



The Old World Archaeologist

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The Greenland Norse: An Archaeological Mystery

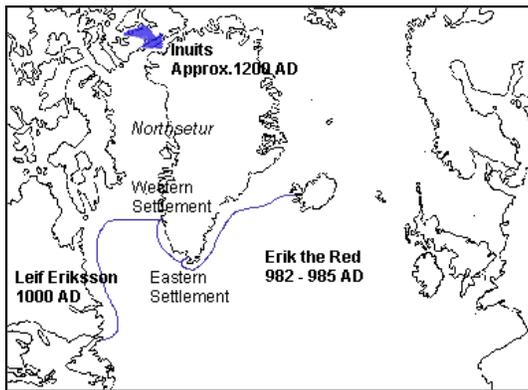
By Andrew N. Morse

Greenland (Scott #260) depicts the ruins of a stone church located near the settlement of Hvalsey. The building is not large. It might easily have been lost within one of the great Gothic cathedrals in Europe that were constructed at about the same time as the settlement of the Hvalsey community. Yet this church stands as a monument to a civilization whose disappearance remains one of the great mysteries of archaeology.

The story of the Hvalsey church and its builders is really part of the saga of Scandinavian expansion in the early Middle Ages. Beginning in the late Eighth Century, population pressures and the Lure of foreign lands encouraged people from Sweden, Norway and Denmark to seek their fortunes abroad. The term "Viking" has been applied to the brave souls who voyaged far beyond their native Scandinavia.



Scott #260 May 6, 1993



Faroe Islands Viking Heritage series Scott #413, issued February 11, 2002 Commemorating Viking Voyages across the Atlantic depicts Viking navigational tool, a sailor on a boat and a longboat under sail.



Scott #351 Aug 13, 1999

The popular image of the Vikings, as raiders and destroyers, is not entirely accurate. Some Scandinavians did indeed use the famous longships, as shown on a stamp from Greenland (Scott #351), to plunder the coasts of their southern neighbors. Yet others voyaged far to the west, establishing outposts of European civilization as they traveled.

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ATA Unit since 1977



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From the Editor:

As I write this column, I just received the latest issue of Scotts Stamp Monthly. These folks tend to list any stamp issued by Egypt that utilized an ancient art stylized figure under “archaeology” regardless of what it actually commemorates! For instance, a stamp for the 13th World Psychiatry Congress utilizes the uadjat or Horus Eye, so it is listed under archaeology instead of medicine. Still, I got 2 new issues out of this one. I cannot find Scott numbers for the rest of the New Digs.

Also in the April (?) issue of SSM is an article about Rulers of the Roman Empire by Vince DeLuca, who I shall corner next time I meet him to join OWASU.

Congratulations to member Barbara Soper on publication of her Megalithic Monuments on Stamps in the February issue of American Philatelist.

You will find the last of the information about Washington 2006 in this issue. We will be having a meeting at the show, with a dinner that evening. The show really is worth the trip because you can take a break from stamps to visit the various Smithsonian Museums – from Postal to History, surely there should be something of King Tut or Rameses II there! I will be easy to find at the show, follow the sound of the ball and chain dragging. Since I am a volunteer, not only will I have to check in with everybody regarding my whereabouts, but my cell phone will actually be “on”?

As I am writing this I am just recovering from the MEGA Show in New York City, at which I had a table. Okay, so it was the ATA Table, sponsored by the American Topical Association. Fellow OWASU member Fred Skvara and I staffed the table along with some friends from the local ATA Chapter. Fred is also editor of Scalpel & Tongs – the medical subjects study unit, as well as the Chapters coordinator. We each got a new member for our respective study units. We desperately need to increase the membership of OWASU! We got some new members for the ATA, too, so they should be pleased with us. Anyone within day trip traveling distance of New York City should attend a MEGA Show, and stop by the ATA table. I’m usually there Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Fridays I must join the working classes and get some money.

I hope to see many of you in Washington! June 2nd 4-5pm, after our meeting we will have a dutch treat dinner at a local restaurant.

Caroline

The Greenland Norse: An Archaeological Mystery

By Andrew N. Morse (cont'd from pg 1)



Scott #81 Mar 15, 1981

Voyagers from Norway reached the Faroe Islands about 800 AD. Faroes (Scott #81) shows a map with the routes taken. The next stop was Iceland, first settled about 870 AD. The early Vikings in Iceland quickly occupied the available land, denuding most of the island of its forests as they spread inland from the seacoast.

Iceland served as a base for even more daring expeditions to the west. In 982 AD Erik the Red led a voyage to southern Greenland. This event is commemorated on a semi-postal stamp from Greenland (Scott #B10), issued in 1982.



Scott #B10 Aug 2, 1982

According to tradition, Erik was obliged to leave Iceland because he killed another man. The early Norse settlers were a contentious lot, and murderous feuds were not uncommon. The violence that inspired Erik's departure did not bode well for future relations with the strangers that the Norse would encounter.



