

SIGMUND FREUD'S
COLLECTION
AN ARCHAEOLOGY
OF THE MIND



Front cover:

Edmund Engelman *The writing arrangement in Freud's study;
desk with antiques* 1938 Courtesy Thomas Engelman

Back cover:

Edmund Engelman *Entrance door to practice of Sigmund Freud,
Bergasse 19* 1938 Courtesy Thomas Engelman

SIGMUND FREUD'S COLLECTION AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE MIND

MONASH UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART | MUMA

GUEST CURATOR: DR JANINE BURKE

Monash University Museum of Art
5 September – 17 November 2007

The Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney
2 January - 30 March 2008

Developed by the Monash University Museum of Art, in
association with the Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney



Foreword

'The psychoanalyst, like the archaeologist, must uncover layer after layer of the patient's psyche, before coming to the deepest, most valuable treasures.'

Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud's Collection: an Archaeology of the Mind brings together objects from Sigmund Freud's personal collection of antiquities held in the Freud Museum, London. The artworks – which travel to Australia for the first time, and are presented alongside related film and documentary material, including Edmund Engelman's celebrated photographs and Anna Freud's home movies – offer a unique insight into Freud as collector, thinker and art connoisseur. They also reveal how Freud's study of art and antiquities influenced his theories of psychoanalysis.

Curated by Dr. Janine Burke, honorary professor in the School of English, Communications and Performance Studies at Monash, the exhibition follows publication of *The Gods of Freud: Sigmund Freud's Art Collection*, the author's book-length study of the Freud Collection and its role in Freud's life and work.

As Burke writes in her curatorial essay, 'The collection offers multiple readings: as the embodiment of his theories, as an investigation and a celebration of past cultures, as an exercise in aesthetic pleasure, as a memento of real and imaginary journeys, as a catalogue of desires, and as a self portrait.'

The selected works provide an overview of Freud's collection, and also offer insights into his revolutionary theories about sexuality and civilisation. Equally, the exhibition highlights Freud's interest in antiquity, and the burgeoning development of archaeology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which was historically commensurate with, and – according to Freud – metaphorically analogous to the development of psychoanalysis. Finally, a passion for collecting is embedded in these objects, bringing a sense of romance and humanity to our understanding of Freud.

Sigmund Freud's Collection: an Archaeology of the Mind was initiated by the Monash University Museum of Art, and developed in association with the Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney. We are especially grateful to the Freud Museum, London, and to Michael Molnar, Director, and Keith Davies, Librarian, for their assistance and support in the development of this significant project.

It has been a great pleasure to work with guest curator Janine Burke, whose intrepid and inspiring research and writing has brought life and insight to this hitherto under-appreciated aspect of Freud's life and thinking. We thank her for her generous and enthusiastic commitment to all

aspects of the project.

We would also like to express special thanks to Tom and Ralph Engelman for their permission to reproduce Edmund Engelman's legendary photographs of Freud's apartment at Bergasse 19 in Vienna in 1938, which provide a critical understanding of Freud's collection in situ, and are remarkable not only as historical documents but as photographs in their own right – as auratic traces of the life and work of one of the key thinkers of the twentieth century. We would also like to thank other lenders to the exhibition including the State Library of Victoria and the University of Sydney.

We are pleased to publish new texts on Freud's life and work, and thank the catalogue essayists for their compelling and insightful texts: leading psychoanalysts Oscar Zentner and María-Inés Rotmiller de Zentner examine Freud's relevance today; and Michael Turner, Senior Curator at the Nicholson Museum, explores the relationship of archaeology and myth to Freud's biography and final resting place.

We are especially pleased to acknowledge the Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney, as a partner in the development of the exhibition, without whom a project of this scope would not have been achieved. I would like to especially acknowledge David Ellis, Director, and Michael Turner, Senior Curator at the Nicholson Museum, for their and their colleagues' interest and contribution to the exhibition and publication.

At MUMA, many thanks are due to Dr. Kyla McFarlane, MUMA's Assistant Curator – Exhibitions, who has managed key aspects of the exhibition and catalogue, along with the entire MUMA staff who have embraced the project with great interest and enthusiasm.

We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of Sofia Marques, Sculpture Conservator, Victoria & Albert Museum, Alayne Alvis, Objects conservator, Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney, and Yanni Florence, designer of MUMA's publications.

The presentation of Freud's collection in the context of the university art museum emphasises Freud's role as one of the most prominent and influential thinkers to emerge in the twentieth century. His ideas, which are still hotly debated, have proved influential not only for psychoanalysis, psychology and psychiatric medicine, but in the wider cultural sphere, including cultural studies, literature and the visual arts. We hope that the exhibition will be of relevance to a range of academic contexts, and of special interest to all of us, as subjects of Freud's theories.

Max Delany
Director, MUMA

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The Shrine of the Dream Collector

Dr Janine Burke

I may say at once that I am no connoisseur in art, but simply a layman ... Nevertheless, works of art do exercise a powerful effect on me.

Sigmund Freud.¹

In the late 1890s, while writing *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud became an art collector, developing an obsession with antiquity, beauty, myth and archaeology that led him to amass a brilliant private museum of over two thousand statues, vases, reliefs, busts, fragments of papyrus, rings, precious stones and prints.

Despite Freud's modest assertion that he was 'simply a layman', his taste was precise and discerning, making his collection an intriguing catalogue of world civilisations where objects rare and sacred, useful and arcane, ravaged and lovely are on display: a great goddess of the Middle Bronze Age, delicate Babylonian seals, Egyptian funerary items, Greek Hellenistic statues, images of the Sphinx, erotic Roman charms and exquisitely carved Chinese jade.

The popular image of Freud as austere, remote and forbidding is contradicted by the collection, which reveals a very different personality: an impulsive, hedonistic spender, an informed and finicky aesthete, a tomb raider complicit in the often illegal trade in antiquities, a tourist who revelled in sensual, Mediterranean journeys, a generous fellow who lavished exquisite gifts on his family and friends, and a tough negotiator for a bargain. Though Freud prescribed the intense, inner journey of psychoanalysis for Vienna's bourgeoisie, his own therapy was shopping. Arranging choice items on his desk, Freud confessed to Jung, 'I must always have an object to love.'² His collection attracts multiple readings: as the embodiment of his theories, as an investigation and a celebration of past cultures, as an exercise in aesthetic pleasure, as a quest for excellence, as a memento of real and imaginary

journeys, as a catalogue of desires, and as a self-portrait.

Freud bought his first artworks in 1896, shortly after his father Jacob died.³ He was shaken by the event. 'In my inner self,' he reflected, 'I now feel quite uprooted.'⁴ Jacob's death provoked a crisis during which Freud plunged into his own unconscious, the underground recesses of his buried self. *The Interpretation of Dreams* was the result of that painful and exhilarating journey of self-analysis, the foundation stone of his life's work. For Freud, mourning and art were aligned at this crucial transition.

