



# ARCHAEOLOGICAL LEATHER GROUP NEWSLETTER

No. 29 March 2009

## Editor's note

Welcome to this first newsletter of 2009 and greetings to all members, old and new. You will find all the details here of the forthcoming visit to Cambridge in May as well as Angela Karsten's very vivid account of last September's trip to Dublin. We have further reports from André Veldmeijer on new studies in progress on a range of Egyptian finds. I can report that the next issue is beginning to take shape too, with contributions on Iberian riding saddles and on a concealed footwear find in a 19th century mill. All other contributions will, it should go without saying, be most welcome! They should reach me, where possible, by the middle of August. Thanks.

*Sue Winterbottom*

## Committee Business

### 16th Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM will be held at Cambridge during our visit to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, which you can read about below. The meeting is scheduled for **Friday, 15 May at 2:00pm**.

### Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Acceptance of the Minutes of the previous AGM
3. Matters arising
4. Chair's Report
5. Treasurer's Report
6. Editor's Report
7. Committee Election, or result of postal ballot (held if more than one nomination is received for any post).

*Nominations are invited for the following Committee positions: Chair, Secretary, Meetings Co-ordinator and one Ordinary Member. Nominations should include the signatures of the proposer seconder and the nominee, by Monday 20 April please, to the Secretary, Diana Friendship-Taylor (see contact details on the final page).*

8. Any other business

## Forthcoming events

### ALG Spring Meeting, 2009

**Visit to Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology**

**Friday 15 May 2009, from 10:30 a.m.**

#### *How to get there*

Cambridge is easy to get to by road, rail or air; just 50 minutes from central London and 20 minutes from London Stansted Airport. The Museum is located on Downing Street, in the centre of Cambridge, about ten minutes walk from the bus station or 20 minutes from the railway station. Enter through the archway opposite Corn Exchange Street, turn right and the entrance of the Museum is in the corner. Note that it is quite well-hidden, both from Downing Street and within the courtyard. A location map is on page 3 and the museum's telephone number is 01223 33516.

#### — Draft Programme —

*10:30am* meet for coffee at the café on Pembroke Street (an extension of Downing Street about 100 metres from the MAA courtyard entrance). The café is called Trockel, Ulman & Freunde, has window-boxes of bright plastic flowers and is on the

corner of Free School Lane.

*11:00am* Meet at Front Desk on entry to Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. We will start with a tour of objects and exhibitions on display.

*12:00pm* We go behind the scenes to view objects of leather-related interest with the curator.

*1:00-2:00pm* Lunch

2.00-2.30pm ALG AGM in room provided for the purpose.

*2:30-3:30* Seminar with undergraduate students: suggested topics Medieval leather boxes, John Cherry; crocodile armour B Wills; tanning processes Roy Thomson.

*3:30-5:00pm* Opportunity to visit the Fitzwilliam Museum.

For those who plan to spend the Friday night in Cambridge, we will arrange to dine together at a local restaurant.

### ***Exhibition at the MAA:***

Opening in March 2009, **Assembling Bodies: Art, Science & Imagination** -

- Presenting insights from anthropology, archaeology, history, classics, bio-medical research and artistic practice, the exhibition brings together an assembly of bodies from different times and places. It attempts both to define and challenge pre-conceived notions about the human body, examining ways that bodies are constructed, known and transformed in various historical, cross-cultural and disciplinary contexts. It invites visitors to explore various technologies through which different bodies are known and made visible.

### ***The Fitzwilliam Museum***

The Fitzwilliam Museum is ten minutes walk from MAA and houses a collection of international importance. The collections are arranged in 30 galleries on two main levels. These divide roughly into paintings, drawings, sculpture and furniture on the first floor and applied arts and antiquities on the ground floor.

Three temporary exhibitions will be showing at the Fitzwilliam:

**The Immortal Stone** - Chinese jades

from the Neolithic period to the twentieth century.

**Changing faces** - Anthony Van Dyck as an etcher.

**Kachôfugetsu** - the natural world in Japanese prints.

Of interest to leather people is, in the ancient Egyptian gallery, two pairs of shoes: one (no. 41) a pair of child's shoes with incised (or is it stamped?) designs dated 500-700AD and a pair of model sandals from a tomb (no. 42) dated 30BC to 200AD.

