



# Ontario Archaeological Society

## Arch Notes

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**OAS member and Board director Nicole Brandon captured this stunning photo of a collapsed cabin while at the recent CAA meetings in Whitehorse, Yukon and area.**

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## NUMBERED. WEIGHED. DIVIDED.

Things get stuck in my head. On the way to defend my Master's thesis for the first time I tuned in to an AM oldies station and found myself singing along to Neil Sedaka's 'Calendar Girl'. It passed the time and settled my frazzled nerves. Unfortunately, the song kept playing in my head during my defense – sometimes so loudly that it was difficult to hear the questions of my examining committee. Needless to say it didn't end well. In the years since, this unwelcome chorus has been joined by fragments of poetry, odd bits of myth, and famous quotations that seem to repeat and repeat. My head is a noisy place.

Since the release of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), which details the most troubling parts of the history of our dysfunctional relationship with Canada's First Peoples, an odd bit of verse has been troubling me. I can't seem to shake it.

Numbered. Weighed. Divided.

It landed in my head courtesy of my grandmother, a devout attendee of the United Church who presented me with the *Golden Books Illustrated Children's Bible* when I was in elementary school. Being marooned on a farm with little access to books, it was a volume that I picked up often, largely out of desperation for something, indeed anything, to read.

The quote comes from Chapter 15 of the Book of Daniel. It opens with the story of the Babylonian regent, Belshazzar, who was feasting with his lords and guzzling wine from golden vessels stolen from the Temple of Jerusalem before its destruction. In the midst of the revelries, the apparition of a man's hand was seen writing strange words on the wall – words that confounded the abilities of Belshazzar's advisors to interpret. The prophet Daniel was then summoned to offer his opinion. As the King James edition notes (my Golden Books edition is long gone), Daniel interpreted the writing as follows

*And this is the writing that was written, Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.25*

*This is the interpretation of the thing: Mene; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it.26*

*Tekel; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.27*

*Peres; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.28*

Belshazzar offered Daniel rich gifts, but was slain that very night and replaced by Darius the Mede. Traits such as gluttony, arrogance, and disrespect are seldom rewarded (at least positively) in myth. Most believe that it would be an injustice to have them rewarded in real life either.

I find it an interesting coincidence that the Anishinaabek and Haudenosaunee peoples of southern Ontario refer to these lands as a vessel. To them, this land between the lakes is known as "the dish." The wampum belt, known as "The Dish With One Spoon", affirms the treaty between the League of the Haudenosaunee (and their allies) and the Anishinaabek (and their allies) and acknowledges that this land is a bowl that everyone must eat from, that no one should take too much from (or exploit), and that everyone in the treaty must keep clean. It is a treaty between sovereign nations that predates Confederation and, unlike many of our treaties, has never been broken.

But back to the dish – the dish that we took and have been feasting from since its rightful owners surrendered it and were pushed into reserves; the dish that has been shorn of its trees, stripped of its resources, game, and fish, and left so filthy that some parts of it are unfit for habitation. Of course, what we've done to the dish pales in comparison to what we did to its former owners. The stories in the TRC range from the merely sad to the positively horrific. If you have children, or merely a heart that is made of something other than brass, the stories will haunt your dreams. Our deeds have been numbered. They have been

weighed in the balance and found wanting. What acts of contrition will be required to prevent our kingdom from being divided?

If you think these issues have nothing to do with archaeology, you are mistaken. On May 13 of this year, I attended an MTCS-sponsored session at the Ontario Heritage Conference in Stratford. The session was ostensibly about 'Aboriginal Engagement' but turned into a meditation on the subject of decolonizing archaeology.