Patients were taken by surprise the first time they were ushered into his rooms at Berggasse 19. Sergei Pankejeff felt he was not in a doctor's office but an archaeologist's study, surrounded by 'all kinds of statuettes and other unusual objects, which even the layman recognised as archaeological finds from ancient Egypt.'⁵ A Russian aristocrat, Pankejeff had recounted to Freud his dream about a tree filled with white wolves. Writing about the case, Freud gave Pankejeff the pseudonym of the Wolf Man. To Pankejeff the artworks from 'long-vanished epochs' created a sense of sanctuary, a 'feeling of sacred peace and quiet ... Everything here contributed to one's feeling of leaving the haste of modern life behind, of being sheltered from one's daily cares.'⁶ Edmund Engelman's precise and atmospheric photographs, taken in 1938, provide a unique record where Freud's collection can be observed *in situ* and where the sensations that Pankejeff registered are evoked.

Freud built his collection during the grand era of archaeological discoveries. His hero was Heinrich Schliemann, the buccaneering amateur, who unearthed the site of Troy in 1871. In 1900, Arthur Evans began excavating the Palace of Minos at Knossos on Crete; twenty-two years later Howard Carter discovered Tutankhamen's tomb. Freud was eager to compare the process of psychoanalysis to archaeology, telling Pankejeff, 'the psychoanalyst, like the archaeologist, must



Edmund Engelman
Portrait of Sigmund Freud at desk with antiques 1938
Courtesy Thomas Engelman

uncover layer after layer of the patient's psyche, before coming to the deepest, most valuable treasures.¹⁶

Freud was justifiably proud of his collection. He protested when his friend Stefan Zweig, the prolific Viennese writer, neglected to mention it in an essay on Freud: 'I have sacrificed a great deal for my collection of Greek, Roman and Egyptian antiquities [and I] have actually read more archaeology than psychology.'¹⁷ In a frantic schedule that involved teaching at the University of Vienna, running a private practice, writing and translating, developing a network of international connections, travel and the demands of a large family, Freud also made the time to haunt antiquities shops in Vienna, Berlin, Athens and Rome.

Home with a new prize, Freud would bring it with him to the dinner table, 'placing it in front of him as a companion during the meal.'¹⁸ Nor could he bear to be parted from the collection, even on holidays. Finishing 'the dream book' in the mountains near Berchtesgaden in 1899, Freud told a friend he was accompanied by '(my) old and grubby gods ... [who] take part in the work as paperweights for my manuscripts.'¹⁹ As time went by, travelling with the gods became an imperative. During the 1930s, most of the collection would be packed by his wife Martha and Paula Fichtl, the maid, and transported to his summer residences near Vienna.

In his study, Freud created a shrine to antiquity, a private gallery kept aloof from the mundane world: none of his artworks was permitted anywhere else in the apartment he shared with Martha, their six children and Minna Bernays, Martha's sister. Among his family, it seems only Anna Freud, his youngest daughter and professional heir, shared her father's taste, selecting Egyptian and Roman items to stand on her desk. While the apartment's decor was comfortable, bourgeois and unremarkable, Freud's study was opulent, exotic and idiosyncratic.

It was a contradiction that typified Freud.

Describing himself as 'a godless Jew', his writings dismiss the consolations of religion yet he was enthralled by magical and sacred objects. Regarding the occult, Freud wrote 'if I were at the beginning rather than at the end of a scientific career ... I might possibly choose just this field of research, in spite of all difficulties.'¹⁰ Freud relished such dichotomies and proposed dualistic theories about human behaviour and culture. Eros (the libido) struggled against the death drive. Statues of Eros, the god of love and desire, are well represented in Freud's collection. Though Freud developed revolutionary theories about powerful, instinctual sexual urges that determined the destiny both of civilisation and the individual, he was a traditionalist regarding women's role and cynical about social change.

Freud loathed modern art. The Surrealists insisted Freud was their patron saint while he regarded them as 'complete fools.' But when Salvador Dali visited Freud in 1938 and sketched his portrait, he was impressed by 'the young Spaniard ... with his candid fanatical eyes and his undeniable technical mastery.'¹¹

For Freud, the great enterprise of psychoanalysis and his art collection developed simultaneously, a symbiotic, nourishing relationship, each informing and enriching the other. Freud was never a wealthy man. In his early years of collecting, he had a growing family, as well as an extended family who often required financial assistance. Nor was his practice, given his controversial theories, thriving. After the first world war, it was often patients from England and America who were making their way to Berggasse 19, not the Viennese.

Freud did not allow privation to limit his compulsion to be surrounded by beautiful things. He was the collector par excellence. Enough was never enough. 'The taste for collecting', writes Maurice Rheims, 'is like a game played with utter passion.'¹² Collecting can also be an aggressive and compulsive urge, privileging competition and possession, the need to be first, to snatch the

prize from beneath a rival's nose. Freud was a combative individual, as his long, sustained battle to secure the credibility of psychoanalysis shows. 'I am by nature nothing but a conquistador', he declared, 'an adventurer, if you wish to translate the term, with all the inquisitiveness, daring and tenacity capable of such a man.'¹³ His collection was also a retreat, a world designed for himself alone, a realm that Baudrillard designated a 'personal microcosm.'¹⁴

Freud did not analyse his reasons for collecting. Nor did he, in a long and productive publishing career, write more than a few sentences at a time about his 'old and grubby gods.' Like Freud's other intriguing omissions regarding his mother, his sexuality and his marriage, his obsession for collecting also involved love, desire, pleasure and possession. The collection highlights his contradictory attitude towards women. Freud was surrounded by women in his home, his practice and his professional life, as well as in the collection with its images of Isis, Athena and Artemis. But in Freud's version of the origins of religion and the development of civilisation, women's power was erased: males dominated and their battles for supremacy brought society into being. His treasured goddesses were unable to influence his opinion.

When Freud fled Vienna for London in 1938, near death from cancer, he declared 'a collection to which there are no new additions is really dead.'¹⁵ Through grace and good fortune, Freud was able to whisk all the antiquities away from the Nazi invaders. Today the collection is on display at 20 Maresfield Gardens, Hampstead – now the Freud Museum London – where he died on 23 September, 1939.¹⁶ In 1971, a selection of antiquities was given by Anna Freud to celebrate the opening of the Sigmund Freud Museum, Vienna, at Berggasse 19. Freud chose to die in his study, surrounded by 'his ancestors of choice, his most faithful colleagues, and the embodiments of his excavated truths of psychoanalysis.'¹⁷

The abbreviation S.E. refers to *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, edited and translated by James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, 24 volumes, Hogarth Press, London, 1953-1974; Vintage, London, 2001.

The abbreviation Jones I, II or III refers to Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, 3 volumes, Basic Books, New York, 1953-1957.