### ***If you want to stay the weekend in Cambridge:***

Cambridge has a lot to offer; see the website <http://www.visitcambridge.org>

There are a wide range of other museums worth a visit. The Sedgwick Museum of Earth Sciences is also on the Downing Site; it has specimens with fossilised fish-skin and fishscales which may be of interest. Within a few minutes walk are also the Museum of Zoology and the Whipple Museum of the History of Science. I've not researched these with leather in mind but do not doubt they will repay investigation.

You might enjoy a recent curiosity, the fabulously sinister "Grasshopper Clock" on the corner of Corpus' Taylor Library. Unveiled to the public in September 2008, this extraordinary feat of new technology now stands facing onto King's Parade; its shining, 24-carat gold dial and gruesome time-keeper. If you wait as the hour approaches, you can see exactly why the unusual crowning glory of the piece – the beastly metal grasshopper – is named the "Chronophage", literally meaning "Time-Eater". The blinking creature rocks open-jawed atop its golden dial, celebrating the devouring of another hour, while the clock strikes with an ominous clonk of a chain dropping into a hidden wooden coffin.

Barbara Wills

## **Autumn Meeting, 2009**

A visit to Vindolanda, Carlisle and other sites in the Hadrian's Wall area is planned for the second weekend in October

(Thursday 8th - Monday 12th or Friday 9th - Tuesday 13th). If you are interested in coming along please get in touch with Diana Friendship-Taylor, who is working out an itinerary (see final page for contact details). More details will be circulated to members by email as arrangements progress and posted on the Group's website. Diana is looking into the possibility of block-booking accommodation for members at the Gilsland Spa hotel as there are race meetings at Hexham around those dates and hotel and guest house availability may be limited. So if you *are* thinking of coming, please do contact Diana as soon as possible so that she will have firm numbers to work with and can let you have the latest information about dates and accommodation choices.

### Review of the ALG visit to Dublin, 24-28 September 2008

by Angela Karsten, English Heritage

I only recently joined the Archaeological Leather Group and took the visit to Dublin as an opportunity to not only meet fellow members, but also to see some amazing finds.

The trip to the National Museum of Ireland in Dublin took place late September; it consisted of a two-day programme of leather-related visits followed by a weekend to see archaeological sites or visit areas of local interest. The group spent most of its time at Collins Barracks, where the National Museum of Ireland (Decorative Arts and History) and the Conservation Department is based. The Friday afternoon was spent with the National Museum of Ireland's stunning archaeological displays at Kildare Street.

We were shown around the Fine Arts Gallery by Caomhán Mac Con Iomaire, Educational Tour Guide, who pointed out some of the more fascinating objects on display (that does not mean the objects we didn't talk about were not interesting) and was very happy to answer questions. The object I most vividly remember was a 'sliotar' that is used for the game hurling. The little



Location of the MAA, Cambridge

ball is made of a core of cork and horse hair. Legend has it that a girl would weave a strand of her own hair into the sliotar and then present it to her sweetheart. The sliotar is nowadays made of a cork core and leather cover.

The object I was most eager to see was the recently discovered Fadden More Psalter; a book of psalms found in a bog. And judging by all the questions that were asked and the time we spent with John Gillis, who was in the process of conservation, I was not alone in my interest. John gave us a very comprehensive and honest account on the work currently carried out on the Psalter. He had consulted widely, investigated the structure, recorded it in detail, tested dewatering treatments for the parchment and chose an evidently successful procedure. The in depth information on the investigations and findings were accompanied by a chance to examine the Psalter during different stages of conservation.

We were also given the opportunity to ex-

amine the leather cover close up and have a go at identifying the material the buttons on the cover were made of. Warts on cattle skin and larvae of the warble fly that live under cattle skin and bore their way out were just a few things I learnt about that day. Another mind-boggling part of the Psalter was an as yet unidentified skin material the Psalter appeared to be wrapped in. Again, we were all given the chance to have a close look at it and have a brain storming session on what sort of material it could be. The group were in their element, each contributing ideas from their own areas of experience; nothing excites them more than a mystery. The Fadden More Psalter is a very fascinating find not least because it is an everyday working Psalter, not the Book of Kells, and more interesting information can be expected from it in the future.