Scott #81 issued 1974

Whatever the motive for the move beyond Iceland, the Greenland colony flourished at first. Two communities were established. The larger settlement, near the southern tip of Greenland, eventually grew to a population of 4000. The other settlement, to the northwest, came to include 1000 people. (These are rather confusingly known as the "Eastern" and "Western" settlements, but they should have been called the "Southern" and "Northern" settlements.)



Scott #189, 1990

The harsh Greenland climate challenged the traditional Norse way of life. Most of the island is covered by a massive ice cap. Greenland (Scott # 81) shows a dog-sled team carrying the mail across the bleak interior. The two settlements grew up in the narrow ice free zones near the seacoast. Even there however, pasture lands were scanty, and large timber forests virtually nonexistent. Another stamp from Greenland (Scott #189) depicts flowers blooming in the ice free margins of the island.

Given their limited resources, the Greenland Norse did their best to adjust. They kept herds of cows; as the remains of extensive cow barns attest. They also raised sheep and goats. The latter animals did better in the cool climate.

The Greenland Norse: An Archaeological Mystery

By Andrew N. Morse (cont'd from pg 3)

The Greenlanders also found items to trade for such vital imports as timber and iron. They sent out walrus ivory, falcons, narwhal tusks, and even polar bears on the ships that occasionally traveled from Europe to their coasts.



Scott #74



Scott #C3



Scott #72



Scott #73

A typical walrus is seen on Greenland (Scott #74). The noble gyrfalcon, often used in Medieval hunting, appears on Iceland (Scott #C3). The peculiar narwhal, whose tusk was frequently mistaken for a unicorn's horn, makes an appearance on Greenland (Scott #72). An appealing portrait of a mommy polar bear and her brood is featured on Greenland (Scott #73).



Scott # B6a, b & c; Leif Erickson statue, Iceland on Globe and Statue



Scott #1359

The Greenlanders also imported a new religion: Christianity! According to tradition, it was Erik's son, Leif Erikson, who brought the new faith to the colony. A statue of Leif, which stands today in Reykjavik, Iceland appears on United States (Scott #1359). The same statue appeared on a set of stamps issued by Iceland.



Scott #354 Aug 13 1999

Leif's father resented the abandonment of the pagan Viking religion. However, his mother, Thjodhild, supervised the building of a church near the family's farm at Brattahild. According to Erik the Red's Saga, "Thjodhild would not live with Erik as man and wife once she had taken the faith, a circumstance which vexed him very much." Vexed indeed! The small church that helped to bring about these conjugal difficulties can be seen on Greenland (Scott #354).

The Popes began appointing Bishops for Greenland in the early 12th Century. Greenland (Scott #149) displays a Bishop's crozier and the Episcopal residence at Gardar. This stamp was part of a set issued in the 1980s to note major themes in Greenland history. The colony's extensive religious establishment eventually came to include both a monastery and a convent.



Scott #149 Sept 30, 1982

(Continued on page 5)

The Greenland Norse: An Archaeological Mystery

By Andrew N. Morse (cont'd from pg 5)

By the middle of the 14th Century, climatic change was beginning to threaten the Greenland colony itself. The Viking expansion of the early Middle Ages was made possible by a remarkable warming trend in the Northern Hemisphere. By the mid-1300s this warm spell was giving way to a long era of colder temperatures.

The cooler temperatures of what came to be called the “Little Ice Age” brought hardship to many countries. For the Greenland Norse, living in a marginal farming area at the very edges of European civilization, the results could be even more serious.

Colder weather also led to a reduction in trade. Merchants in Bergen, Norway were supposed to be responsible for carrying on most of the trade with Greenland. Norway (Scott #383) shows a fairly typical cargo vessel of the late Middle Ages. The increase in dangerous ice floes around the southern part of the island discouraged the Bergen merchants from sending many ships to Greenland. Though vessels from other countries occasionally came to trade, the settlers must have been conscious of their growing isolation.



Scott #383 Aug 27, 1960



Scott #150 Sept 15 1983

Colder weather also drove the Greenland Eskimos, or Inuit, south to the Norse settlements. Relations between the two peoples apparently were not good, though some cultural contact must have existed. Greenland (Scott #150) shows carvings that the Inuit made of their Norse neighbors.



Scott #113 June 24, 1982

The Inuit way of life was better adapted to the increasingly hostile climate. Greenland (Scott #113) shows an Inuit hunter in a kayak harpooning a walrus, while Green (Scott #149) depicts whalers stalking their prey. Yet, for reasons that remain unexplained, the Norse did not seem to take to the Inuit ways.