1. *The Moses of Michelangelo* (1914), S.E., vol. XIII, p.211.
2. *The Freud-Jung Letters: The correspondence between Sigmund Freud and C.G. Jung*, William McGuire (ed.), Ralph Manheim and R.F.C. Hull (trans.), Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1974, p. 292.
3. For discussion of Freud's early purchases, see Janine Burke, *The Gods of Freud: Sigmund Freud's Art Collection*, Knopf, Milson's Point, 2006, pp.139-145.
4. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (ed.), *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, London, 1985, p.185.
5. Sergei Panjekeff, 'My Recollections of Sigmund Freud', in Muriel Gardiner (ed.), *The Wolf-Man and Sigmund Freud*, Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, London, 1972, p.139.
6. Panjekeff, 'My Recollections', p.139.
7. Ernst L. Freud (ed.), *Letters of Sigmund Freud, 1887-1939*, Tania and James Stern (trans.), Basic Books, New York, 1975, p.403. The essay on Freud appeared in Zweig's *Die Heilung durch den Geist: Franz Anton Mesmer, Mary Baker Eddy, Sigmund Freud*, Inselverlag, Leipzig, 1931. (*Mental Healers*, New York, Viking, Cassell, London, 1933.)
8. Jones, II, p.393.
9. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, *Complete Letters of Freud to Fliess*, p.363.
10. 'Ernst L. Freud, *Letters of Sigmund Freud*, p.334.
11. Jones, III, p. 235. Dali's *Portrait of Freud* was later presented to the Freud Museum, London, in memory of writer Helene Eliat van de Velde (1894-1949).
12. Maurice Rheims, *Art on the Market: Thirty Five Centuries of Collecting from Midas to Paul Getty*, David Pryce-Jones (trans.), Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1959, p.138.
13. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, *Complete Letters of Freud to Fliess*, p.398.
14. Jean Baudrillard, 'The System of Collecting', in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (ed.s), *The Cultures of Collecting*, Reaktion, London, 1994, p.7.
15. Ernst Freud, Lucie Freud and Ilse Grubrich-Simitis (ed.s), *Sigmund Freud: His Life in Words and Pictures*, Christine Trollope (trans), Norton, New York/London, 1998, p.313.
16. In 1980, the Sigmund Freud Archives, a registered English charity, purchased the land and buildings at 20 Maresfield Gardens with funds from the New-Land Foundation Inc. Muriel Gardiner, founder of the New-Land Foundation, a friend of Anna Freud's as well as a psychoanalyst, was instrumental in establishing the museum. On Anna's death in 1982, the contents of the house were bequeathed to the English charity to establish the Freud Museum, London, that opened in July 1986. Sigmund Freud Archives Inc. and Freud Museum London Trustee Ltd. are the trustees. The museum is operated through a Joint committee of Sigmund Freud Archives and the New-Land Foundation, and managed with the assistance of the London Advisory Committee.
17. Lynn Gamwell, 'The Origins of Freud's Antiquities Collection', in Lynn Gamwell and Richard Wells (ed.s), *Sigmund Freud and Art: His Personal Collection of Antiquities*, State University of New York at Binghamton; Freud Museum, London, 1989, p.29.

Female figure (Ishtar)

Syria, Orontes Valley, Middle Bronze Age, c.2000–1750 BC

clay, 11.7 x 4.5 cm

LDFRD 3725

Collection Freud Museum London

The oldest work in the exhibition is from the most archaeologically rich site in Syria. Freud used archaeology as the driving metaphor of psychoanalysis. He told a patient, “the psychoanalyst, like the archaeologist, must uncover layer after layer of the patient’s psyche, before coming to the deepest, most valuable treasures.”¹

Among recent excavations at the ancient Syrian city of Ebla (now Tell Mardikh), figurines like this were found in the acropolis, an area sacred to Ishtar.² *Female Figure* was probably an offering to Ishtar and, like other offerings, she was disposed of in a *favissa*, a pit used for the disposal of objects used in a temple. Originally, *Female Figure* was adorned: her pierced ears held ear-rings, and there were decorations in the socket in her forehead and her doughnut-shaped navel. Incisions on her thighs indicate her pudenda. Due to the vast numbers of figures offered to the gods as gifts by devout pilgrims, temple repositories had to be cleared out periodically and the old offerings buried in the vicinity of the god’s shrine. Such caches, frequently stumbled upon by diggers, are the source of many such figures in private and public collections.

Ishtar was the region’s super-goddess, the divine personification of the planet Venus, in charge of love, storms, fertility and war. Sacred prostitution was part of her worship. When her lover Tammuz died, Ishtar descended to the underworld to find him. In Babylonian scriptures, she was called the Light of the World, Leader of Hosts, Opener of the Womb, Righteous Judge, Lady of Victory and Bestower of Strength.

*In the brilliant heavens, to give omens in abundance, I appear, I appear in perfection. With exultation in my supremacy, with exultation do I, a Goddess, walk supreme; Ishtar, the Goddess of evening, am I; Ishtar, the Goddess of morning, am I; Ishtar, who opens the portals of heaven, in my supremacy.*³

1. Sergei Panjekeff, ‘My Recollections of Sigmund Freud’, in Muriel Gardiner (ed.), *The Wolf-Man and Sigmund Freud*, Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, London, 1972, p.139.
2. Similar *Female Figures* from the Orontes Valley and from the same period are in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, cat. no. 256 (AN 1949.180), and especially cat. no. 257 (AN 1949.180). The excavations took place in 1998. Like *Female Figure*, it is unknown from which site in Syria they were recovered. See Roger Morrey, *Ancient Near Eastern Terracottas in the Ashmolean Museum*, www.ashmol.ox.ac.uk/ash/amocats/anel/pdf-files/ANET-29Bronze2Syr-Catalogue-2.pdf, p.2.
3. Robert Francis Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature, Selected Translations*, D. Appleton & Co., New York, 1901, p.434.



Cylinder seal (+ clay impression)
Old Babylonian, c.19th–18th century BC
hematite, 2.6 x 1.5 cm
LDFRD 4243
Collection Freud Museum London

Bertha Pappenheim, known in her case study as Anna O, was an early patient of Josef Breuer, Freud's colleague. She dubbed psychoanalysis 'the talking cure.'¹¹ Fascinated by language and antiquity, Freud collected examples of writing's earliest forms. Cylinder seals were developed in southern Mesopotamia (now Iraq) and southwestern Iran to record business transactions and authenticate documents. The pictographs were the 'signatures' of dignitaries, officials and traders. In Babylon, scribes did most of the writing on tablets of soft clay. The tablet was then 'signed' by rolling a cylinder seal across it. The seals provide a lasting record of Babylonian culture.

This exquisite seal was made during the reign of Hammurabi (1793-1750 BC) who established Babylon as a major kingdom. Made of hematite, a hard, long lasting iron oxide stone, the seal shows Shamash, the bearded sun god who dispensed law and justice, resting one foot on his attribute animal, a human-headed bull, while the king, facing Shamash, raises his hands in supplication. Behind Shamash stands a priest on a dais while standing behind the king is a goddess wearing a horned head-dress, perhaps Aya, goddess of the dawn and Shamash's consort. As Dominique Collon, British Museum, notes, 'The sun god Shamash was and remained the most popular deity in Mesopotamia.'¹² The clay impression was made in 1989.

Freud believed that the events of early childhood determined an individual's destiny, so perhaps it is no surprise that he collected objects from the childhood of civilisation.

1. '[Anna O] aptly described this procedure, speaking seriously as a 'talking cure' while she referred to it jokingly as 'chimney-sweeping'. Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, (1893-1895), S.E., vol.II, p.30.
2. Dominique Collon, *First Impressions, Cylinder Seals in the Near East*, British Museum Publications, London, c.1987, p.167.