We then went on to see a small fraction of the approximately 6000 pieces of Viking Leather excavated in Dublin from 1961 – 1982. Piera Weir, Assistant Keeper, and Jennifer Mulrooney, Conservator, gave us an introduction on the analysis and interpretation work that is planned, which also involves some conservation and re-conservation of leather finds. I think it was quite unusual for most of us to see so much hair/ fur on some of the leather items. Piera and Jennifer showed us some very beautiful and unusual leather artefacts; many of them yet unidentified. I am very much looking forward to future publications of these truly unique leather finds.

The next day was dedicated to bog bodies. Rolly Read, Head of Conservation, gave us a very graphic talk on two recently discovered bog bodies, their examination and conservation. He did ask us in the beginning whether we had a weak stomach, we all shook our heads saying we are leather people and we can cope with it. But when I looked around there was the odd crunched up face here and there. Rolly did not spare us any of the gruesome details! We continued with looking at bog bodies in the studio and it was quite a privilege to be allowed so close up and no showcase between you and the bog body. Another fascinating



We get a chance to look at the Fadden More



Rolly Read shows us the bog butter

analysis result was the hair gel that had been used by the smaller of the two bog people showed the presence of an imported pine resin.

Another thing I had not come across before was bog butter. Bog butter is probably an offering of butter that can be found in a bog, either in a wooden container or wrapped in a cloth like material that has not survived. It was really very strange to see such old butter and experience the unusual smell of it.

After this we went to view the bodies on display at the National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street. The bodies were displayed sensitively, screened from the other gallery displays. We got excited too by the Iron Age fur leather cloak. We were given a tour in both English and French, a boon to our francophone members. The breadth, depth and complexity of the collection and displays require far more time than we had available.

This trip was most inspiring and stimulating. I felt very privileged to be given access to these unusual finds. The staff at the National Museum of Ireland made us welcome and looked after us very well. It was encouraging to be given such an honest account of the conservation work carried out by the Conservation Department. I hope that more conservators will share their experience in that way in the future.

My thanks to Barbara Wills for assistance in putting this review together and to Claudia Koehler of the National Museum, Dublin for the use of her photos.

*[This review appeared in the January 2009 issue of ICON News. It can also be found on the ALG website in the Meetings section, where there are more photos in colour]*

## **The Leatherwork from Deir el-Bachit: Preliminary Report<sup>1</sup>**

by André J. Veldmeijer

### **Introduction**

In the five years of excavation of the Coptic monastery of Deir el-Bachit on the west bank of the Nile at Thebes (Burkard & Mackensen 2003; Burkard *et al.* 2003; Eichner 2005)<sup>2</sup> a large quantity of leatherwork has been recovered. During the 2008 season all the leather finds were catalogued, studied and photographed. The focus of the work was the diagnostic pieces, concentrating in particular on manufacturing technology. Full analysis will take some time but it is nevertheless possible to present a limited preliminary report; the final publication will include a fully illustrated catalogue of all catalogued finds.

### **Leather research in Egypt**

Interest in leatherwork is increasing in Egyptian archaeology, having been neglected until about five years ago. Our knowledge is still limited, however, even regarding the Roman and Christian leatherwork which are among the best studied (for an overview on studies, see van Driel-Murray 2000 and, more recently, Veldmeijer 2008.) This, together with the nature of the site (a relatively closed community of limited life span and the first monastery excavated systematically) emphasizes the importance of the study of Deir el-Bachit's leather. Furthermore the author has worked at other sites producing material of similar age (Amarna's Kom el Nana) as well as from shortly before (Elephantine) and after (Qasr Ibrim) the occupation of the monastery, so good comparisons are possible.

### **The finds**

Two categories of objects are most abundant and constitute the majority of finds: fragments originating from book covers and footwear.

