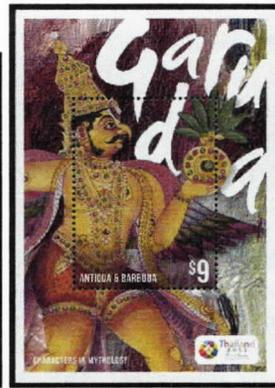
Jeffrey S. Brottman
 Gerald J. Gallagher
 Andrew N. Morse
 Jerry Davis
 George Grabon
 Hugh W. Johnston
 Todd Pfeifer

These people help keep the dues level at \$15.00 with their generous contributions to the "Ink Fund", which enables me to illustrate all New Digs in color.





Antigua & Barbuda, Characters in Thai Mythology, issued 2013.



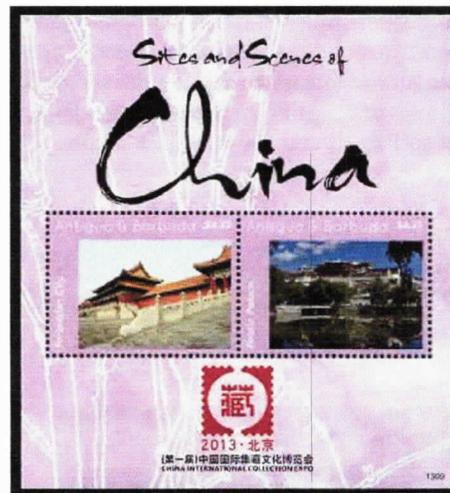
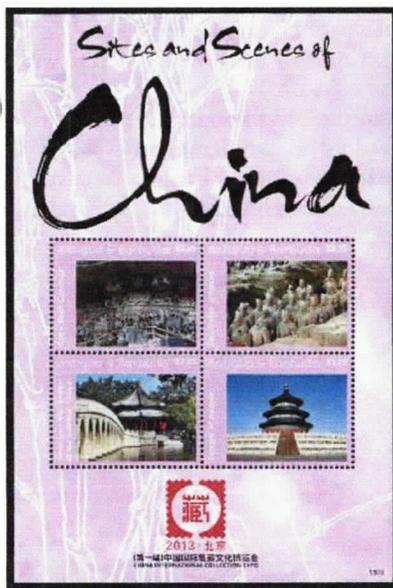
Characters from Hindu Mythology, Rakshas, Indra, Vayu, Garuda

Brahm Rakshas or Brahma-Rakshasa are fierce demon spirits, as per Hindu mythology. Rakshasas were a populous race of supernatural humanoids. There were both good and evil rakshasas, and as warriors they fought alongside the armies of both good and evil. They were powerful warriors, expert magicians and illusionists. As shape-changers, they could assume various physical forms, and it was not always clear whether they had a true or natural form.

Indra is the king of the gods and ruler of the heavens. Indra is the god of thunder and rain and a great warrior, a symbol of courage and strength. Vayu is his friend and servant and the Vasus are his advisers. Indra's mount is the elephant Airavata and he also has a golden chariot drawn by ten thousand horses.

Vāyu is a primary Hindu deity, the Lord of the winds, the father of Bhima and the spiritual father of Lord Hanuman. Vayu is nevertheless important for certain Hindu ceremonies and is then perceived of in more temperate terms. He is called "the bearer of perfumes" and is credited with being a benign force who is a constant companion of Vishnu, one of the incumbent Hindu triad, and his wife Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and beauty.

The Garuda is a large mythical bird or bird-like creature that appears in both Hindu and Buddhist mythology. Garuda is the mount of the Lord Vishnu. Garuda is the Hindu name for the constellation Aquila. The Brahminy kite and Phoenix are considered to be the contemporary representations of Garuda. Indonesia adopts a more stylistic approach to the Garuda's depiction as its national symbol, where it depicts a Javanese eagle (being much larger than a kite).