Shabti figure of Senna

Egyptian, New Kingdom (18th Dynasty), Tuthmosis III–Amenophis IV,

1479–1400 BC

limestone, 28.5 x 8.7 x 8.3 cm

LDFRD 3271

Collection Freud Museum London

Freud described mourning as work, an image personified by the Egyptian tomb object known as the *shabti*.¹ Meaning 'I am here', *shabtis* or 'answerers', came to be regarded as deputies of the deceased. Their job was to perform any agricultural tasks assigned to the deceased in the next world. The Egyptians were obviously concerned about the amount of work they might have to do. If a family could afford it, hundreds of *shabtis* were interred in the tomb. Freud owned several types of *shabtis* and he arranged them together on a cabinet in his consulting room, just as they would have been arranged in a tomb.

This *shabti* of a man has a sensitively modelled face with distinctive eyes, large ears and a square beard. The hands are crossed on the chest. Though the hieroglyphs have faded, the owner's name was Senna. The *shabti* is inscribed with a chapter from The Book of the Dead. It is translated as follows: 'O *shabti* allotted to me! If I be summoned or if I be detailed to do any work which has to be done in the realm of the dead, if indeed obstacles are implanted for you therewith as a man at his duties, you shall detail yourself for me on every occasion of making arable the fields, of flooding the banks, or of conveying sand from east to west: 'Here am I!', you shall say.'²

1. Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', (1917[1915]), S.E. Vol. XIV, p. 244-245. '[W]hen the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again.'
2. Nicholas Reeves, in Lynn Gamwell and Richard Wells (ed.s), *Sigmund Freud and Art: His Personal Collection of Antiquities*, State University of New York at Binghamton; Freud Museum, London, 1989, p. 65.



Head of Osiris

Egyptian, Third Intermediate period, 1075–716 BC

bronze, 30.5 x 7.0 x 8.5 cm

LDFRD 3128

Collection Freud Museum London

Freud's bronze *Head of Osiris* enjoyed a privileged position on his desk. Osiris was the lord of the underworld who guided the dead on their journeys to the afterlife and presided at their trial, known as the Weighing of the Heart. He was Egypt's most popular deity, beloved because he combined the roles of god, man and saviour. Killed by his brother Seth, Osiris was returned to life by the rituals of Isis, his wife, his sister and a powerful witch. Incest was tolerated among Egyptian royalty. Freud commented it was 'merely brother-and-sister incest, which even at the present time is not judged so harshly.'¹

Egyptian art forms the bulk of Freud's collection. He wrote, 'No other people of antiquity did so much [as the Egyptians] to deny death or took such pains to make existence in the next world possible.'² Freud, who began collecting art in 1896 following the death of his father, was intrigued by their rituals for rebirth. The Egyptian items in his collection symbolically chart a preoccupation with mourning. Freud described mourning as work. Equally, it is a journey from the darkness of grief to the light of recovery and renewal, the same journey that Egyptians believed literally took place in the afterlife.

Osiris' expression is calm and dignified, yet he seems youthful, perhaps fitting for a god who dies only to live again, a boy-god who defeats old age and death. *Osiris* wears a crown decorated with a uraeus, the sacred cobra of Egypt. *Osiris* has lost much of his magnificence over time. His eyes, now empty sockets, would once have been inlaid with precious stones. He is also missing his beard and the plumes and disc of his crown. Nose, mouth and cheeks are scored, probably by the same tomb robbers who stole his adornments. Once *Osiris'*s head would have sat atop an impressive bronze torso, a cult figure presented to the god by a wealthy worshipper.

1. Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, S.E. vol XXIII, p.1.

2. Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, (1939), S.E. vol XXIII, pp.19-20.



Isis suckling the infant Horus

Egyptian, Late period (26th Dynasty) 664–525 BC

bronze, 24.0 x 9.4 x 4.8 cm

LDFRD 3037

Collection Freud Museum London

Egypt's mother goddess. The story of how Freud acquired *Isis* is a good example of how undervalued antiquities were in his lifetime and how he managed to amass such a large collection on a limited budget. In 1935, Robert Lustig, Freud's favourite Viennese antiquities dealer, spotted *Isis* in a junk shop in the countryside. When he asked the price, the shop owner put the statue on the scale to weigh it, and Lustig bought it for the price of the metal. Though Freud made a catalogue of his collection in 1914, it has been lost, so it is unknown where and when he bought most of his antiquities, or how much he paid for them.

The goddess as madonna is as svelte as a girl: her clinging shift reveals pert breasts, trim hips, graceful, elongated legs and feet. *Isis'* features are exquisitely neat and symmetrical. Offering her breast to her son, she is a study in harmony and balance. Restrained, composed, girlish and slim, Egypt's all-powerful female deity provides an image of femininity that Freud found attractive.

Because Isis brought Osiris back to life, she was regarded as 'the highest type of a faithful wife and mother and it was in this capacity the Egyptians honoured and worshipped her most.'¹ As the symbol of the annual Nile flood which promised prosperity and growth, she also represented fertility. Isis was a mother goddess, emblematic of fecundity and renewal. Freud knew that mother goddesses had once reigned supreme. 'The male deities appear first as sons beside the great mothers'. But matriarchy was overthrown and 'a patriarchal order' was established.²

1. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians, or Studies in Egyptian Mythology*, vol. II, Dover Publications, New York, (1904), 1969, p.204.
2. Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, (1939), S.E, vol. XXIII, p.83.



Donation Stele

Egyptian, Ptolemaic period, dated 301 BC.

limestone, 53.0 x 36.0 x 6.0 cm

LDFRD 4581

Collection Freud Museum London

This impressive stele provides a lesson in Egyptian history. Professor J. D. Ray, Cambridge University, has identified the figures and translated the hieroglyphs.¹ At the far right stands Ptolemy, the general of Alexander the Great, who seized control of Egypt when Alexander died in 323 BC, and declared himself Pharaoh. Ptolemy was Alexander's close friend and one of his most trusted generals. Ptolemy presents a hieroglyph denoting a field, or agricultural land. This motif was originally designed to commemorate endowments of land but was soon applied to most religious donations. Facing Ptolemy are four gods: (from right to left) the creator and solar god Amun, his consort Mut, their son the moon god Khonsu and Horus, a sky god and a god of kingship, who is the son of Isis and Osiris.

The lowest register, somewhat damaged, has an inscription in demotic, the shorthand script in everyday use during this period. Dr. Betsy M. Bryan, Johns Hopkins University, suggests the damage was probably accidental, perhaps the result of digging by a farmer who found the relic.² The lines of text record the date: the month of Pakhons in the fourth year of Pharaoh Ptolemy (July, 301 BC). The text mentions that a chapel, its income and divine images, are to be assigned to Amenhotep, son of Khahor. At this time, lands previously confiscated by Alexander were returned to members of the Egyptian priesthood, such as Amenhotep, to secure their loyalty to the new ruler, Ptolemy. This stela records an episode in that process.

Freud taught himself to read hieroglyphs, studying books by noted British Egyptologist, E. A. Wallis Budge. He observed the connection with psychoanalysis. 'If we reflect that the means of representation in dreams are principally visual images not words, we shall see that it is even more appropriate to compare dreams with a system of writing than with a language. In fact the interpretation of dreams is completely analogous to the decipherment of an ancient pictographic script such as Egyptian hieroglyphs.'³

1. Lynn Gamwell and Richard Wells (ed.s), *Sigmund Freud and Art, His Personal Collection of Antiquities*, p.54.
2. Dr. Betsy M. Bryan, Alexander Badawy Professor of Egyptian Art and Archaeology, Johns Hopkins University. Email to Janine Burke. 5 July 2007.
3. Sigmund Freud, 'The Claims of Psychoanalysis to Scientific Interest', (1913), S.E., vol. XIII, p.177.