Several of the papers stood out. Gary Warrick reminded us of the inherent contradictions we face as members of the Settler Society when we 'do' archaeology on other people's pasts. He looked forward to the day when Indigenous participation in archaeology would become so commonplace as to be un-noteworthy. Holly Martelle and Peter Timmins offered best practices in engagement protocols and masterfully explained the deep and pernicious manner in which Colonialism has inserted itself into the categories, language, and assumptions of our discipline. Paul General explained that the notion of 'First Nations' had to be used as more than a politically-correct euphemism for 'Indian' and that the concept of nationhood implied inherent rights that must be respected under the Constitution. There was nothing smug or self-congratulatory to be found in any of the talks. People clapped politely for the speakers but few smiled. They were too busy thinking.

Amidst the thousands of archaeological consulting contracts, the reams of archaeological reports, the supernaturally dull form letters and the plodding, bureaucratic language that pervades them all, one could almost forget that archaeology is a battleground. On one side, the Settler Society continues to eat its 'Belshazzarian' feast from a stolen dish – resources are harvested, lands are urbanized, green is in retreat. It's getting hot. Across the frontier, First Peoples, status and non-status, strive to assert their identity, to gain acknowl-

edgement of their treaty rights, and to reclaim their cultural properties. We archaeologists think of ourselves as huddled together in a shell crater somewhere in the middle, and we certainly take fire from both

sides, but our 'bread' is buttered by the status quo – by a planning system that has only just begun, and barely at that, to acknowledge the rights of First Peoples. What is our role to be in the days ahead, should our

kingdom be divided?

*Paul Racher  
President*

## SO... DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS...?

**N**o ... it is not time for fieldwork, ... washing and cataloguing, ... analysis, ... writing reports, ... filling out all those overdue Borden forms... No, it's now time to nominate someone for an OAS Award. Yes, you are correct: the OAS Award nominations are now open.

The OAS has a robust awards program that acknowledges the achievements of its members in the preservation, documentation and presentation of the material culture and broader knowledge uncovered from Ontario's archaeological record.

Awards are available for student, non-professional, and professional archaeologists in recognition of their accomplishments and contributions in promoting further understanding and appreciation of Ontario's past. These awards are presented annually at the OAS Symposium

The following award categories are now open for nominations:

**J. NORMAN EMERSON SILVER MEDAL** awarded to an outstanding Ontario non-professional archaeologist whose life's work has been consistently of the highest standard

**J.V. WRIGHT LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD** awarded to an outstanding Ontario professional archaeologist whose life's work has been consistently of the highest standard

**IAN KENYON MEMORIAL AWARD** awarded to a professional archaeologist who has made an exceptional contribution to the development of Ontario archaeology

**TIM KENYON MEMORIAL AWARD** awarded to a non-professional archaeologist who has made an exceptional contribution to the development of Ontario archaeology

**HERITAGE CONSERVATION AWARD** is given in recognition of a significant voluntary contribution to heritage preservation within the Province of Ontario

**PEGGI ARMSTRONG PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY AWARD** is given in recognition of excellence in the promotion of public interest in the study of archaeology through the use of displays, workshops, training, site tours and/or the development of educational program and materials

**KILLARNEY AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE** is given in recognition of the continuing long-term support and active participation of OAS members

**AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT** is given to either an individual or a group in order to recognize contributions and accomplishments in the field of cultural resource management

**AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLISHING** is given to an individual, group or firm in order to recognize contributions and accomplishments in publishing works dealing with the field of North Eastern Archaeology

**OAS STUDENT PAPER-POSTER AWARD** awarded annually to a student in or recently graduated from a Bachelor's or Master's degree program at a post-secondary institution, and who was the primary author on a paper or poster presented at the OAS Symposium.

The 2016 symposium will be held in Waterloo in early November, so start up those papers and posters!



### How to Nominate and Apply

For more details about these awards and to download a nomination form, please visit: <http://ontarioarchaeology.org/awards>. Complete award applications must be received by the Board no later than July 1, 2015.

The awards are presented at our annual symposium, which this year is being hosted by the Grand River Chapter, the first weekend in November. It's in Waterloo at the Delta Hotel and Waterloo Regional Museum. Be sure to plan to attend to see who is presented with one of the above awards.