#### *Book covers*

The book covers are mostly decorated although comparable, undecorated leather has been identified as well. The decoration consists of impressed motifs, the majority

of which are lines within which other motifs are applied (mainly circles, but in some cases also crosses). Fortunately, good examples of book covers exist from elsewhere, which allows close comparison both of decoration and technology.

#### *Footwear*

Only two more or less complete sandals have been identified; all other entries in this category are fragments, most of which show very extensive repair which prohibits identification of the original sandal type. In addition there are numerous decorative elements, originating from sandal strap complexes. The footwear, besides being analysed within the excavation's theoretical framework, will be analysed within the framework of the Ancient Egyptian Footwear Project. The AEFPP is a multidisciplinary research project into ancient Egyptian footwear from Predynastic to Coptic times. The project aims to develop a footwear typology following the work of Montembault (2000) and Goubitz *et al* (2001) but based on a larger number of examples than Montembault's and also including date and distribution as diagnostic characteristics. Leguilloux (2006) has established a typology based on the objects from Didymoi but limited to that site and its period. For the moment Montembault's typology will be used here with a concordance to that of Leguilloux. Neither of those typologies uses the shape of the sole as a characteristic although Leguilloux (98-101) recognises the distribution of shapes in time.

The majority of the recognisable sandals fall in Montembault's category 'Class I, Type B, Variant 2' (Leguilloux 2b). Sandals I, B, 2 are characterised by their strap complex and in particular the construction of the back strap. A pre-strap, rectangular, is pulled through two slits (one at each side of the sandal) in the insole. The ends of the pre-strap have one or more slits (usually two or three) to which the back/heel straps are hitched. The front strap is pulled through two slits in the insole which are positioned one behind the other; it is thus sandwiched between the insole and treadsole and does not show at the ventral surface of the treadsole.

DB 0879 (Fig. 1) is the most complete example and consists of an insole and treadsole, the latter of which protrudes beyond the insole on all sides. The sandal has a rounded heel and distinctly constricted waist. From here, the width increases rapidly; the lateral edge curves rather abruptly towards the big toe whereas the curvature of the medial edge is gentler. Consequently, the sole is swayed and meant for the right foot. The soles are sewn along the perimeter with leather thong running stitches, which are widely but evenly spaced. Three additional longitudinal rows of leather thong running stitches are placed within the perimeter stitching. The dorsal surface of the insole shows impressed decoration of geometrical motifs. A repair is visible between the two slits for reception of the front strap. An incomplete sandal, DB 3389, is of comparable construction.

DB 1236 (Fig. 2) is the back three quarters of a small sandal. The heel is rounded and the waist is slightly constricted. Towards the front the width increases slightly and apparently on both sides; unfortunately the incomplete condition does not allow reconstruction of the exact shape. It is clear, however, that this differed distinctly from DB 0879. Originally there was at least one additional sole layer, but whether it was a complete sole or limited to the heel area is uncertain. It would have sandwiched the pre-strap running underneath the surviving layer. This pre-strap has rounded ends and is equipped with three longitudinal slits for the attachment of the back/heel strap, which is now lost. The dorsal surface of the insole is without decoration. Usually, the pre-straps are relatively narrow. In DB 2031, however, which is a heel part and comparable in shape to DB 1236, the pre-strap is relatively wide. The dorsal surface of this insole (stitches along the perimeter suggests there was at least one other sole layer) is decorated with impressed and painted(?) geometrical motifs.

Yet another shape within this group of sandals is DB 1261 (Fig. 3). The heel is rounded and the waist is not constricted: towards the front the width increases distinctly and continuously. The front itself is



Fig.1 Sandal DB 0879 Scale 5cm

square cut, while the slits for the pre-strap are about halfway along the present length rather than towards the back. Stitching around the perimeter as well as one row longitudinally down the centre suggests at least one other sole layer. The strange shape of the sandal, together with two cuts in the front edge and the forward position of the slits for the pre-straps suggests that it may be a piece cut from a larger sandal.

The identification of coiled decorative elements of straps as well as isolated fragments of straps, suggests at least two other

'classes' of sandals. One substantial piece of a shoe's upper (DB 3708) has been recorded. Unfortunately, the fragment is folded several times due to which its study is severely hindered; future work will focus on the identification of this find.