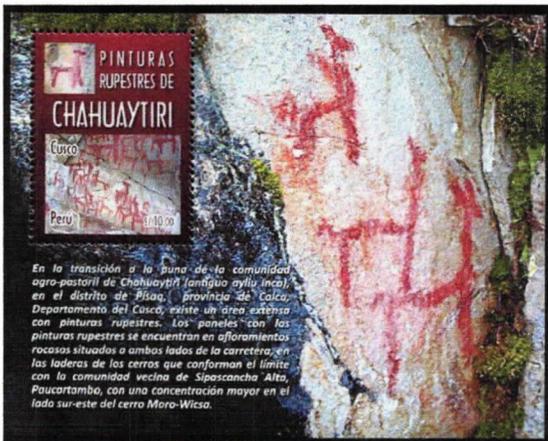
Antiqua & Barbuda,

Sites & Scenes of China (China 2013)

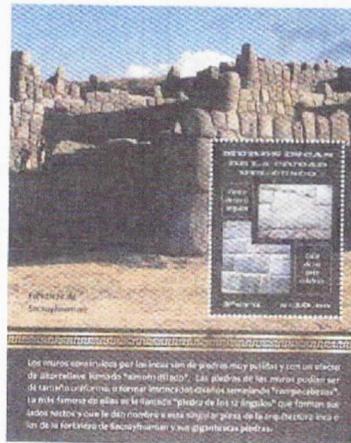
Included in sheetlet of 4 is an illustration of the Terracotta Soldiers of Emperor Qin. Included in the S/S is a view of the Palace of the Forbidden City. Issued for a stamp show held in China.



Belarus, 1025th Anniversary of Christening of the Kievan Rus - Lamentation of Christ, Old Testament Trinity, Christ Pantocrator, Issued July 10, 2013 sheet stamps and souvenir sheet.



Peru, Ancient Painting in Chahuaytiri in the Cusco area issued October 11, 2013



Peru, Inca Wall in Cusco, issued November 15, 2013



Poland, Chronicles of Gallus Anonymus, Issued 2013. Also available in black prints and envelopes.

Each souvenir sheet bears a number, the one illustrated here is 0243580.

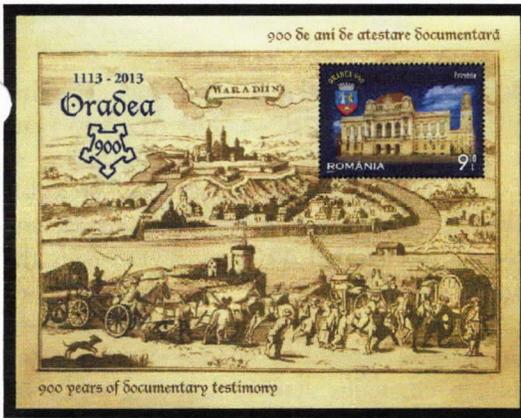
This Polish Chronicle was written in Latin between 1112 and 1116 by an anonymous monk, probably from Provence in France (Gaul).

Gallus greatly influenced the subsequent course of Polish history, as his version of Poland's early history emphasized that the ruler's authority was inferior to that of God, as expressed in the voice of the assembled people (as in the Latin proverb, "*Vox populi, vox Dei*" — "The voice of the people is the voice of God"), thus reinforcing the electoral tradition of Poles and their tendency to disobey unwanted authority. This concept, via the *Chronicles* of Wincenty Kadłubek and the *Sermons* of Stanisław of Skarbimierz, contributed to the development of the unique "Golden Liberty" that would characterize the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, whose kings were elected and were bound to obey the parliament.



Portugal - 900 Years Order of Malta, issued September 27, 2013





Romania - 900 Years Oradea City Souvenir Sheet issued August 30 2013

Bottom stamps depict:
 Assumption of the Virgin Orthodox Cathedral
 The Romano-Catholic Cathedral
 Queen Marie Theatre
 Oradea Town Hall



Romania Post celebrates UNESCO Anniversaries - 350 Years since the Building of the Wooden Church from Rogoz Village.



Romania issued about November 21, 2013

the secular wood into a genuine masterpiece. The village was first mentioned under the name “Rogos” in 1488 and it was part of the property of Ciceu fortress, which belonged to Stephen the Great and subsequently to the other Moldavian rulers. Tradition says that it was erected from two pieces of wood and the short stone foundation sustains walls from massive elm beams.

Like a true miracle, the church survived the fire put by Tatars in 1717 when other tens of churches and villages were turned into ashes. The originality of this church is given by the polygonal antenave, the rectangular nave and the seven-sided polygonal apse. The exterior of the church is decorated with pre-Christian motifs, where the rope and rosette motifs are predominant. The roof is asymmetric, high, pyramidal and the bell tower is square-shaped. The bell room is open, with columns and arcades. On the west part of the entry, a carved cross lies on the entire height of the church wall.