Baboon of Thoth

Egyptian, Roman period, 30 BC–AD 395.

marble, 22.0 x 9.5 x 10.5 cm

LDFRD 3133

Collection Freud Museum London

Thoth was one of Egyptian mythology's most complex and interesting deities, the scribe of the ceremony called the Weighing of the Heart. He was regarded as the inventor and god of all the arts and sciences and the special patron of medicine, writing and magic. The Book of the Dead, a collection of spells which were chanted by priests over the deceased, was assumed to have been composed by Thoth and certain chapters written 'with his own fingers.'¹

Baboon of Thoth shows the god in his manifestation as a dog-headed ape, symbolising wisdom and equilibrium. On his head, he wears the lunar crescent and disc, associating him with the moon and the measurement of time. Seated with his paws on his knees, *Thoth's* expression is sagacious and reflective. Thoth sometimes appeared twice in depictions of the Weighing of the Heart: as the ibis-headed scribe and as a tiny baboon seated atop the scales, their equalising force. In his role as royal scribe, Thoth was represented as a bird; as a household god, he was depicted as a baboon and meant to confer good fortune. Exactly why Thoth had two animal identities remains a mystery.²

The Egyptians were fond of apes, regarding them as lusty and canny, and often kept them as pets. Thoth's genitals are displayed and realistically rendered, unusual in Egyptian art which prized dignity and the asexual schematisation of form. Thoth's attributes as the patron of writing, knowledge and healing, as well as being a protective household deity, made him an ideal muse for Freud's writerly journeys. Freud must have known, from the museum collections with which he was familiar, that this was a first-class work.

1. E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians, or Studies in Egyptian Mythology*, vol. 1, Dover Publications, New York, (1904), 1969, p. 401.
2. C. J. Bleeker points out that 'whenever Thoth takes action and makes pronouncements, he appears in human form with the head of an ibis' but 'for domestic use the effigies of Thoth as a baboon were made.' C. J. Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth, two key figures of the ancient Egyptian Religion*, Brill, Leiden, 1973, pp.108, 113.



Corinthian black-figured Alabastron (Mistress of animals)

Greek, Archaic period, c.600 BC

terracotta, 28.2 x 15.0 cm

LDFRD 3699

Collection Freud Museum London

In 1904, Freud visited Corinth with his brother Alexander. It was his first, and only, visit to Greece. They stayed three days in Athens where Freud wrote to Martha, his wife, that he had made 'a few small purchases, the continuation of my dealing with antiquity.'¹ They also stopped in Corinth where Freud could see the excavations being conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

Corinth was famous for its vases. Around 700 B.C., vase painters in Corinth revitalised their wares by 'Orientalising' them with wildly exuberant, curvilinear patterns. They also created a bold, black, silhouette technique. To decorate their works they borrowed from West Asia's bestiary of fabulous creatures: the Sphinx, the Siren, the Griffin and the Gorgon. In the fully developed Corinthian style that flourished until 550 B.C., the vases are crowded with figures set against backgrounds of elaborately patterned floral ornament.

Freud collected nearly a dozen Archaic period Corinthian vases. The largest and most impressive is this *Alabastron*, showing a winged Mistress of Animals. An alabastron is an elongated, narrow necked vase that holds oil or perfume. The Mistress of Animals was a West Asian goddess, often depicted in Minoan and Mycenaean art, and assimilated into Greek art as Artemis, goddess of the hunt. A popular subject in Corinthian art, she displayed power over nature and was usually shown, as on Freud's vase, subduing wild creatures.² Seen in profile, the goddess holds a swan by the neck in either hand, their extended wings echoing her own. On her head, she wears a *polos*, the tall crown worn by goddesses in this period. At first, the dense, all-over patterning in red and black makes the figures difficult to decipher, like a visual puzzle, a characteristic of Corinthian vases.

1. Sigmund Freud, *Unser Herz zeigt nach dem Süden. Reisebriefe 1895-1923*, (Our Heart Points to the South: Travel Letters. 1895-1923.), edited by Christfried Tögel, in collaboration with Michael Molnar, Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin:, 2002, p.193.
2. Nanno Marinatos, *The Goddess and the Warrior: the naked goddess and mistress of animals in early Greek religion*, Routledge, London/New York, 2000, p.97.



Sphinx

Greek, South Italian, late 5th–early 4th century BC

terracotta, 21.0 x 15.0 x 8.0 cm

LDFRD 4387

Collection Freud Museum London

Freud made the myth of Oedipus and the Sphinx central to psychoanalysis. 'A single idea of general value dawned on me. I have found, in my own case too [the phenomenon of] being in love with my mother and jealous of my father, and I now consider it a universal event in early childhood.'¹ Freud believed this profound instinctual urge explained the development of sexual identity in both men and women.

In Egyptian art, the Sphinx was a protective, benevolent male figure who represented the pharaoh. In Greek art, the Sphinx was female, and associated with death and funerary monuments. In Sophocles' play, *Oedipus Rex*, written in the fourth century BC, she is the destructive trickster whom Oedipus must outsmart to save the city of Thebes, and his own life.

Oedipus confronts the Sphinx on his return to the city after many years. The Sphinx's riddle – 'Which is the animal that has four feet in the morning, two at midday and three at evening?' – was correctly answered by Oedipus, 'Man, who in infancy crawls on all fours, who walks upright on two feet in maturity, and in his old age supports himself with a stick.'

As a reward for saving Thebes, Oedipus marries the queen, Jocasta. But Oedipus does not know that Jocasta is his mother and that, in an altercation on his way to Thebes, he has murdered Laius, the king, who was his father. When the truth is finally revealed, Jocasta commits suicide and Oedipus blinds himself.

Freud's images of the Sphinx explored the various meanings she offered. This freestanding *Sphinx* wears the *polos*, or crown of a goddess, indicating she has divine status and is worshipped in her own right. She has the face and breasts of a woman, together with the hindquarters of a lion, plus beautifully curled wings. A hybrid creature, she is endowed with a lion's strength while her wings, those of an eagle, also symbolise strength and power. Her association with Greek funerary monuments make her a *daimon*, meaning a 'divine power' or 'fate'. Good daimons were guardian spirits, who acted as helpful advisors between gods and humans.

1. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (ed.), *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, London, 1985, p.272.



Athenian black-figured Lekythos
Haimon Painter (Workshop)
Greek, Classical period, c. 490–470 BC
terracotta, 16.2 cm
LFRD 3683
Collection Freud Museum London

A scene from the tale of Oedipus and the Sphinx is shown on this lekythos. A lekythos is an oil or perfume flask, cylindrical in shape with a narrow handle attached to the neck. Timothy Ganz points out, 'This type of scene with numerous men gathered around the column and no single figure identified as Oedipus repeats itself often in the late sixth and early fifth century.'¹

The Sphinx, elegant as a cat, sits on a small column between Theban elders. In the story, the Sphinx alights at Thebes and asks her riddle, prepared for her by the Muses. Each man who fails to correctly answer is promptly devoured. Why was the Sphinx terrorising Thebes? There are conflicting accounts. Was she sent by the gods to avenge a crime or was she merely a literary device, added by Sophocles to his play for dramatic flair? This scene shows the dilemma the town faced. Before Oedipus arrived, the Thebans gathered daily in their assembly to ponder the riddle, since the gods had decreed the Sphinx would stay until the riddle was solved.