#### *Non-diagnostic finds*

The non-diagnostic material has been inventoried, recording the context, quantity and kind of material (mainly offcuts and waste with a lesser quantity of 'other', i.e. unidentifiable fragments). The large numbers of offcuts and waste clearly suggests that some manufacturing of leather objects was done in the monastery. This need not imply that skin processing (*i.e.* slaughtering of the animal, depilating the skin, curing/tanning etc.) was done there too.

#### **Discussion**

It is argued that a refinement of the typology is needed on the basis of the shape of the sole, the number of sole layers and their method of attachment to each other, the presence/absence of decoration and the construction of the pre-strap. This is in addition to the above-mentioned characteristics of date and distribution. The Deir el-Bachit assemblage is important for the overall typology, due to the fact that it comes from a stratified context and is limited in time and space. It fills a gap be-



Fig.2 Sandal DB 1236 Scale 5cm



Fig.3 Sandal DB 1261 Scale 5cm

tween the earlier finds from Elephantine and has some overlap with finds from Qasr Ibrim. We are fortunate that there are many finds from Christian layers in Egypt; although most have not been published, the author has studied the footwear in several collections, which allow comparisons with the Deir el-Bachit material.

The study of wear teaches us about the use of a leather object but also about the relative wealth of a society, for which the degree of repair is one indication, the presence/absence of more expensive shoes another. The high degree of repair and the virtual absence of closed shoes here both point to a poor population.

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#### **Acknowledgements**

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Photographs by E. Endenburg. Courtesy of

Projekt Deir el-Bachit, Institut für Ägyptologie an der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

#### **Notes**

1. This report is an abbreviated version of the report published in *Antiquo Oriente* 6.
2. See [http://www.dainst.org/index\\_55\\_en.html](http://www.dainst.org/index_55_en.html)

#### **Cited literature**

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## Correspondence

Elizabeth Peacock writes:

In ALG Newsletter 28 (September 2008) June Swann reviewed the book *X-radiography of Textiles, Dress and Related Objects* by Sonia O'Connor and Mary M. Brooks (2007). She discusses just one article, that by Howard and Holmes. I would like to draw the ALG Newsletter readership to another article in the volume, which, in fact, is about archaeological leather. It is entitled: 'The contribution of X-radiography to the conservation and study of textile/leather composite archaeological footwear recovered from the Norwegian Arctic', by myself. It is not clear why June omitted this.

Josh Silva from Portsmouth, Virginia, USA wrote asking for information about a shoe he found while hunting for bottles in an 18th-19th century creek bed (see photo below). After studying four of his photos, June Swann has identified it as a woman's 1870-1885 barette boot with straps across the front. According to Josh the find spot was in a low-lying swampy area of Portsmouth that was used as a fort during the Revolutionary War, when the British bombarded the city. A century later, housing was built around the area and it became a dumping ground for all kinds of refuse.



## Recent publications and other items of interest

**Marquita Volken, 'The water bag of Roman soldiers', Journal of Roman Archaeology 21 (2008), 264-274**

An important article for students of Roman military equipment and the products of leather-working throughout the Empire. She puts forward the view that the handles, spouts and associated seam fragments found at Egyptian sites such as Mons Claudianus, Berenike and Didymoi are the remains of standard-issue water bags carried by legionaries and that these can be identified in scenes on Trajan's Column. In the past the pieces of equipment shown in these scenes have been variously interpreted as satchels, tool bags and clothing bags.

**André Veldmeijer and Erno Endenburg, 'Footwear from Qasr Ibrim', Egyptian Archaeology, Bulletin of the Egypt Exploration Society, 33 (Autumn 2008), 18-20**

A preliminary report, beautifully illustrated, which describes footwear from Roman, early Christian and Ottoman levels. This includes leather shoes, wooden pattens and sandals made from basketry and palm leaves/fibres.

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Barbara Wills has passed on a link to the **Furskin Identification** website:

<http://www.furskin.cz/index.htm>

This is an online project aimed to assist in the identification of fur skin based on small samples of material. It uses a specially written computer algorithm together with a library of electron-microscope figures.