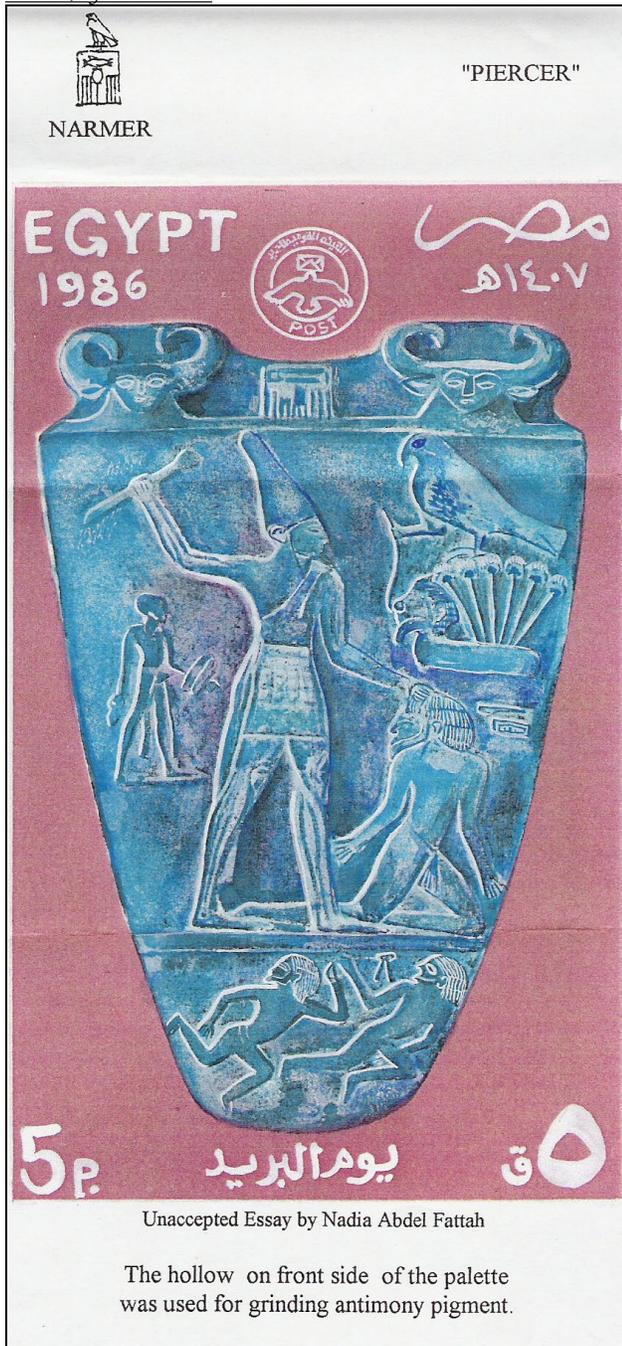
The small “Western” settlement to the north was abandoned some time in the late 14th Century. The survivors may have gone south to the “Eastern” settlement, which hung on for several decades longer. The last recorded visitors sailed from Greenland in 1410. After that, there is only silence . . .

What happened to the Norse settlers in Greenland? Did they simply starve to death? Did they leave for other parts in a series of unrecorded voyages? Or did they join the Inuit – whose way of life at least offered a chance for survival?

The failure of the Greenland colony leaves many issues unresolved. Was the disappearance of the colony inevitable, given the unfavorable conditions? Or did the Norse fail to take advantage of the resources still available to them? And how far can any civilization go in adjusting to a new environment? Archaeological work in Greenland may unravel these mysteries, and provide us with lessons in adaptation for our own time.

The Narmer Palette

Sidny Schlain



The art historian calls the palette, flat art. The historian calls it a history of conquest by King Narmer. The linguist calls it an early use of words to explain the event.



Scott #C183 designed by S. Abdel Aziz
Commemorating Conquest of the Delta

The first side, which shows Narmer in the white crown, has two cows heads on top which represents the goddess Hathor. In between is the house of Horus. Hathor means House of Horus and they are used together from very ancient times. In the House of Horus is the name Narmer. The name is derived from catfish = nar and chisel = mer.

Behind Narmer is his son, Djer. His head is shaved to prevent head lice. Narmer has him there to learn the art of warfare. Djer has an animal tail like his father, a sign of royalty. He carries his father's sandals. The men travel and fight barefoot. Djer also holds an ointment jar. It probably contains olive or palm oil to protect the skin from sunburn. The flower hieratic sign means flower of my family.

The hieroglyph beside the captive about to be killed reads 'harpoon lake' the area of battle. Some say it means Washi people or land. The falcon shows that Horus is in control of the Delta lands.

I have not deciphered the bottom register at this time. Some writers say it lists two cities captured. To me it looks like two Olympic swimmers doing the Australian crawl to win the blue ribbon above them.

On the obverse side, there is the hieroglyph of a carpenter's squire. It refers to Narmer the builder. Narmer knew he would have to move his control point to the apex of the Delta and build a new city there. The palette was made after the conquest. His father Scorpion moved from Thinis to Nekheb for similar reasons.

(continued on page 8)

The Narmer Palette

Sidny Schlain

(Continued from page 7)

In the top register, Narmer now has the red crown on his head. His name is there. The hieroglyph behind the banner means "united them".

The horseshoe shaped hieratic sign is found on bas-relief in the tomb of Rahotep, a priest of the 4th Dynasty. Together, you have united them. Narmer is not referring to the Nome warriors and the dead enemies. He is referring to the Nome warriors. This was to be a big battle. He had to be sure of his troops. As Winston Churchill said "Don't blow the bugle unless you are sure the troops will follow".

President's Message

I was pleased to read about a new discovery in Egypt, of a large group of mummies in a single burial. Perhaps if side scan radar were used in the area, more tombs could be discovered.