In addition to these awards, **The Valerie Sonstenes Student Research Fund** provides small grants to assist students in undertaking new research to advance our knowledge of Ontario's archaeological record. This fund is open to Honours, Masters, PhD or post-doctoral level projects. For more information about this research fund, please contact William Ross, the Director of Member Services at: [memberservices@ontarioarchaeology.org](mailto:memberservices@ontarioarchaeology.org).

# SUNKEN VESSELS

By William Fox, Jean-Luc Pilon and Carley Crann

Several years ago, Jean-Luc received a series of relatively complete ceramic vessels recovered from the St. Lawrence River in the vicinity of Kingston by a sports diver. Curious about their exact antiquity, he removed some of the carbonized food residue from the vessel interiors and submitted it for AMS dating to the Beta Analytic Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory in 2014. Jean-Luc also submitted samples to the Canadian Conservation Institute which used gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) to identify deer fat and most surprisingly, caffeine (Poulin 2014 – see also Canadian Museum of History Blog – *Archaeology Month: Vessels Which Speak Volumes On The History Of First Nations*). One vessel, dating to nearly 1800 radiocarbon years ago (Figure 1), also contained traces of heated marine oil.



**Figure 1: Vessel 4 – Middle Woodland vessel dated to 240 calibrated AD.**

Considering the exciting range of dates and subsistence information derived from these vessels, the senior writer was reminded of a collection of ceramics from Charleston Lake reported by Phillip Wright in 1980. As the Provincial Regional Archaeologist for Eastern Ontario, Phill worked with Ken Cas-

savoy and a volunteer dive team including Art Amos, to document an underwater deposit of ceramics during the 1976 to 1978 field seasons (Wright 1980: 53). The recoveries deteriorated rapidly upon removal from the lake and so, the Canadian Conservation Institute was requested to stabilize the collection (Segal 1977). Wright (1980: 61-68) identified ceramic wares related to the middle to late Point Peninsula, Pickering, Owasco, and middle stage St. Lawrence Iroquois; or roughly the period from 300 to 1450 A.D., which is comparable to the age range of vessels received by Jean-Luc. Similar to the Kingston area vessels, substantial portions were recovered, permitting an unprecedented opportunity to study complete decorative motifs for ceramics predating 1000 A.D. Advances in radiocarbon dating since Phill's 1980 analysis and report provided the potential for individual vessel dates, based on AMS analysis of carbonized residues from these vessels by the A.E. Lalonde AMS Laboratory (AEL-AMS) at the University of Ottawa.

With the termination of the Provincial archaeological field program, regional collections were consolidated, and the Charleston Lake collection was moved to London. Shari Prowse of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport kindly provided access to the ceramics and residue samples were obtained from three vessels (Nos. 4, 5 and 7) which stylistically appeared to span the Middle Woodland period. The initial dates were shocking; ranging from 1731 to 6418 radiocarbon years before present – something was definitely wrong! Discussions between Carley Crann of the AEL-AMS laboratory and Tara Grant of the Canadian Conservation Institution revolved around the consolidants and adhesives used to stabilize the ceramics, and how these could be extracted from the samples. Subsequently, they radiocarbon dated 20 consolidants and glues commonly used in archaeological conservation and produced a poster for the recent Canadian Archaeological Association meeting in Whitehorse. The PVAC AYAA which had been used to consolidate the

Charleston Lake vessels by vacuum impregnation was revealed to have a radiocarbon signature of its petrochemical source, which is well beyond the age limit of radiocarbon (~50,000 years). With a solvent wash, the PVA was then removed from the samples, with the following results:

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The authors of the following article wish to assure readers that a much more substantial and detailed peer reviewed paper concerning this project will be forthcoming. The title refers not only to the underwater origin of the ceramic vessels in question, but also to one of the potential mechanisms for their deposition, especially in deep waters offshore – capsized watercraft. These 'canoe wrecks' as referred to by the senior author, were an inevitable result of millennia of canoe travel on the Great Lakes, larger interior lakes, and riverine highways.