1. Timothy Ganz, *Early Greek Myth, A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources*, Viking Arkana, London, 1996, pp.495-6.



Balsamarium

Etruscan, 3rd century BC

bronze, 9.4 x 7.2 x 6.5 cm

LDFRD 3029

Collection Freud Museum London

This *Balsamarium*, that held perfumed oil, incense or ointments, is decorated with the faces of a maenad and a satyr.

Maenads and satyrs were members of the retinue of the Greek god Dionysus. The dark-skinned satyrs, part-man, part-goat with cloven hooves and horns, terrified shepherds as they chased nymphs across the landscape. Maenads, the priestesses of Dionysus, could be equally intimidating as they caroused in ecstatic abandon, loudly playing drums and flutes or tearing live animals to pieces and devouring their flesh. In ancient Greece, women who worshipped Dionysus periodically quit their homes and family to participate in all-female rituals that honoured the god. These seem to have involved frenzied dancing, leading to trance and ecstasy (*ekstasis*: standing outside oneself), sometimes assisted by copious quantities of wine.

Freud arranged the *Balsamarium* on the edge of his desk, so the maenad faced toward him while the grinning satyr looked toward his consulting room. The maenad's gaze is fixed and wide-eyed, her lips slightly parted. She appears to be in a trance. In contrast her companion is earthy, cheeky and ugly. Maenads usually remained chaste, unlike the priapic satyrs. In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud explored the notion that everyone is fundamentally bisexual. 'In human beings pure masculinity or femininity is not to be found in either a psychological or a biological sense. Every individual on the contrary displays a mixture of the character traits belonging to his own and to the opposite sex.'¹

The *Balsamarium* depicts such a fusion with male and female literally roped together by the headdress worn by both maenad and satyr. While the female face better realised, each is dependent on the other: the woman's ecstatic, spiritual gaze and the libidinous male's alert, mischievous look. Freud believed that libido is 'invariably and necessarily of a masculine nature, whether it occurs in men or in women and irrespectively of whether its object is a man or a woman.'² By turning the maenad towards him, Freud determined that the little bronze functioned as a deity of thresholds, a god of margins who symbolises Freud's proposition that there is a border where masculine and feminine meet, and merge.

1. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, (1905), S.E., vol. VII, p. 220. This sentence was added in 1915.
2. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, (1905), p. 219.



Eros

Greek Hellenistic period, probably from Tanagra, c.300–250 BC
terracotta, 8.5 x 5.0 cm
LDFRD 3897
Collection Freud Museum London

Freud had several statues of Eros, winged messenger of desire and representative of the life force. Freud declared that 'language has carried out an entirely justified piece of unification in creating the word 'love' with its numerous uses ... In its origin, function and relations to sexual love, the 'Eros' of the philosopher Plato coincides exactly with the love force, the libido of psychoanalysis.'¹ H.D.F. Kitto remarks that in Greek 'eros has different associations: it means something like 'passionate joy' ... [h]e is something which makes every nerve tingle.'²

Eros appears suspended in flight, his left leg forward, his wings raised and his right arm across his chest. He is without his trademark bow and arrows, weapons he used to strike the hearts of gods and mortals and inflame them with love. But Eros was not just a playful child engaged on a series of reckless missions to cause passion and mayhem. Mythologically, he was an ancient figure, a powerful and mysterious force, arising at the formation of the world, though it took centuries before a specific cult to him evolved.

Freud believed eros can mean love or sexual desire, leading to 'the most potent experience of overwhelming pleasure and thereby set a pattern for our quest for happiness.'³ It can be a civilising force, igniting the spark between lovers that can result in steady relationships, marriage, children and a sense of community, as well as unleashing turbulent and unbridled emotions.

Freud respected Eros, 'the preserver of all things.'⁴ Eros aroused desire, for people and for objects. Plato suggested love and desire are directed at 'what you don't have, what isn't there, and what you need.'⁵ Freud, lover of beautiful things, recognised the urge. The statue of *Eros* was an object of desire he had to possess. Not only did it epitomise classical civilisation and the inspiration Freud derived from it but, equally, *Eros* was an item of pure aesthetic pleasure.

Why did Freud collect small objects? Possibly because it meant he could afford to buy more and crowd his study with them. In the 1930s, he liked to take his collection with him on summer holidays to the outskirts of Vienna, packing up hundreds of the antiquities and re-arranging them as they were in his rooms.

1. Sigmund Freud, 'Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego', (1921), S.E., vol. XVIII, p.91.
2. H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks*, Penguin, Harmondsworth (1957), 1985, p.251.
3. Plato, *The Symposium*, Christopher Gill (trans.), Penguin, London, 1999, p.35.
4. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, (1920), S.E., vol. XVIII, p.52.
5. Plato, *The Symposium*, p.35.



Artemis

Greek, Hellenistic period, from Myrina, 2nd century BC

terracotta, 31.0 x 13.0 x 8.3 cm

LDFRD3273

Collection Freud Museum London

Artemis was a free-spirited virgin goddess whose realm was nature, the wilder the better, where she roamed and hunted with a band of women. *Artemis* has lost her arms and, presumably, her bow and arrows but it does not detract from her vigour and personality, emphasised by her stance and flowing robes. She is on the move and inspires others to do the same.

This statue comes from the ancient city of Myrina (now near Aliaga on Turkey's Aegean coast). In the late nineteenth century, many treasures were excavated from a necropolis on the site. The haul by the French School at Athens found its way to the Louvre Museum while other antiquities, pillaged by the locals, surfaced in the marketplaces of Vienna, Athens and Paris.

Freud noted the continuity of pagan prototypes despite Christianity's attempts to obliterate them. In his essay, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians', he describes how, after the destruction of the famed temple to Artemis [Diana is her Roman name] at Ephesus in Turkey in 301 AD, a basilica to the Virgin Mary was built, 'the new mother-goddess of the Christians ... Now once again the city had its great goddess and, apart from her name, there was very little change.'¹

1. Sigmund Freud, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians', (1911), S.E., vol XII, p.343.



Athena

Roman, 1st or 2nd century AD, after a Greek original of the 5th century BC

bronze, 12.5 x 4.5 x 3.8 cm

LDFRD 3007

Collection Freud Museum London

Athena was Freud's favourite work. When he bought *Athena*, sometime after 1914, he positioned her in pride of place at the centre of the antiquities on his desk. In 1938, when the Nazis invaded Vienna, Freud and his family prepared to flee. It seemed that Freud might lose his entire collection so he selected two works to be smuggled out, to represent all the collection meant to him. One of those was *Athena*, the other a tiny *Jade Screen* (Qing Dynasty, 19th century, not in the exhibition).¹

Athena was restored to Freud in Paris, when he was en route to London. Princess Marie Bonaparte, Freud's close friend and a psychoanalyst, had spirited the statue out of Vienna. When the Princess returned it to him, Freud said that he felt 'proud and rich under the protection of Athene.'¹ Freud did not treat his artworks as sacrosanct. During the analysis of the American poet Hilda Doolittle, known as H.D., he picked up *Athena* and handed it her. '*This is my favourite*', he said. '*She is perfect ... only she has lost her spear.*'²

Athena is a masculine goddess. As the protector of Athens, the Parthenon was her temple. She was the daughter of Zeus, his favourite child, born fully formed from his head. She was a fierce warrior who, with her enormous bronze-tipped spear, helped the Greeks fight the Trojans. When Perseus fought Medusa, the snake-haired monster, Athena assisted, advising him to use her great shield like a mirror because those who gazed into Medusa's eyes were turned to stone. On her breast, Athena wore Medusa's image, an emblem of a vanquished force she had turned to her own advantage. Like most of the gods, she had a range of characteristics: in times of peace, she was benevolent and inspiring, a patron of the arts and a wise, civilising influence.