Recently, American, French, and Egyptian teams came up with independent reconstructions of the supposed image of the head of King Tut. Over the next five years, it is planned to do all the mummies in the Cairo Museum. As an engineer, I am always glad to see modern technology help in improving the information that comes from an archaeological find.

Washington 2006



Although the show runs from May 27th through June 3rd, Topical Collecting will be highlighted June 1-3. There will be lots of exhibits to see, dealers to spend money with from all over the world! I remember returning home after attending Pacific '97 and receiving my charge card statement with billings from Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, France, Great Britain and others. It looked like I had traveled the world! I covered all that ground in one day! There will not be another International Stamp Show in the United States until 2016, when it will be held in New York City.

The Old World Archaeology Study Unit will be having a meeting on Friday, June 2nd, scheduled for 4-5pm. I believe the show closes at 6:00pm, so after the meeting you can chat with fellow members or head to the dealers for some last minute purchasing, or the post office for some last minute canceling. We will have a pre-arranged spot to meet when the show closes to proceed to dinner at a local restaurant. Check at the ATA table for any updates to this information.

See you in Washington!

In the second register there are the serpopards. It is for utility not to tell part of the history. It was a common theme at this time and was also found in the art of Sumer and Elam.

The bottom register ends the story. The bull has destroyed the cities of Pe Lay Dep.

Eds. Note: The Narmer Palette was found by J.E. Quibell in 1898 when he was excavating the royal residences of various early Egyptian kings at Hierakonpolis in Upper Egypt. The Palette is slate, shield shaped and is decorated on both sides depicting Narmer defeating his enemies. The palette symbolizes the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt.

The Getty Villa in Malibu, CA has been reopened after reconstruction. I had a memorable visit there one sunny Sunday afternoon, before the Getty Castle was built on a mountaintop. Both would be worth a day of your time if you are in LA. For "desert", visit the La Brea tar pits.

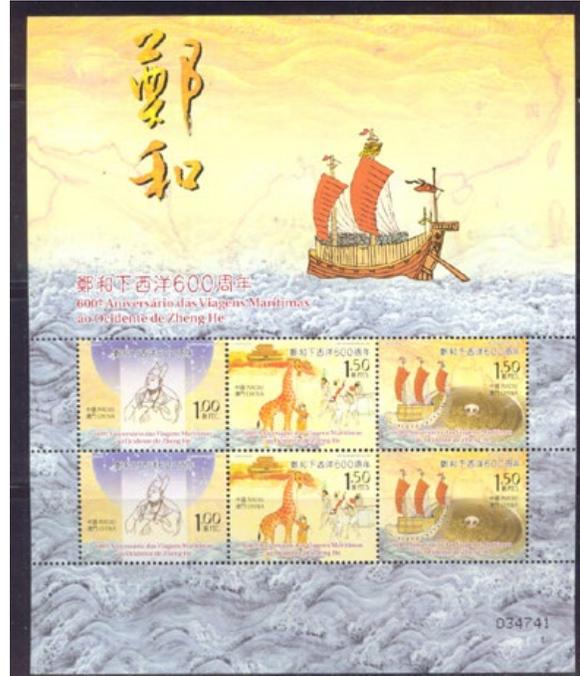
I hope to meet several of you at our Friday session at the Washington 2006 Stamp Show. A dutch treat dinner will be planned for the evening. Come on down!

New Digs

During July 2005 China, Macau and Hong Kong Issued stamps honoring the voyages of Zheng He in the 1400s. Though not actually archaeology, this subject may be of interest to some members so I am giving the details of some of these issues below. There may have been more than are shown.



Zheng He Voyages / Scott #3438a, b, & c
Peoples Republic of China, 28 June 2005



Zheng He Voyages Macau June 2005



Zheng He Voyages / Scott #3439
Peoples Republic of China, 28 June 2005



Peoples Republic of China, Chengtoushan Relics
Issued 6 November 2005 / Scott #3461



Macau Great Inventions of China 9 October 2005
Paper making, Compass, Printing, Gunpowder, Art.

**similar set issued by Hong Kong August 18, 2005 Scott #1149-52.

New Digs

(continued from page 9)



Algeria - no issued date known
Numidian Kings – similar to type issued 2004



Armenia
Issued 5 October 2005
1600th Anniversary of invention of the Armenian alphabet



Peoples Republic of China 2005
Issued 1 April 2005
Great Wall of China
Scott #3429

Note: Last issue illustrated a stamp issued by France for UNESCO depicting Petra. Scott has assigned #2056 for this stamp issued 26 Nov 2005.



Peru issued Nov 2005; 50th anniversary Europa stamps depicting the stamps of Spain with pre-Columbian artifacts.