**Marcus Klek** has sent the address of his new website: <http://www.palaeotechnik.de/>

which is devoted to experimental work with prehistoric technologies, in particular tanning.

His recent book in English, **Native American Buffalo Robes - A Study of their Role in Plains Indian Societies and a**

**Practical Guide to Traditional Tanning Techniques** (2008) is available from the BoD website: <http://www.bod.de/>

**Franklin Pereira**, in Portugal, has sent the following details of two books of which he is the author and which were published in February this year by Editora Prefácio (Rua Bernardo Lima, 8 A, 1150-076, Lisbon):

**Ofícios do couro na Lisboa medieval** (Leather trades in medieval Lisbon) uses documentary evidence from the period following the reconquest of Lisbon from the Moors in 1149. The initial chapter deals with the tanning process, the trade of sumac and tree bark and the leather business; a full chapter is dedicated to shoemaking where some styles and ways of working still followed Moorish methods. Saddlery and gilt leather provide the next chapters; another one is dedicated to the *correeiros* guild, whose trade involved the making of different bags, sheaths, full leather shields, and carved cowhide for upholstery; small trades and other artefacts (fur garments, gloves, bookbinding, leggings, leather bottles, falconry and donkey saddles) are taken into account in the last chapter. There is an extensive bibliography. The book costs 12 €

**Um document da Inquisição de Lisboa, de 1610** (A document of the Inquisition of Lisbon, dated 1610) deals with the trial of Lourenço da Costa, a *mudéjar* originally born in Seville and bought as a slave when he was a boy of 11 by Jerónimo Fernandes, a Lisbon gilt leather maker, and taken to Portugal. At 33 years old he made some angry remarks against the Christian religion on his release from jail when he was unwilling to return to his owner who, he said, beat him and kept him in chains. A process of Inquisition started which lasted almost a year. A short history of gilt leather in Portugal is also included. A shorter version of the trial was published in the UK's Tools and Trades History Society *Newsletter* 96 (Spring 2007)pp. 24-27. The book costs 9 €

Franklin Pereira's earlier publications cover a wide range of subjects relevant to the leather trades in Spain and Portugal as well

as further afield. A list is currently on the ALG website:

<http://www.archleathgrp.org.uk/biblio/FP.pdf>

and if you need further information please email [frankleather@yahoo.com](mailto:frankleather@yahoo.com)

## Book reviews by June Swann

A number of significant books on shoes have emerged since my last reviews. The most pleasant surprise, as it seemed impossible to hope it would be published in full, was the Canadian Red Bay report on shoes presumed from the wreck of the 'San Juan' sunk in 1565. Edited by Robert Grenier, Marc-André & Willis Stevens *The Underwater Archaeology of Red Bay*, with sub-title, 'Basque ship-building and whaling in the 16<sup>th</sup> century', Parks Canada 2007 hardback ISBN 978-0-660-19652-7, 5 volumes in English Cat. no. R62-389-2007E, with the French edition the same except ending in 2007F, 1572 pages, the series not sold separately. Try to persuade your local big or university libraries to obtain these volumes, which will remain a standard reference for this decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century for many years to come. Available from Publishing & Depository Services, PWGSC, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0S5; internet: [www.publications.gc.ca/](http://www.publications.gc.ca/)

Each volume includes detailed Contents for the whole series, but no mention of an index. Vol. 1: Underwater Archaeology, Vol.3: The 24m Hull, Vol.4: Rigging, Vessel use & related studies, Vol.5: Appendices, Glossary & Bibliography, with Vol. 2: Material Culture, including p.II-135 – II-195 on the Footwear by Stephen Davis, who has been working on it since excavation. An 11 ½ page introduction describes the various types of shoes, with drawings of sections, seams, patterns, photographs of complete examples, and also a contemporary oil painting and drawing. The types are: turnshoes, welted, ankle shoes, and boots, cut down from something similar to those from the English 'Mary Rose' sunk 1545; ending with comments on fashionable footwear for off-duty wear. There is information too on

Spanish and Basque guild regulations, noting where surviving shoes diverge from the rules. The remaining pages comprise the full catalogue, with line drawings of the significant pieces and reconstructions of the shoes. It is good to see so many obviously comprising sailors' pumps (the turnshoes), as well as sturdier footwear for the heavy work dealing with whales ashore. I hope it will encourage something similar for the 'Mary Rose'.