Freud developed revolutionary theories about powerful, instinctual sexual urges that determined the destiny both of civilisation and the individual. In his collection, he surrounded himself with images of goddesses. But in Freud's version of the origins of religion and the development of civilisation, women's strength was erased: males dominated and their battles for supremacy brought society into being. In Freud's most controversial theory – penis envy – he proposed that because women lack a penis, they consider themselves inferior to men.

1. A photograph of Freud taken by Marcel Sternberger in June 1938, at 39 Elsworthy Road (where Freud and his family stayed before moving to Maresfield Gardens), show *Jade Screen* and *Athena* on his desk, together with the terracotta figurines Princess Marie Bonaparte had given him in Paris en route to London. The antiquities were not unpacked and arranged until the family moved into Maresfield Gardens in September. Illus: Harald Leupold-Löwenthal et.al., *Sigmund Freud Museum*, Gingko Press, California, 1995, p. 87.
2. Quoted in Sigmund Freud, *Diary of Sigmund Freud, 1929-1939, A Record of the Final Decade*, Michael Molnar (trans.), Freud Museum Publications, London; Scribner, New York, 1992.,p.237.
3. H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), *Tribute to Freud*, Carcanet, Manchester, 1974, pp. 68-69.



Phallus (winged)

Roman

bronze, 4.8 x 3.5 cm.

LDFRD 4680

Collection Freud Museum London

Phallus (double)

Roman

bronze, 4.8 x 8.0 cm

LDFRD 4682

Collection Freud Museum London

Phallus (double)

Roman

bronze, 7.0 x 7.0 cm

LDFRD 4684

Collection Freud Museum London

Freud collected around twenty phalluses, mostly Roman but also Egyptian, Etruscan and Japanese. If he liked an item, he bought as many good examples as possible. Though Freud believed that the Roman god Priapus 'stood for permanent erection, a wish fulfilment representing the opposite of psychological impotence', the god also signified good luck.¹ To the Romans, Priapus was a protective fertility god and they placed statues of him in their gardens, as well as in their fields as scarecrows.

The original role of these little phalluses was not so much erotic pleasure but portable talismans that were sewn into clothes or carried, and that offered magical protection from evil. As a symbol of good fortune and male power, the phallus had been worshipped since Neolithic times. Freud was critical of conservative attitudes that designated the genitals as 'objects of shame ... and even disgust' while in earlier civilisations 'they were the pride and hope of living beings; they were worshipped as gods.' It made him reflect that in 'the course of cultural development so much of the divine and sacred was ultimately extracted from sexuality that the exhausted remnant fell into contempt.'²

1. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (ed.), *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887-1904*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, London, 1985, p.308.
2. Sigmund Freud, 'Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood', (1910), S.E., vol.XI, p. 97.



Head of a Guardian Figure

Chinese, Ming Dynasty, 15th–17th century AD

bronze, 17.0 x 15.0 x 15.5 cm

LDFRD 3444

Collection Freud Museum London

Freud also collected a small range of South-East Asian art. He did not visit the region and referred only in passing to eastern civilisations in his writings.

Head of a Guardian Figure is a protector of a Buddhist temple and is known as a *dvarapala*. Typically, a pair of guardians in warrior dress holding weapons would flank the entrance to a temple or shrine. Buddhism had become popular in China during the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD). Though Chinese art tends to favour serenity and contemplation, and Buddhism is a non-violent religion, *Guardian Figure* has a fierce expression. The duty of such figures was to actively protect the temple and its worshippers, and challenge those who would contradict the Buddha's teachings. The mouth of *Guardian Figure* is open as if uttering the mantra 'ah'. His companion figure would have had his mouth closed for 'um.' These two letters are the beginning and end of the Sanskrit alphabet, and symbolise the beginning and end of time. This *Guardian Figure* would probably have stood on the left of the entrance and his companion figure on the right.

The Ming dynasty (1368–1644 AD) was a period of cultural restoration and expansion. After overthrowing the Mongols, the indigenous Chinese rulers engaged in major projects that included the construction of the Forbidden City in Beijing and further fortifications of the Great Wall.



Table screen

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 19th century AD

wood and jade; screen (without stand) 19.0 x 12.6 x 2.5 cm

LDFRD 3001

Collection Freud Museum London

Freud arranged his most exquisite Chinese object on his desk, directly behind *Athena*. *Table Screen* is inset with the figure of a scholar, carved in white jade, and surrounded by delicate, curving, wooden leaves and branches. A meditative object for the Chinese scholar's desk, the natural forms were meant to encourage the mind to roam in an ideal landscape.

Freud, who revelled in the natural world, was no stranger to such imaginary journeys. His similarity to the Chinese scholar does not end there. Scholars were collectors of high-quality art objects, some functional, some inspirational, most small enough to decorate their desks or complement their studies. The scholar's studio was a place of study and contemplation, where he surrounded himself with specially created 'treasures' – brushes, inkstones, water droppers, netsukes and figurines that embodied the shared wisdom, traditions and values of the Chinese literati. Objects of beauty as well as status symbols, the treasures projected 'allusive and symbolic meanings' that 'encouraged and inspired [the scholar] in his work.'¹

Freud had been collecting jade, mainly bowls, for many years. It was his introduction to Chinese art. Called the 'stone of heaven', jade was the sacred gem of China, symbolising a range of virtues, including justice, wisdom and courage, and meant to confer good luck and protection. The Chinese have treasured jade even more than westerners have valued gold.² Jade is an extremely hard stone, so carving it is a slow and difficult process, another reason it is regarded as precious. During the Qing Dynasty, which lasted from 1644 to 1911, jade carving improved substantially because the ruling Manchu emperors established workshops where carvers refined their techniques. *Table Screen* is an elegant example of their craft. The Qing Dynasty was 'an antiquarian age when, as never before, men looked back into the past, burrowing into the Classics, dabbling in archaeology, forming huge collections of books ... porcelain and archaic bronzes.'³

1. Fang Jing Pei, *Treasures of the Chinese Scholar*, Weatherhill, New York, 1997, p.2.

2. Jane Portal in Lynn Gamwell and Richard Wells (ed.s), *Sigmund Freud and Art*, p. 130.

3. Michael Sullivan, *An Introduction to Chinese Art*, Faber & Faber, London, 1971, p.190.





The sealed South Italian Apulian bell krater of the 4th century BC containing Sigmund and Martha Freud's ashes, situated in the Ernest George columbarium at Golders Green Crematorium. Photo: Michael Turner

Nostalgia & Dionysus: The mystery of Sigmund Freud's final resting place

Michael Turner

Sigmund Freud died at 3 am on 23rd September 1939 in the study of his house at 20 Maresfield Gardens in Hampstead, London, surrounded by the majority of his over 2000 antiquities. He was eighty-three. The cause of death was an overdose of morphine administered, at Freud's insistence and to fulfil a long-standing promise by his Viennese doctor Max Schur, to alleviate the suffering of his sixteen-year battle with cancer of the mouth. Three days later, on 26th September, his body was cremated at Golders Green Crematorium. Harrods of Knightsbridge, on the instructions of his middle son Ernst, were the funeral directors. The eulogies, in accordance with Freud's wishes, were given by Ernest Jones and Stefan Zweig.