While most readers will know the affiliation of Bill and Jean-Luc, we note that Carley is an employee of the Lalonde AMS laboratory at the University of Ottawa.



**Figure 2: Vessel 4 – Pseudo-scallop shell impressed vessel dated to 395 calibrated BC.**



**Figure 3: Vessel 5 – Pseudo-scallop shell rocker stamped vessel dated to 639 calibrated BC.**



**Figure 4: Vessel 7 - Cord-wrapped stick impressed vessel dated to 531 calibrated AD.**

The Vessel 5 date overlaps the ‘Hallstatt Plateau’ which ranges from 1110 to 500 calibrated BC (similar to many Vinette 1 dates – see Spence and Fox 1986: 15, Table 1.1), and is surprisingly early. However, unlike Vessel 4 (Figure 2) which displays an everted rim lip and more sophisticated decorative motif, Vessel 5 (Figure 3) is a simple straight rimmed conical pot with a less complex decorative pattern, similar in form to Vinette 1 vessels (Mitchell 1963). Taché and Hart have recently refined the dating of Vinette 1 ceramics and documented the contemporaneity of this earliest vessel form with steatite bowls across the Northeast (Taché and Hart 2013). Their results suggest that Vinette 1 ceramic production dates to between roughly 1400 calibrated BC and 300 calibrated BC, clearly overlapping our early Point Peninsula dates, as they do the period of steatite vessel production (Ibid.: 367, Table 4).

This is not a unique situation, given numerous other early Middle Woodland dates from both Saugeen and Point Peninsula sites in Ontario (Spence and Fox 1986: 35, Table 1.3); although, the association between the old wood carbon dates and ceramics remain suspect. To the east, a “decorated ‘Vinette 1’ vessel” was recovered from feature 167 of the Early Woodland Boucher cemetery in Vermont (Heckenberger et al. 1990: 122-123, Figure 13). The feature was radiocarbon dated to 600 uncalibrated BC, and the vessel is very similar in form to Charleston Lake Vessel 5, but displays an incised triangular motif over a corded surface.

Further AMS dating of Middle to Late Woodland transitional ceramic vessels from Charleston and South Lakes is in process, thanks to a Symons Trust Fund for Canadian Studies grant to the

senior author. We hope that this information will assist in clarifying the cultural traditions and relations of Indigenous populations occupying southeastern and southwestern Ontario during the latter half of the first millennium A.D. Additional AMS dating of Point Peninsula vessels is also planned, in an effort to clarify the temporal range of this ceramic tradition and perhaps, the relation of its producers to the Early Woodland Meadowood peoples of Ontario.

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# SAVE THE DATE



**Borders and Boundaries**  
Ontario Archaeological Society  
2016 Symposium, November 4-6  
Delta Hotel, Waterloo

**The Call for Papers will be released shortly. Those wishing to indicate interest in presenting a paper or perhaps participating in specific sessions, should contact Dr. Chris Watts at <[c3watts@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:c3watts@uwaterloo.ca)>. Further information will be emailed to members and will also be announced on Facebook and the OAS website in the near future.**

# WHAT'S GOING ON?

## A CHAPTER ROUNDUP

By Amy St. John,  
Chapter Services Director

Most Chapters take break from regular meetings for the summer field season and start meetings back up in September, but here is a round-up of some of the meetings that were held in April and May and some exciting summer events Chapters will be holding.

### GRAND RIVER

The April speaker was Dr. Jim Keron speaking on 'An Intra-Cemetery Analysis of the Distribution of Phenotypic Variables at Kellis-2, Egypt'. Dr. Jim Keron applied spatial statistics to the distributions of discrete genetic traits to address past marriage practices and issues of post-marital residency.