The interior painting made in 1785 by the icon painters Radu Munteanu and Nicolae Man attests through inscriptions, in the nave and the altar, that the church was built by Grigore Man and his wife. This may now be seen only in the nave and antenave. The themes of the painting are from the Old and New Testament.

The painting is attested by the Cyrillic inscriptions from the altar: “In 1785, this holy church was painted during the reign of the holy emperor Joseph II ...” On the dome there are represented scenes from the *Genesis* (Adam’s creation, Eve’s creation, Adam and Eve cheated by the snake, the Expulsion from Paradise).

Among the numerous old icons of the church, the icon of Virgin Mary and Child Jesus stands out, having their faces and aureoles painted in relief and bearing the inscription 1787.

In 1834, an anonymous icon painter repainted the ceiling of the antenave and the dome of the nave, managing to integrate the general image of the interior painting into a harmonious creation.

The restorations carried out between 1960 and 1961 reinforced the church by rebuilding the foundation and changing the floor and the roof. The monumentality of this church is given by its simplicity, the silhouette and ornamental language and by the design and technical construction, demonstrating once again the geniality of the Romanian craftsmen.

The stamp of the issue with the face value of lei 8.10 illustrates the *Wooden Church from Rogoz* by giving value to the ecclesiastical beauty, the national culture and the traditions of the picturesque locations.

Source: Romania Post

Loyal to its mission of promoting unique historical monuments from our country, **Romfilatelia** celebrates the anniversary of three and a half centuries since beginning the construction of the *Wooden Church from Rogoz* by introducing into circulation a postage stamps issue dedicated to this event.

Wooden churches have been unanimously recognized for the simplicity and balance of their volumes and proportions, being considered highly valuable artistic and technical achievements. Eight wooden churches built between the 14th – 18th centuries (Ieud-Deal, Poienile Izei, Budesti-Josani, Rogoz, Barsana, Surdesti, Desesti and Plopiș) have been included in UNESCO World Heritage List.

The *Saints Archangels Michael and Gabriel Church* from Rogoz, built in 1663, two years after the invasion of Tatars in 1661, lies on the Valley of Lapus River, in the village bearing the same name, and represents a clear example of the talent of the artists who used traditional techniques to turn



Russia, 1150 Years of Smolensk City, Souvenir Sheet, issued September 21, 2013, Designed by C. Ulyanovs

Smolensk is among the oldest Russian cities. The first recorded mention of the city was 863 AD, two years after the founding of ancient Rus'. According to Russian Primary Chronicle, Smolensk (probably located slightly downstream, at the archaeological site of Gnezdovo) was located on the area settled by the West Slavic Radimichs tribe in 882 when Oleg of Novgorod took it in passing from Novgorod to Kiev. The town was first attested two decades earlier, when the Varangian chieftains Askold and Dir, while on their way to Kiev, decided against challenging Smolensk on account of its large size and population.

The souvenir sheet dedicated to the UNESCO World Heritage is made up of 4 values. Each stamp depicts the main architecture of the Unesco site and the background shows an important work of art of the same site. The first stamp reproduces the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi and a particular of the painting "Crucifixion with five Franciscans" by Giotto. The second value depicts the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino and a detail of the painting "Saint Roch" by Lorenzo Lotto. The third stamp reproduces the Mausoleum of Theodoric in Ravenna and a particular of the mosaic of a starry night sky from the vault of the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. The last value shows the Estense Castle in Ferrara and a detail of the frescoes of the Palazzo Schifanoia



San Marino, UNESCO World Heritage, Italy, issued October 9, 2013



China/Taiwan - Ancient Artifacts Souvenir Sheets, Issued October 8, 2013
Taiwan 2013 Ancient Artifacts Vase Bowl Plate Arts S/S x 2

New Year's Chinese silk tapestry scroll with Emperor Gaozong's calligraphy, Qing dynasty. Based on a new year's painting by Emperor Qianlong of the Qing dynasty, the sheet features a Chinese silk tapestry scroll. The tapestry depicts a pine branch, some camellia flowers and plum blossoms in a vase. In front of the vase are a persimmon, two lily bulbs, as well as some reishi mushrooms placed in an incense burner. It symbolizes good fortune and longevity.