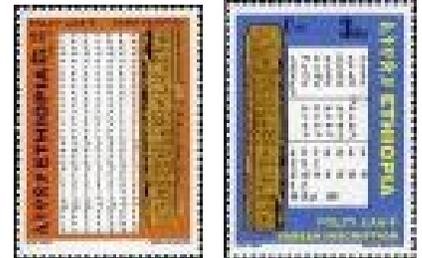
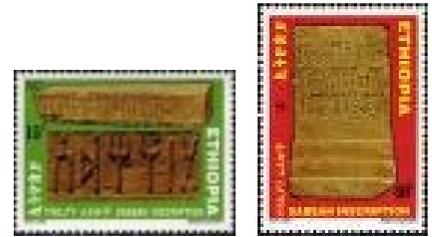
Found on Ebay, asking price \$8.95 opening bid, have checked both Keimar and Bombay stamps sites without success but price seems high by \$1.00 or \$2.00



Chad (5 stamps in set)
Issued 19 July 2005
Toumai - Ancestor of the Hominids



Colombia
Issued 2005
Gold Artifacts in Museums



Ethiopia History of Writing
Issued 28 August 2005
Subject Sabeian Inscription



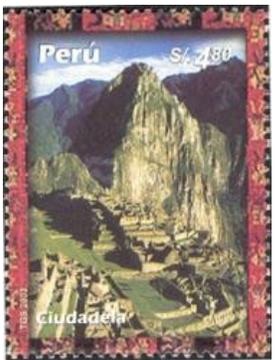
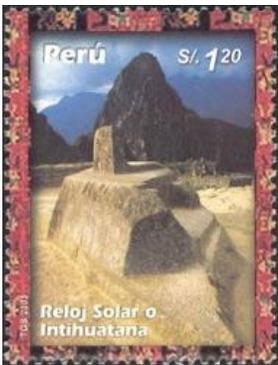
Indonesia - Borobudur
Stamps & S/S / Scott #2081a & b
Issued 17 September 2005.



Morocco
Issued 12 July 2004
Dinosaur of Tazouda (Ouarzazate)



Belarus
 Issued 15 November 2005
 Ancient Architecture



Peru
 Issued 20 March 2004
 Subject Archeology - Machu Picchu -
 Sundial, Huayana Picchu Waterfall,
 Three windows Temple, Citadel



Indonesia 28 June 2005 Scott #2074.



Russia
 Issued 1 November 2005
 60 years UNESCO
 Scott #6928



Wallis & Futuna Islands
 Issued 19 April 2005
 Subject Warlike rock frescos
 (one stamp shown larger for detail)



Wallis & Futuna Islands
 Issued 14 July 2005
 Subject Ulutoa thrower.

Archaeology Today

French Customs Seize Ancient Treasures

French customs agents seized two illegal shipments of artifacts from Africa, including statuettes, prehistoric fossils, jewels and pearl necklaces. The separate seizures in recent weeks in the southern cities of Arles and Perpignan netted more than 17,700 archaeological objects in vehicles driven by two Moroccan nationals. In the first operation, agents in Arles seized more than 17,600 objects from Mali and Morocco in a Moroccan-registered vehicle that was headed to Germany. They included fossils of crocodile and turtle skulls, and a dinosaur's jaw from about 60 million years ago. The same vehicle was carrying dozens of bronze statuettes in human and horse forms, jewels and pottery from Mali - most of which date to around 1,500 BCE.

In Perpignan, agents stopped an Italian-registered car containing 124 objects dating to the Neolithic era between 6,000 and 5,500 BCE including arrowheads, axes and pearl necklaces.

Source: Evening Echo (28 December 2005)

Xi'an Museum of the Neolithic to Re-Open

The museum of the Banpo Ruins, the largest and best-preserved prehistoric settlement ever discovered in China, will reopen on April 1 after renovations. The protection hall built half a century ago above the ruins was in disrepair, posing a threat to the relics, hence the need for renovation, curator Zhang Lizhi said. The renovated protection hall covers an area of 4,600 square meters, up from the original 2,700 square meters. Six exhibition rooms in the hall provide an insight into primitive life using modern digital technologies, Zhang said. The museum was built on the 6,000-year-old Banpo Village about seven kilometers east of Xi'an, capital of western Shaanxi Province. The remains of this prehistoric settlement were discovered in 1952 when workers were laying the foundation for a factory building. The ancient settlement reveals the natural living environment, labor skills and social customs of local residents belonging to a matriarchal clan community of the Neolithic age.

Source: China News (12 February 2006)

Early Chiefdoms Offer Clues to Modern Wealth, Study Says

When human ancestors gave up a nomadic way of life to farm the land, they gathered in small communities where they could share some of their skills. These early societies, known as chiefdoms, sowed the seeds of modern human civilization. Now a unique study of archaeological data has shown that the organization and symbols of power in these chiefdoms varied greatly. Robert Drennon and Christian Peterson from the University of Pittsburgh analyzed three ancient chiefdoms that existed in different parts of the world at different points in time. The anthropologists mapped out housing patterns and counted the shards of pottery and jewelry belonging to each house. These data allowed them to unravel clues about how each society was organized.