### HAMILTON

Events Coordinator Meagan Brooks ran information table on behalf of the Hamilton Chapter at Battlefield Park on the first weekend in June. Additionally, they are holding their first public dig with the chapter, set for Saturday August 13th at Griffin House in Ancaster, a beautiful property with a rich history. The plan is to open a few units in an area near the house with high potential for material culture and instruct chapter members on proper excavation strategies, with artifact processing indoors at a later date. This excavation trial run is only open to Hamilton Chapter OAS members at this time, but they hope to expand the scope in the future.

### HURONIA

The May meeting featured Dena Doroszenko speaking on 'Recent investigations by the Ontario Heritage Trust'. Over the past five years, the Trust Archaeologist has been involved in reburials, investigating looting incidents and being proactive in the preservation of archaeological sites in Ontario.

### OTTAWA

The Ottawa Chapter held a movie night on May 12th featuring the film *The Curse of the Axe*. Members attended and learned about the Mantle or 'Jean-Baptist Lainé' site, the Wendat (Huron) ancestral village excavated by Ron Williamson.

### PETERBOROUGH

At the April meeting Caleb Musgrave spoke on his role as a First Nations monitor and some of his current activities and on May 24th, John and Teresa Topic shared their experiences as Peruvian archaeologists. Peterborough Chapter will hold its first public archaeology site with Trent University archaeologist Dr. James Conolly for eight days in late June. Lab dates will follow.

### TORONTO

In April, Charles Garrad presented his last public lecture on 'Champlain and the Petun'. Charles has studied the Petun Indian occupation of the Blue Mountains near Collingwood for more than 50 years. April 2016 marked his 50th anniversary as a member of the OAS of which he served as President, Executive-Director, and Librarian. On hand for the talk were OAS President Paul Racher, President of the Ontario Historical Society Rob Leverty and a number of former colleagues and well-wishers.

The May meeting featured Carl Benn, PhD, Department of History, Ryerson University speaking about 'Exploring Iroquois/Haudenosaunee Material Culture, 1700-1815'. The talk explored the



**Charles Garrad's (right) talk at the April Toronto Chapter meeting was very well attended including (left) Rob Leverty, President of the Ontario Historical Society and OAS Executive-Director Lorie Harris. Photo: Neil Grey**



following: What did Six Nations Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas, and Tuscaroras look like in the 18th and early 19th centuries? Using images of portraits, other artworks, and artifacts, we explored this question and examined some of the challenges of using such sources in understanding the period's material culture.

Toronto has Janice Teichroeb of the Toronto Region Conservation Authority scheduled to speak Sept. 21, 2016 on 'The Haight site, a nineteenth century textile industry site in Ajax'.

## WINDSOR

The April meeting featured Chapter President Amanda Black stepping in for a speaker who could not attend due to unforeseen circumstances. Amanda spoke on the various uses of herbs and other plants, including medicinal uses as well as spiritual uses, by various people including native groups. In her presentation titled, 'Culturally Significant Plants, It's not just a Weed', she stated that herbs are generally used as a tonic while many plants are often used to cure things.

# CONGRATULATIONS, DR. RON!

By Sheryl Smith

The Executive Board of the OAS is pleased to join the chorus of those who celebrate and acknowledge Dr. Ron Williamson of ASI, the most recent recipient of the Canadian Archaeological Association's prestigious Smith-Wintemberg Award. He is now part of an elite group of only 25 archaeologists who have been recognized for outstanding contributions to the discipline in Canada. Ron received the award at the recent CAA meetings in Whitehorse, Yukon.

As the CAA website says:

"The Smith-Wintemberg award is presented to honour professional members of the Canadian archaeological community who have made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of the discipline of archaeology and our knowledge of the archaeological past of Canada. This award is presented in any year, as merited. An eligible candidate should have: 1) significantly advanced the training and practice of archaeologists, and/or 2) made exceptional research

contributions, and/or 3) advanced method and theory in some significant way.... Candidacies for Canadian archaeologists working primarily outside of Canada can be accepted by the CAA, but priority will be given to archaeologists who have worked on Canadian archaeology for most of their careers.