New Digs



China/Taiwan - Personal Greetings 2013 II

Classic Artifacts
From the National
Palace Museum Block
of 6 Diff. & Block of
4 Diff.

(Total 10 New
Stamps), Classic
Artifacts



Togo, Nefertiti, sheetlet of 4 different and s/s, issued June 3, 2013

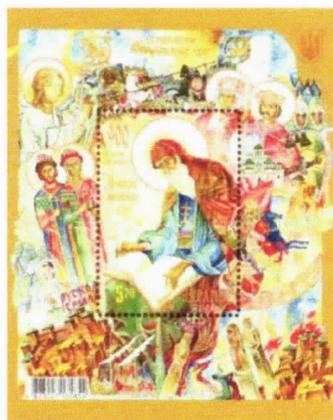


I found a site that has all the stamps of Togo listed for 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010; <http://www.neofila.com/pr-mint/world/Togo.htm>
This site also sells these stamps. The March 30th issue below honors the UNESCO effort on the 50th anniversary.

The stamps below have appeared in previous OWAs.



Togo, Egyptian Art,
issued March 30,
2012
Togo Greek Art,
issued Jan 1, 2013



Ukraine, Nestor the Chronicler,
900th anniv. of the Tale of Bygone
Years, July 26, 2013,

Designed by Nicholas Kochubej

Saint Nestor the Chronicler (c. 1056 – c. 1114, in Kiev) was the reputed author of the *Primary Chronicle*, (the earliest East Slavic chronicle), *Life of the Venerable Theodosius of the Kiev Caves*, *Life of the Holy Passion Bearers, Boris and Gleb*, and of the so-called *Reading*. Nestor was a monk of the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev from 1073. The only other detail of his life that is reliably known is that he was commissioned with two other monks to find the relics of St. Theodosius of Kiev, a mission which he succeeded in fulfilling. It is also speculated that he supported the reigning prince Svyatopolk II and his pro-Scandinavian party and disliked Greek influence in Kiev. His chronicle begins with the Deluge, as those of most Christian chroniclers of the time did. The compiler appears to have been acquainted with the Byzantine historians; he makes use especially of John Malalas and George Hamartolus. He also had in all probability other Slavonic language chronicles to compile from, which have since been lost. Many legends are mixed up with Nestor's *Chronicle*, the style is occasionally so poetical that perhaps he incorporated bylinas which are now lost.

Archaeology Today

8,000-Year-Old Artifacts Unearthed in Minnesota

An archeological dig in the suburbs south of Minneapolis (Minnesota, USA) is turning up artifacts thousands of years old at the future site of a bridge project.

Before work begins, federal historic preservation laws require scientists to find out what's beneath the dirt, so archaeologists began digging on the border of Shakopee and Chanhausen. "Cold weather's good because we're working in a wetland and it helps to freeze the ground and make it easier to work with," explained Frank Florin, Florin Cultural Resource Services LLC. The crew has been at it for six weeks now and as traffic passes by the site, 8,000 years ago it was a place hunters and gatherers stopped. "There's very few sites in Minnesota that are that old and this well preserved," said Florin. "This site, a lot of it is capped below six to ten feet of more recent sediment so it's quite well preserved."

One of the finds is a spear point that's believed to be about 8,000-years-old; all of the artifacts found will be given to the Minnesota Historical Society. The crew has another two weeks of work. They'll be back in the spring at another nearby site.

Edited from Kare 11 (3 January 2014)

Bronze Age Artists Used Palace Floor as Creative Canvas

The floors of Greek Bronze Age palaces were made of plaster that was often incised and painted with grids containing brightly colored patterns and/or marine animal figures. In researching one such floor in the Throne Room at the Palace of Nestor, one of the best-preserved palaces of the Mycenaean civilization, University of Cincinnati student Emily Catherine Egan has found evidence that the floor's painted designs, dating back to between 1300-1200 BCE, were meant to replicate a physical hybrid of cloth and stone - serving not only to impress but also to instruct the ancient viewer.