Writing in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, the scientists describe the valley of Oaxaca, Mexico, which was occupied by an early chiefdom around 3,500 years ago. Most residents lived in small villages of less than 50 people. But there was one village, San José Mogote, that had a population of more than 500. "Wealth was the most important currency for the Oaxaca community," Drennon said, referring to the high number of possessions, such as precious jewelry, found in individual dwellings, but the anthropologists discovered a surprisingly different kind of structure for the 3,000-year-old Alto Magdalena community in the Colombian Andes. Careful mapping of all the dwellings revealed that these people didn't live together in villages. "They were scattered across the landscape on small plots that they farmed for themselves," Drennon said. The Alto Magdalena people practiced a shamanic religion, as evidenced by sculptures found in the region of priests with supernatural and animalistic powers. Important residents were buried in the most ornate tombs, which bear religious symbols suggesting that they were revered spiritual figures. But based on the distribution of artifacts, Alto Magdalena's most powerful people were not necessarily wealthy. "High-ranking people had a great deal of spiritual power, but they didn't enjoy a much higher living status," Drennon said. In northeast China, Drennon and Peterson found that the structure of the Hongshan culture, which emerged around 6,000 years ago, lay somewhere between the Alto Magdalena and Oaxaca communities. "Both religion and an economy were in evidence, but they don't seem to have meshed," Drennon said. According to the authors, some of the differences in chiefdoms can be partially explained by landscape and climate. Both the valley of Oaxaca and the Hongshan region have dry highland climates where agriculture is a risky venture. Working together to dig irrigation channels and share labor meant people could increase their chances of success. By contrast the Alto Magdalena community had a mild climate where frosts were unheard of and crop failure was rare.

Source: National Geographic News (8 February 2006)

Archaeology Today

Egyptologists Unearth Statue of King Tut's Grandmother

Cairo, Egypt (Reuters) Egyptologists have discovered a statue of Queen Ti, wife of one of Egypt's greatest pharaohs and grandmother to the boy-king Tutankhamun, at an ancient temple in Luxor, and Egyptian antiquities official said. The official said the roughly 3,400 year old statue was uniquely well preserved. Ti's husband, Amenhotep III, presided over an era which saw a renaissance in Egyptian art. "It was a time of flourishing of art in ancient Egypt.. Behind a good man is a strong woman. And she was a very strong lady." Said Sabry bdel Aziz, head of the Pharaonic department at Egypt's Supreme Council for Antiquities.

Queen Ti was also mother to Akhenaten, the sun-worshipping pharaoh some credit with starting the world's first known monotheistic religion. Abdel Aziz said Queen Ti helped to prepare Akhenaten's son, Tutankhamun, for kingship. Researchers from Johns Hopkins University in the U.S. discovered the black granite statue at the Temple of Mut in the ancient temple complex in Karnak. The statue is missing it's legs but is otherwise well preserved, Aziz said. It was buried under about half a meter of rocks and sand.

A number of cartouches, or royal name signs, of Amenhotep III were found on the statue, and the statue's design and features allowed researchers to identify it as a new kingdom 18th dynasty statue of Queen Ti, Aziz said.

Cartouches of a later kind also on the statue indicated it may have been re-used about 300 years later by a 21st dynasty ruler.

Queen Ti (or Tiye) has been depicted on Egypt Scott #1513.

CNN, Tuesday January 24th 2006

"Lost World" Found in Indonesia Is Trove of New Species

To boldly go where no one has gone before, one group of scientists didn't have to venture into space. They found a lost world right here on Earth. "It really was like crossing some sort of time warp into a place that people hadn't been to," said Bruce Beehler of the wildlife expedition he co-led in December into the isolated Foja Mountains on the tropical South Pacific island of New Guinea.



During a December 2005 expedition in Indonesia's Foja Mountains, a researcher cradles a golden-mantled tree kangaroo, the first such tree kangaroo ever spotted in Indonesia. During a 15-day stay at a camp they had cut out of the jungle, the conservationists found a trove of animals never before documented, from a new species of the honeyeater bird to more than 20 new species of frogs. "We were like kids in a candy store," said Beehler of Conservation International in Washington, D.C. "Everywhere we looked we saw amazing things we had never seen before."

Another highlight of the expedition was the discovery of a population of the golden-mantled tree kangaroo. It was the first record of this species in Indonesia.

Meanwhile, reptile experts documented 60 different kinds of frogs, including more than 20 new species.

Perhaps the most exciting discovery was a tiny frog less than 14 millimeters (0.6 inch) long. The animal that was detected only when it produced a soft call from among leaves on the steepest part of the forest floor. A botanical team collected more than 550 plant species, including at least five previously unknown woody plant species. Entomologists encountered more than 150 insect species, including four new ones.

In the Foja Mountains there are more than 740,000 acres of old-growth tropical forest. "This virgin territory has not been impacted by humans," so plant and animal species are at natural population levels, Beehler said.

Stefan Lovgren for National Geographic News February 7, 2006

New Tomb Opened in Egypt's Valley of Kings

Through a partially opened underground door, Egyptian authorities gave a peek Friday into the first new tomb uncovered in the Valley of the Kings since that of King Tutankhamun in 1922. US archaeologists said they discovered the tomb by accident while working on a nearby site. Still unknown is whose mummies are in the five wooden sarcophagi with painted funeral masks, surrounded by alabaster jars inside the undecorated single-chamber tomb.

Archaeology Today

New Tomb Opened in Egypt's Valley of Kings

(Continued from page 13)

The tomb, believed to be some 3,000 years old, dating to the 18th dynasty, does not appear to be that of a pharaoh, said Edwin Brock, co-director of the team from the University of Memphis, Tennessee, that discovered the site.