Reaching to the same period is a very useful book drawing together all the footwear excavated in Turku, the capital of Finland. Janne Harjula *Before the Heels, footwear and shoemaking in Turku in the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the Early Modern Period*, Turku 2008 ISBN 978-951-96801-7-0, 223 page paperback in English, with local maps, and distribution maps for similar finds from northern Europe, drawings and colour photographs of the inevitably brown finds. As you might guess from the title, the English is sometimes clumsy, but we are very grateful it may thus reach a wider audience. The first 114 pages cover the footwear by type, using Goubitz' rather restrictive types and terminology, each section with a summary, for those too busy for detail. A short chapter looks for differences between certain parts of the city. The next looks at sizes and sexes of different types to show choices for men, women and children, with finally the changing fashions. The second half deals with shoemaking, the patterns, accessories: laces, buttons (here sadly following other non-shoemakers in calling them toggles), buckles, straps.

Documentary evidence includes shoemaking, tanning and other leather working, and the surviving evidence for each. There are pages on Sources and an extensive Bibliography, which everyone dealing with these periods will appreciate, followed by reference numbers for the finds, an appendix on threads used, Glossary and Finnish terms. This will be a standard reference for Scandinavia and northern Europe, at least until more countries do something similar for their own areas. Inevitably there are variations in types of footwear required for

different countries and their differing conditions. It seems incredible that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we are still only beginning to consider this.

A short article on medieval overshoes is useful: Marquita and Serge Volken, 'Lopen op Trippen' in *Westerheem* Netherlands year 46 no.5, 1997 p.12-18; the subtitle is 'The significance of the experiment'. Well illustrated with Continental examples.

Another book deals with footwear from the Man from the Ice [another revised construction showing the opanke sole, though whether the 'vamp' really was an integral part of the original or a later addition remains questionable], through ancient Roman, medieval from Paderborn, to 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Salvatore Ferragamo, to modern youth culture.

The book is **Schuhtick** (shoe mania), edited by Hartmut Roder, 212 page hardback, many B&W and colour photographs, Mainz am Rhein 2008 ISBN 978-3-8053-3938-4. Produced in connection with an exhibition organised by 3 German museums: LWL-Museum für Archäologie in Herne, Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen Mannheim and Überseemuseum Bremen. Contributions from some 22 authors including from the Offenbach Shoe Museum and the Ferragamo Museum, but mostly from Germany. A number deal with connotations: magic, superstitions, fetish, popular culture, with the editor on Lloyd Shoes (Germany) and the decline of the shoe industry in recent years. The statistics are terrifying, with one Chinese shoe town's population growing in 20 years from 50,000 in 1980 to 7 million in 2000. There are also some 20<sup>th</sup> century advertisements, a note on polishing, and a 21 word glossary, which barely touches basics (good to see that 'chopine' is given for the 1533 wedding shoes of Katherina de Medici, which is more likely than the usual translation as heeled). It may be that the curious mixture makes sense in the Exhibition, said to be shown at all 3 museums during 2009, but the relevant dates are not listed. The first opened in Herne 6 December 2008, with no closing date given.

### Please, Museums, don't do this to us!

The Národní Muzeum, Prague produced a 60 page booklet **Stopy lidí** (Human Traces, a walk from prehistory to the moon) in connection with the exhibition of the same title November 2007- 30 June 2008. With items borrowed from the Zlín Shoe Museum, elsewhere in Czech Republic and abroad, it showed the story of man's expansion over the earth, the development of the upright posture and importance of feet, and the footwear encountered. In Czech and English, the many illustrations include Tanzania footprints from 3.7 million years ago, ancient Egypt, the inevitable Chinese bound feet and footwear, Native American, India, Korea, Japan, Maya, Nigeria, Tunisia, 15<sup>th</sup> century Bohemia and more recent shoes and souvenirs. You might try [www.stopylidi.cz](http://www.stopylidi.cz)