According to Egan, "Mycenaean palatial floor paintings are typically believed to represent a single surface treatment - most often cut stone or pieced carpets. At Pylos, however, the range of represented patterns suggests that the floor in the great hall of the palace was deliberately designed to represent both of these materials simultaneously, creating a new, clever way to impress visitors while simultaneously instructing them on where to look and how to move within the space." During her research, Egan noted that some of the intricate motifs of the Throne Room floor recalled the mottled and veined patterns of painted stone masonry, while other elements mimicked patterns on depictions of textiles in wall paintings both from Crete and the Greek mainland. She contended that the hybrid combination of these materials on the Throne Room floor was specifically designed to "supersede reality. It depicted something that could not exist in the real world, a floor made of both carpet and stone. As such, the painting would have communicated the immense, and potentially supernatural power of the reigning monarch, who seemingly had the ability to manipulate and transform his physical environment."

Egan also argued that the hybrid quality of the floor was intended to draw attention to one of its other notable features - a dramatic diagonal in the grid design. Past studies had posited that this introduction of a strong diagonal into the floor's otherwise regular grid pattern had been an uncorrected mistake. However, Egan believes that the diagonal was intentional: "A way to draw both a visitor's eyes and his or her footsteps toward the throne positioned along the right-hand wall of the room. It was painting with a purpose." In addition, Egan's study at the Palace of Nestor has uncovered the first evidence for the use of a drafting technique called an artist's grid to paint a floor.

Edited from EurekAlert! (2 January 2014)

Cats Domesticated by Chinese Farmers 5,000 Yrs Ago

A study conducted by researchers at the Chinese Academy of Sciences has produced the first direct evidence of cat domestication. Led by Yaowu Hu, he and his colleagues analyzed eight bones from at least two wild cats excavated from the site of the ancient Chinese village of Quanhucun. The analysis showed that the cats were preying on animals that lived on farmed millet - probably rodents. Archaeological evidence indicated that the village farmers had problems with rodents in the grain stores. In essence, the cats and the villagers had developed a kind of symbiotic relationship. "Results of this study show that the village of Quanhucun was a source of food for the cats 5,300 years ago, and the relationship between humans and cats was commensal, or advantageous for the cats," said study co-author Fiona Marshall, PhD, a professor of archaeology in Arts & Sciences at Washington University in St. Louis. "Even if these cats were not yet domesticated, our evidence confirms that they lived in close proximity to farmers, and that the relationship had mutual benefits." Other clues gleaned from the Quanhucun food web suggest the relationship between cats and humans had begun to grow closer. One of the cats was aged, showing that it survived well in the village. Another ate fewer animals and more millet than expected, suggesting that it scavenged human food or was fed.

Cats were thought to have first been domesticated in ancient Egypt some 4,000 years ago, but more recent research suggests close relations with humans may have occurred much earlier, including the discovery of a wild cat buried with a human nearly 10,000 years ago in Cyprus.

Recent DNA studies suggest that most of the estimated 600 million domestic cats now living around the globe are descendants most directly of the Near Eastern Wildcat, one of the five *Felis sylvestris lybica* wildcat subspecies still found around the Old World. Marshall, an expert on animal domestication, said there currently is no DNA evidence to show whether the cats found at Quanhucun are descendants of the Near Eastern Wildcat, a subspecies not native to the area. If the Quanhucun cats turn out to be close descendants of the Near Eastern strain, it would suggest they were domesticated elsewhere and later introduced to the region.

Edited from Popular Archaeology; December 16, 2013

Unlocking the Scrolls of Herculaneum

The British Museum's 2013 show of artefacts from the Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, buried in ash during an explosive eruption of Mount Vesuvius, was a sell-out. But could even greater treasures - including lost works of classical literature - still lie underground?

For centuries scholars have been hunting for the lost works of ancient Greek and Latin literature. In the Renaissance, books were found in monastic libraries. In the late 19th Century papyrus scrolls were found in the sands of Egypt. But only in Herculaneum in southern Italy has an entire library from the ancient Mediterranean been discovered in situ. On the eve of the catastrophe in 79 AD, Herculaneum was a chic resort town on the Bay of Naples, where many of Rome's top families went to rest and recuperate during the hot Italian summers. It was also a place where Rome's richest engaged in a bit of cultural one-upmanship - none more so than Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus, a politician and father-in-law of Julius Caesar. In Herculaneum, Piso built a seaside villa on a palatial scale - the width of its beach frontage alone exceeds 220m (721ft). When it was excavated in the middle of the 18th Century, it was found to hold more than 80 bronze and marble statues of the highest quality, including one of Pan having sex with a goat. When he came to plan his own exercise in cultural showing off, J Paul Getty chose to copy Piso's villa for his own Getty museum in Malibu, California.