"I don't think it's a royal tomb, maybe members of the court," he told the Associated Press. "Contemporaries of Tutankhamun are possible—or of Amunhotep III [also called Amenophis III] or even Horemheb." Egypt's antiquities chief, Zahi Hawass, said, "Maybe they are mummies of kings or queens or nobles—we don't know. But it's definitely someone connected to the royal family."

So far, archaeologists have not entered the tomb, having only opened part of its 1.5-meter-high entrance door in early February. But they have peered inside the single chamber to see the sarcophagi, believed to contain mummies, surrounded by around 20 pharaonic jars.

Egyptian antiquities authorities allowed journalists a first look into the tomb, located near the tomb of Tutankhamun. At the bottom of a 10-meter-deep pit, a narrow shaft leads down another 5 meters to the door, made of blocks of stone. A hole about a foot wide has been cleared from the door.



Mummy's 'White, Painted Face'

Inside the chamber alabaster pots, some broken, are lined up next to the sarcophagi. One of the coffins has toppled and faces the door, showing its white, painted face. Another is partially open, showing a brown cloth covering the mummy inside. The discovery has broken the long-held belief that there's nothing left to dig up in the Valley of the Kings, the desert region near the southern city of Luxor used as a burial ground for pharaohs, queens, and nobles during the New Kingdom period (1539-1075 B.C.). The 18th dynasty lasted from around 1500 to 1300 B.C. and included the famed King Tut.

The team hopes to remove the coffins before the end of the digging season, usually around May, when the weather gets too hot to work in the deserts outside Luxor, 300 miles south of Cairo. The coffins appear to have some damage from termites. "It's going to take a lot of conservation work to consolidate these things before we can take them out," Brock said.

The archaeologists were working last year on the neighboring tomb of Amenmeses, a late 19th-dynasty pharaoh, when they found the remains of ancient workmen's huts. The scientists then discovered a depression in the bedrock that they suspected was a shaft. When they returned to work during this excavation season, they opened the shaft and found the door.

Since the discovery of Tut's tomb, experts have believed that the Valley of the Kings contained only the 62 previously known tombs—labeled KV1 to KV62 by archaeologists. "I wouldn't be surprised if we discover more tombs in the next ten years," U.S. archaeologist Kent Weeks told AP. Weeks made the last major discovery in the valley. In 1995 he opened a previously known tomb—KV5—and found it was far larger than expected: more than 120 chambers, which he determined were meant for sons of Pharaoh Ramses II. "It's ironic. A century ago people said the Valley of the Kings is exhausted, there's nothing left," he said. "Suddenly Carter found Tutankhamun. So then they said, 'Now there's nothing to find.' Then we found KV5. Now we have KV63." Weeks, who was not involved in the new discovery but saw photos of the tomb's interior, said it was probably built for one person but that multiple sarcophagi were moved in later for storage. The jars, he said, appear to be meat jars for food offerings. Objects in the tomb "could be 200 to 400 years later than the original cutting of the tomb," he said.

February 10, 2006 Associated Press

3,000-year-old Cliff Art Found in China

Archaeologists have found a 3,000-year-old cliff painting made with human hand prints and believed to depict a dancing man and woman in southwestern China, a news report said Monday. The 1.4 meter-by-1.6 meter (50-by-60-inch) painting was found near the Jinsha River in Yunnan province, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Local people guided a three-member team of archaeologists to the painting, said Ji Xueping, associate professor with the Yunnan Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology.

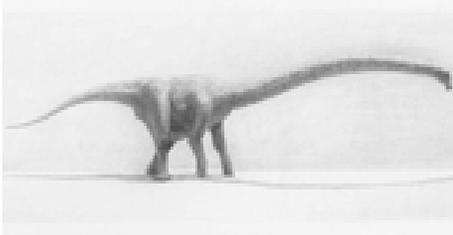
The painting was made with a mixture of iron ore and animal blood, Ji said.

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Archaeology Today

Newly Discovered Dinosaur Had Giant Neck, Air-Filled Bones

Scientists say they have found the fossil of a new species of ungainly dinosaur that had special air sacs in some of its bones to help support its massively long neck. Living more than 100 million years ago in what is now Mongolia, the dinosaur belonged to a group of gentle, plant-munching giants called sauropods, the biggest animals ever to have walked the Earth.



Experts say what's most impressive about the dinosaur isn't its huge bulk but its 24-foot-long neck. Paleontologists Daniel T. Ksepka and Mark A. Norell of the American Museum of Natural History in New York discovered the fossil in Mongolia's Gobi desert in 2002. The partial fossil skeleton includes a single neck vertebra that measures nearly 2 feet in length. This is bigger than the same vertebra found in fossils of *Diplodocus*—another, much larger four-legged sauropod that measured up to 90 feet in length.

The researchers conclude that the smaller dinosaur was oddly proportioned even for a sauropod. Their analysis of the find is detailed in the museum's journal, *Novitates*.