**Ron Williamson is congratulated on his Smith-Wintemberg Award by President of the CAA Gary Warrick**

footsteps with similar passion and commitment. Smith and Wintemberg, as well as the archaeologists who have been honoured with the Smith-Wintemberg Award are our professional elders. We can learn much from their professional lives."

In the first part of the twentieth century there were very few professional archaeologists in Canada. In the history of our profession two individuals stand out as people who laid many of the foundations of our discipline, one that we so easily take for granted. These two ardent and consummate archaeologists, Harlan I. Smith and William J. Wintemberg, inspired the Canadian Archaeological Association to create an award recognizing others who have followed in their

# NOTES ON A VISIT TO ROME AND NAPLES

By Mima Brown Kapches

Although you might think that I've travelled to most of the major cities of the world, you'd be incorrect in your assumption. In fact, as far as European cities go I'm rather quite limited. I had only been to Rome once and it was a 'drive-thru'. The bus picked us up at the airport and dropped us off at the cruise ship. In between we drove through Rome, no getting off the bus allowed. The only memory I have of that trip was that the coliseum seemed much smaller than I thought it should be, I think that was the result of being asleep on the bus, and as my visit to the coliseum this time proved, it's quite massive, and indeed worthy of the name colossal. So this week long trip to Rome (May 21-28, 2016) can be considered my first.

The reason for my visit to Rome was to see *La Traviata* at the Opera de Roma, a magnificent production directed by Sofia Coppola with Violetta's costumes designed by Valentino. I had booked tickets in February and somehow ended up sitting in the best box in the house, I was rather overwhelmed by the opulence of my seats and the nosy Romans walking by looking up and thinking, who is that? But I endured their stares for the night and the opera was thrilling! I think Ben Kingsley and Sly Stallone also enjoyed it, but my seats were better!

I did see most of the usual 'suspects' in Rome and of these the breathtaking moment of my first sight of the Trevi Fountain stands out. Its marble majesty could not be dimmed by the

masses of selfie-taking tourists.

My goal was to see two significant archaeological museums, The Museo Nazionale Romano at the Palazzo Massimo in Rome and the Museo Archeologico di Napoli in Naples. In this brief note I'm going to mention four items that are of archaeological interest in these museums. Some of you may have seen these and some of you may have not. In any event they make for an interesting archaeological story.

In the basement of the Museo Nazionale is a small exhibition 'In The Museum Strongbox. The Symbols of Power. The Imperial Insignia and Sceptres from the Palatine Hill'. You might be tempted to pass on this, don't.

In a dimly lit room are two cases, one with the remains of sceptres and the other with ceremonial lances and standard-bearing lances. Only the heads of these emblems of imperial power remain, the ivory and wooden staffs have long since disintegrated (Fig. 1). In 2007 Malcolm Moore reported in the *Guardian* "The only Roman emperor's sceptre to have been found has gone on public display in Rome for the first time" (27 Feb. 2007). Discovered during construction activities in 2005 near the Palatine Hill, the cache of ceremonial objects was dated using stratigraphy and C14 to the late 3rd or early 4th Century AD. They are thought to belong to Emperor Maxentius who ruled from AD 306-312 (his rule ended when he was killed by his brother-in-law Constantine, [soon to be the Great, famously known for the Edict of Milan]). The insignia were wrapped in silk and buried in wooden boxes to protect them during the period of unrest that followed his death. The spheres are very dramatic, two gold coloured glass spheres, one blue chalcedony orb (from India?) which may have been topped with an eagle, and a green glass sphere in an elaborate mount (Fig. 2). Today we can produce perfect spheres with little difficulty; imagine how challenging this task would have been in the past. I wonder if when sunlight caught the orbs the light refracted through them creating a glowing effect?