Piso's grand villa, which has come to be known as the Villa of the Papyri, also contains the only library to have survived from the classical world. It is a relatively small collection, some 2,000 scrolls, which the eruption nearly destroyed and yet preserved at the same time. A blast of furnace-like gas from the volcano at 400C (752F) carbonised the papyrus scrolls, before the town was buried in a fine volcanic ash which later cooled and solidified into rock. When excavators and treasure hunters set about exploring the villa in the 18th Century, they mistook the scrolls for lumps of charcoal and burnt logs. Some were used as torches or thrown on to the fire. But once it was realised what they were - possibly because of the *umbilicus*, the stick at the centre of the scrolls - the challenge was to find a way to open them. Some scrolls were simply hacked apart with a butcher's knife - with predictable and lamentable results. Later a conservator from the Vatican, Father Antonio Piaggio (1713-1796), devised a machine to delicately open the scrolls. But it was slow work - the first one took around four years to unroll. And the scrolls tended to go to pieces. The fragments pulled off by Piaggio's machine were fragile and hard to read. "They are as black as burnt newspaper," says Dirk Obbink, a lecturer in Papyrology at Oxford University, who has been working on the Herculaneum papyri since 1983. Under normal light the charred paper looks "a shiny black" says Obbink, while "the ink is a dull black and sort of iridescence".

Reading it is "not very pleasant", he adds. In fact, when Obbink first began working on them in the 1980s the difficulty of the fragments was a shock. On some pieces, the

eye can make out nothing. On others, by working with microscopes and continually moving the fragments to catch the light in different ways, some few letters can be made out. Meanwhile, the fragments fall apart. "At the end of the day there would be black dust on the table - the black dust of the scroll powdering away. I didn't even want to breathe."

This all began to change 15 years ago. In 1999, scientists from Brigham Young University in the US examined the papyrus using infrared light. Deep in the infrared range, at a wavelength of 700-900 nanometres, it was possible to achieve a good contrast between the paper and the ink. Letters began to jump out of the ancient papyrus. Instead of black ink on black paper, it was now possible to see black lines on a pale grey background. Scholars' ability to reassemble the texts improved massively. "Most of our previous readings were wrong," says Obbink. "We could not believe our eyes. We were 'blinded' by the real readings. The text wasn't what we thought it was and now it made sense."

The Villa dei Papyri scrolls

Some 2,000 scrolls have been recovered from the villa, of which some 1,600 to 1,700 have been unrolled. Most are philosophical works in Greek, many by Philodemus of Gadara, identified as author of 44 scrolls and probable author of another 120 sections of scroll. Other works include a comedy in Latin by Caecilius Statius called *Faenerator*, or *The Usurer*, about a young man who borrows money at high interest to get his girlfriend out of the hands of a pimp

By Robin Banerji BBC News Magazine; December 19, 2013

6,000-Year-Old Tombs Unearthed in Vietnam

Six tombs built 6,000 years have just been excavated in Bac Kan Province in Northeast Vietnam, about 180 kilometers north of Hanoi. Local archaeologists used the absolute dating method on snail shells found inside the tomb to determine that the remains dated back to more than 6,000 years ago. The items, of which four have been exposed to the open air, were found together with broken skeletons with missing skulls and teeth, said excavation team leader Professor Trinh Nang Chung of the Hanoi-based Institute of Archaeology. As the team didn't find any trace of human skulls and teeth at the site raised the hypothesis among the scientists that the corpses were victim to 'headhunting' practices in which the early peoples of Southeast Asia would steal skulls to get the power from the dead. Two skeletons among the six were buried with cutting tools made of stone as burial belongings. The tombs were made of stones. According to researchers and scientists, the first residents of the cave were of the Hoa Binh - Bac Son culture (4,000 BCE - 5,000 BCE), whereas the last ones had lived there during the early Iron Age.

Aside from the cutting tools, hundreds of artifacts made of ceramic and stone, including jewelry, tools, ochre (a soil of yellow color, mixed with water to decorate the bodies of both the dead and the living) that represent the two cultures have been unearthed at the site.