The newly described species is named *Erketu ellisoni*. Erketu, the god of might, was one of 99 deities from pre-Buddhist Mongolian tradition. *Erketu ellisoni*'s neck bones suggest that an interesting evolutionary strategy allowed the animal to support its long neck, the researchers say. Computed tomography (CT) scans show that the dinosaur's vertebrae are filled with spaces that probably held small air sacs. "The vertebrae aren't solid bone but honeycombed with chambers which were probably filled with air," Ksepka said. "This was definitely helping to reduce the overall weight of the animal, particularly the neck. You don't want a lot of weight up front—that would off-balance the animal. This honeycomb structure is an advanced feature which you see pretty high up in the sauropod evolutionary tree," Ksepka added. The researchers also report that the tops of these neck bones were split into two parallel tracks, likely allowing room for a ligament that helped the dinosaur lift its neck.

"Research that has been done lately indicates that other, similar sauropods probably held their necks parallel to the ground," Ksepka said. "We think this animal had a similar posture," he added. "It may have had this long neck to easily graze over a large area rather than to reach to the very tip of a tree. Their teeth were well suited for stripping vegetation." The dinosaur's fossil remains—a chest plate, two lower leg bones, and an ankle bone—link it to an advanced group of sauropods called titanosaurs.

Titanosaurs are thought to have been a highly successful dinosaur group, because their fossils have been found throughout the world. Despite this, the rich fossil beds of Mongolia have yielded very few sauropod remains.

"They're rare in general in the Gobi desert, so this fossil is helping us see what kind of sauropods were around in an area which has yielded all these other different kinds of dinosaurs," Ksepka said.

James Owen for National Geographic News March 21, 2006

Archaeologists in Jordan discover Bronze and Iron Age remains

Archaeologists found a skeleton and other remains dating to the Bronze and Iron Ages in the Jordan Valley. A team from Jordan and Greece discovered the skeleton along with 'with various remains of bones and pottery' dating to the Bronze Age, Saad Al Hadidi (director of the department of antiquities in Salt, in charge of the dig), said.

Excavations in the region of Tal Al Kafrein, 38 kilometers (23 miles) south of the capital Amman, unearthed a cave containing a passage and staircases. They also found two floors of living quarters and brick and stone walls "in a good state", dating to the Bronze Age, which lasted from 3,200 to 1,950 BCE, and later Iron Ages. Hadidi said that further excavations were made impossible by the presence of recent Islamic tombs nearby.

Source: Middle East Times (20 January 2006)

Archaeology Today

Photo in the News: Egypt's "Most Beautiful Mummy"



May 5, 2005—Just in time for Mummy's Day, archaeologists have unveiled "the most beautiful mummy ever found in Egypt," according to Zahi Hawass, the head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities. Revealed Tuesday, the

2,300-year-old male mummy was discovered two months ago under 20 feet (6 meters) of sand near the pyramids at Saqqara.

Its pigments still vivid, the mummy's nearly intact wooden sarcophagus offers a glimpse of ancient rituals and everyday life: The mummification process is depicted in detail, for instance, while, Maat, goddess of truth and balance, hovers above with wings outstretched. One thing the paintings don't reveal is who lurks inside the sarcophagus. The gold mask and the mummy's location, a royal burial complex, suggest the deceased was a man of great wealth. The rest is up to science. Hawass, a National Geographic explorer-in-residence, told reporters that an upcoming CT scan should unlock secrets of who the mummy was and how he lived.

Awards

Mona Lisa Select Site

02/01/06

Congratulations!

After a careful examination of your site, we find that it merits our award for its design, informative content and navigation. As a result, your site has been selected to serve as our Site of the Month for February.

Congratulations for creating a charming, and informative website. The time you have invested in the site is praiseworthy. Thank you for inviting me to review your site and for making such a terrific contribution to the philatelic web community. - AS rating 3.0, AS! Key Science Site, AS! Article Contributor, Designated Landmark Project, Designated Learning Fountain, Designated Seven Wonders of the Web.

- Best regards, Steve Feld



Talking Hands Award

02/04/06

The Old World Archaeological Study Unit is a unique experience in Archaeology and Stamp Collecting. This site presents its material in a way that makes it interesting to everyone. History, Life, and mail postage takes on a new light while going through the pages of this delightful site.

The way the categories are laid out makes it very easy to find information about any era or country you would wish to see. I found myself lost in a world I know nothing about, and now I found I have expanded my knowledge a little more. A big thank you goes out to the developers and contributors of the Old World Archaeological Study Unit for a job done very well. - AS rating 5.0



- B.H.

As a "space filler" which may be of interest to some of our members: The ATA has just released a new handbook to help Topical Collectors with questions they may have about the hobby. "Don Beuthel's TOPICAL HELPLINE - Collecting and Exhibiting Tips" answers questions about collecting, finding, mounting writing up and exhibiting topical stamps. It is a 70 page compilation of six years of his "Helpline" columns in Topical Time. The cost is \$7 to non-ATA members and \$5 to members, along with \$2 postage in the US and Canada and \$4 overseas. American Topical Association - PO Box 57 - Arlington, TX 76004-0057 - americantopical@msn.com 817-274-1181 This will be available at Washington 2006.