A second edition of **Stepping Out, three centuries of shoes** by Louise Mitchell, Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney, Australia 95 page paperback 2008 ISBN 979 1 86317 124 3; has considerably more photographs of shoes in the collection and related illustrations than the first. There is a useful description of shoes illustrated, many from the Joseph Box, London collection, which slipped away at the beginning of the Second World War, with transcriptions of makers'/retailers' labels. p.26 has a good photograph of a c1570s fashionably slashed leather shoe excavated in London, but sadly captioned 'Greenland or Iceland 1830-60': both were photographed on the same day in 1997. Another rarity included is a 1761 coronation shoe. It ends with a good selection of contemporary shoes, some very lively designs from Australia.

### **Note on the possible relation between shoes and chariots**

by André J. Veldmeijer

In 1912 Howard Carter, famous for his later discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun, bought a piece of wood with attached leather from a dealer in Luxor, which he gave to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He posited that these were

chariot parts, coming from the tomb of Amenhotep III, as the colour and workmanship of the bindings of the purchased piece matched those found in that king's tomb. Preliminary examinations confirm that these fragments are part of a chariot's casing. Among the fragments is a roughly rectangular piece of red leather with large circular decoration in three layers: the outer edge of the patch is relatively wide and green; the inner, narrower edge is white and the centre is black. Although the object has not been fully studied yet (scheduled for August 2009), the measurements and construction (whip stitching at both long edges) equals those of so-called 'curled-toe ankle shoes' as seen in the Egyptian Museum (SR 5174/5175, see Veldmeijer, 2009). Parallels to these are not known from other and more complete remnants of leather chariot casings, e.g. from Tuthmosis IV's chariot or another one of unknown provenance housed in Cairo's Egyptian Museum, that is currently under study. The Cairo chariot is decorated with bands of partially overlapping (in stair-step fashion) strips of leather in different colour. Other motifs include zigzag patterns and icicles. Accordingly, the object in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is identified as part of the upper of a curled-toe ankle shoe.

There is increasing evidence that a chariot's casing, and associated quivers and bow cases were made as a single group, combining comparable manufacturing technology and decoration. The red curled-toe ankle shoes fit into this scheme on the basis of their use of colours. Although the combination of bright red and green is the most popular combination in leatherwork, there are several shoes that are comparable in manufacturing technology but have a very different distribution of the colours (predominantly green instead of red, for example) and other decoration as well (SR 5205 from Thebes, see Veldmeijer, 2009). This might indeed point to the possibility that a matching pair of shoes were made together with a chariot. Unfortunately, and curiously, scenes of shoe-making are never included in two dimensional leatherworking scenes. Unfortunately, two dimensional representations are not helpful as the feet

of the charioteer are never visible, and thus these cannot be used to advance this hypothesis.

If this reasoning is correct, it might be significant to reassess other Egyptian footwear studies as well, particularly that of Tutankhamun. Most of his chariots are elaborately decorated with inlay work rather than dressed with red-and-green leatherwork. His footwear is equally elaborately decorated with gold beadwork and, in one case, with inlays of gemstones. Would it be possible that these, the chariot and the footwear, were a matching pair too?

Only eight complete chariots are known, most (six) of which came from Tutankhamun's tomb. Another chariot was found in the tomb of Yuya and Tjuiu, the great grand parents of Tutankhamun. One unprovenanced chariot (whose restoration leaves something to be desired, and thus renders it almost useless for comparison) is housed in the Florence Museum. Two dimensional art includes the manufacturing of chariots and their accompanying leatherwork and give much supporting information.

Research of leather is long overdue and if there is more material in collections, which might be the case, it has never been looked at. But the Ancient Egyptian Leatherwork Project has just begun and we hope to present you with an update that sheds some more light on the possible connection between footwear and chariots in due course.

My thanks to Salima Ikram for discussion and improving the English.

**Reference:**

Veldmeijer, A. J. (forthcoming) 2009, "Studies of ancient Egyptian footwear. Technological aspects. Part XV. Leather Curled-Toe Ankle Shoes", PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology

*Editor's note: readers will recall that an article about the curled-toed ankle shoes in the Cairo museum appeared in the last issue of this newsletter.*