Edited from Thanh Nien News; December 20, 2013

Archaeology Today

Egyptian Rock Art Shows Enigmatic Spiders

Archaeologists have discovered a panel containing the only known example of spider rock art in Egypt and, it appears, the entire Old World. The rock panel, now in two pieces, was found on the west wall of a shallow sandstone wadi, or valley, in the Kharga Oasis, located in Egypt's western desert about 175km west of Luxor. Facing east, and illuminated by the morning sun, the panel is a "very unusual" find, said Egyptologist Salima Ikram, a professor at the American University in Cairo who co-directs the North Kharga Oasis Survey Project.

The identification of the creatures as spiders is tentative and the date of it uncertain, Ikram said. Even so, based on other activity in the area, the rock art may date to about 4000 BCE or earlier. The main panel shows what appear to be a few spiders, with a 'star' that's possibly meant to depict a web next to the spider on the far left. There are also comblike drawings that are more enigmatic; Ikram said they could be insects being trapped by the spiders, plants or even silken tubes spun by the spiders. A piece of rock that appears to have been broken off the main panel depicts creatures drawn in a different style; this could be an attempt to portray a harvestman, an insect that looks like a spider.

The discovery leaves archaeologists with a mystery - why did people in the Kharga Oasis create rock art showing spiders, especially when no other examples are known to exist elsewhere in Egypt or, it appears, the entire Old World? Ikram consulted with Hisham El-Hennawy, an arachnologist who mentioned spiders called *Argiope lobata* living in the western and eastern deserts may have attracted the interest of ancient people. These spiders can be found "shaded and surviving, in the middle of their orb web under the burning sun at noon," Ikram writes.

The idea of spiders bathing in the sun may hold religious significance to ancient people in the area. "This would combine the force of the sun and the ability of this solar creature to survive its heat successfully, and thus be worthy of reverence or totemic allegiance," she writes in the Sahara article. In addition, some spiders in Egypt are known to bite people and pose a danger, something that may have attracted ancient interest, and hence, the creepy-crawly rock art, Ikram said. It's also possible that spiders were more prevalent in the oasis in the past, something the environmental research her team is conducting may shed light on.

Edited from LiveScience; December 20, 2013

From the Web Site:

Old World

Founded 1977
ATA Unit since 1977
AFS Unit since 1975



Archaeological Study Unit

Have you visited our website recently?

A membership application is available for printing, so is a flyer advertising our club. They print easily for those of you attending stamp shows around the country to leave at the literature table. This past month I have received 2 emails complimenting the website and links. Check it out!

Oldest Human Footprints in North America Identified

There are only two prints - one left and one right - but an ancient hunter-gatherer's path through mineral-rich sediment in the Chihuahuan Desert of northeastern Mexico has been dated to around 10,500 BP. A team led by Doctor Nicholas Felstead, a geo-archaeologist at Durham University, was able to date the tracks because they were preserved in travertine, a sedimentary rock that contains minute traces of uranium from the waters in which it formed. The tracks were first discovered during highway construction in 1961. They were excavated and taken to Saltillo's Museo del Desierto, for study, but their precise location was lost to history. A search for the site in 2006 came up empty, but it did turn up an additional 11 tracks in a Cuatro Ciénegas quarry - in the general area where the original prints were believed to have been found - and dated back about 7,250 years. Although rare, fossil human footprints have been found elsewhere in North America, from Nicaragua to California. The oldest known human print in the Western Hemisphere is the tiny track of a child's foot in Chile dated to 13,000 years ago - adding to the debate about when humans first migrated to the New World.

Edited from Western Digs; December 9, 2013

Excavations at Capital of Bronze Age Canaanite Kingdom

The 2013 excavations at Tel Kabri, in the western Galilee region of modern Israel, included the discovery of a complex composed of several rooms adjacent to the palace, and an additional large hall and rooms belonging to the palace, creating a 75-meter-long continuum of uninterrupted monumental architecture. The projected extent of the palace may be between 5,000 and 6,000 square meters.

The excavations aimed to locate the western edge of the palace, instead encountering the remains of a palatial storage complex with the remains of nearly 40 large Canaanite storage jars along with other vessels, including a smaller storage jar with two handles, a goblet (or 'Kabri cup'), and parts of a jug and a small dipper jug.

This is the largest concentration of restorable pottery found anywhere in the palace of Kabri, and the only entire room still full of artefacts. It is also the first time that such a storeroom with jars still present has been uncovered within a Middle Bronze Age palace in Canaan, and residue analysis as well as pottery provenance studies are planned. It is hoped those results should provide insights into Canaanite palatial economy during the early-mid second millennium BCE.

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