In a room on the ground floor are two marvelous bronze, life-size, sculptures, the Boxer and the Prince. The Boxer immediately fascinated me. His expression, the cauliflower ears, the wounds and scars on the face and the punished nose, were so dramatic. These are thought to be original Greek bronzes from the first century BC; they decorated the Baths of Constantine and were found in 1885. Quoting from the text describing the Boxer: "X-Ray fluorescence analysis and eddie (Eddy?) currents ... show how in some cases the different composition of the ... (copper-tin-lead ratio)... was used intentionally to create specific polychrome effects on some details.... The bulging ematoma (sp?) under the right eye has... a very low tin content and is quite different from the main casting alloy." When you look at the photograph of the Boxer (Fig. 3) the variations in the colour of his body gives the vivid impression of bruising. It's a remarkable



**Figure 1: The Sceptres and the lance heads, in the distant second case.**



**Figure 2: Artist's Representation of the Emperor's Sceptres.**



**Figure 3: The Boxer.**

piece and evocative of a difficult life in a different world.

The Museo Archeologico in Naples is right downtown and my driver (who had never been to downtown Naples!) said he couldn't leave the car for fear of vandalism, so he circled the building while I visited. The building itself is spectacular, taking up an entire city block; it's massive, with interior gardens and display galleries with vaulted frescoed ceilings. The artifacts, mosaics and frescoes from Pompeii are on display, well only some choice objects, as I would assume that thousands are in storage. Several of the artifacts from this museum were borrowed for the Pompeii exhibition that was at the ROM and is currently at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art. I'll talk about two artifacts from this museum, one small and spectacular vase from



**Figure 4: The Blue Vase**

Pompeii and a large, dramatic sculpture from Rome. The Blue Vase was found in Pompeii (Figure 4) and is a cameo glass vase in the shape of an amphora. It's not very big - 33 cm tall - and the exterior design consists of putti gathering grapes and other scenes of wine merriment. The rarity of the vase is in the difficulty of its manufacture. Cameo glass artifacts are incredibly complex to make and because they are glass, they break easily and are therefore incredibly rare. (Even broken fragments of cameo glass are significant). One other well-known cameo glass artifact is the Portland Vase in the British Museum. The making of cameo glass seems to have occurred between BC 30 and 60 AD in Rome. What does the production involve? The glass is blown and shaped and different colours of glass are layered one on another. The Blue vase had the white as the exterior layer and the blue underlay the white. The white was then delicately and carefully carved and chiseled away to create the elaborate raised motifs and designs on the vase, exposing the blue. Even in the days of Pompeii and following times, these vases were highly coveted. Apparently this is considered the most valuable artifact in the collections of the Naples museum. From a distance it looks unassuming: only when you are close can you see the artistic and technical opulence of the piece. Stunning, breathtaking, are all words that can be used to describe this artifact.

Pompeii and a large, dramatic sculpture from Rome.

Now for an object of a very different scale, the Farnese Bull, a sculpture in marble, some 3.7 m tall and 24,000kg (Figure 5). This is the largest sculpture from a single piece of marble in the world. Thought to have been made in Rhodes ca. 222-235 AD and transported to Rome. It was "rediscovered" in 1545 and displayed in the Farnese palace by Pope Paul III. The dramatic and life-sized figures depict Antiope's two sons tying Dirce (Antiope's Aunt) to a bull to punish her for killing their mother. The realism of this is astounding. The only problem is that it is raised on a very large plinth and you have to look up at it, I would have preferred to have seen it at ground level. The sheer size and weight of it makes me ponder the difficulty of moving it in antiquity by sea and land until its present resting place.

That's all, ancient Rome and Naples in four objects! I could have written about more, many more, but for *Arch Notes*, just a short note is perfectly tantalizing!

All photos by Mima Kapches.



**Figure 5: The Farnese Bull**



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