Freud's ashes, together with those of his wife Martha, who died in 1951, are now inside a sealed South Italian Apulian bell krater of the 4th century BC in the Ernest George columbarium at the Crematorium. The krater, given to Freud in 1931 by Princess Marie Bonaparte, rests on a black granite plinth designed by his architect son, Ernst. It is on open display and may be viewed by any visitor to the Crematorium.

Strangely, it is not known why, when, and by whom the decision was made to place Freud's ashes in this South Italian funerary vessel, (not Greek as is often suggested), with its explicitly eschatological imagery. There is no mention of such an intention in any of Freud's correspondence, in his will, or in any subsequent family correspondence, either written or oral. To an archaeologist interested in the iconology of such pottery, rather than a Freud scholar, this lack of knowledge is an ironic challenge given Freud's oft quoted 'the psychoanalyst, like the archaeologist in his excavations, must uncover layer after layer of the patient's psyche, before coming to the deepest, most valuable treasures.'¹

To a museum curator interested in 'unearthed tales', this very modern mystery attached to an ancient artefact is most intriguing.

Many hundreds of similar pots have survived and are now in museums and private collections around the world. The majority have variations on exactly this same imagery. The pots have survived the ravages of time, often intact, having been recovered from graves (both inhumation and cremation). They were grave goods, often part of an assemblage, to accompany the deceased to the afterlife. In a cremation context they commonly contained the ashes of the deceased.

Apart from Freud, no one in modern times, as far as I am aware, has similarly used such a pot in such a way – as a funerary receptacle.

The fact, if not the full significance, of the pot's Dionysiac imagery has always been recognised.² Dionysus was the god of wine, theatre, and death, all of which involved the process of *ekstasis*, 'the standing outside' – the becoming, at least temporarily, somebody other than oneself. The wine drinker becomes, to a greater or lesser degree, drunk; the actor takes on a different persona by applying a mask; the dead soul leaves its body. Dionysus was the god who enabled both the stepping out and, most importantly, the stepping back in – by sobering up, by removing the mask, by entering the afterlife. In each case, following a period of dislocation, one becomes oneself again. It is this utterly fundamental fact that made the god so important, in several different guises, throughout the pre-Christian Mediterranean world. It was only by acceptance of the god through initiation into the Mysteries, and through correct procedure, that these benefits became possible. Euripides' play, the *Bakchai* is a potent lesson in the dangers of denying the god, even if its characters are sometimes poorly understood.

The whole concept of a Mystery religion is that it was, and remains, just that, mysterious, unknowable, to all but the initiated. We can only recreate something of the concept of its afterlife

from the imagery on what were supposed to be 'private' grave goods – they were buried, out of sight, certainly never meant for our uninitiated eyes, which is perhaps why we struggle to understand them. Scant written sources give a clue. In Aristophanes' comedy *The Frogs*, with its typical role reversal, Herakles describes for Dionysus how on the way to the afterlife he will arrive at groves of myrtle bathed in the most beautiful light. And even before he sees it, he will hear the joyful clapping of many hands beating time to the pipes accompanying the dance. This, as Herakles the supreme initiate adds, was the afterlife for both male and female initiates of the Mysteries (154-61) In the 2nd century A.D., Plutarch, himself an initiate, describes how although the path to the Underworld will be dark and dangerous (fragment 178), once there the initiate will be met by the bright light of day, soft breezes, and the sounds of voice and music (*Moralia* 1105b). The afterlife of the Mysteries in other words was a rural idyll.

Certainly Freud's pot is Dionysiac – the vegetal staff or *thyrsos* and the wine cup or *kantharos* held by the naked young man, the hanging bunch of grapes, and the single suspended vine leaf are all recognisable iconographic identifiers of the world of the god. This does not mean however that the naked figure is necessarily Dionysus. It has been suggested that such figures are possibly an initiate of the god in the afterlife, and that the two generic cloaked figures of the other side, (the most common single image found on these pots), are initiates about to set off on their journey – the beginning and the end.³ The column found on both sides of the pot is sometimes found bearing the inscription *termon*, a word that can mean both 'beginning' and 'end'.

Freud readily admitted to having read more archaeology than psychology. Collecting antiquities and cigar smoking were his two self-confessed addictions. Perhaps he read Sir William Hamilton's important introduction to the second of his own Antiquities collections illustrated by

Wilhelm Tischbein in 1793. Hamilton, resident of Naples and wife of Emma, was the first of the great collectors. In the Introduction, Hamilton describes the absolute prevalence of Dionysiac imagery on the South Italian Apulian pottery that he personally witnessed coming out of the ground. Freud will have also recognised the rural and idyllic setting of this imagery – far removed from the *Bakchai's* horrific imagery of disbelief. In essence this is the imagery of nostalgia. From the Greek, *nostos*, a homecoming, it is just that – a return in death to memories of an idyllic past. The figures in this imagery are always young – a return therefore to a past of youth and childhood.

Freud's earliest childhood has been described as an 'undisturbed Golden Age'. Janine Burke describes the effect that these years had on the development of the man and his theories, concluding that, 'nostalgia saturated [his] memories'.⁴ In 1873, Freud underwent a life changing moment. In his final year of school he heard a lecture on Goethe's short essay *On Nature*, (an essay that was actually by Georg Christoph Tobler and attributed to Goethe). He was so impressed that he decided on the spot to study medicine rather than law. The short essay, written in the 1780s, is a pantheistic paean to Nature. Goethe himself recognised 'its obvious inclination to a sort of Pantheism, to the conception of an unfathomable, unconditional, humorously self-contradictory Being, underlying the phenomena of Nature; and it may pass as a jest, with a bitter truth in it'.⁵ The essay includes the powerfully animistic message, 'Nature! We are surrounded and embraced by her; powerless to separate ourselves from her, and powerless to penetrate beyond her ... she tosses her creatures out of nothingness, and tells them not whence they came, nor whither they go. It is their business to run, she knows the road'. Freud himself described Nature as 'majestic, cruel and inexorable'.⁶

Freud was devoutly irreligious. The year before his death he wrote to Charles Singer,

'neither in my private life nor in my writings have I ever made a secret of being an out-and-out unbeliever'. Animism, however, he recognised as 'a *psychological theory*' giving 'a truly complete explanation of the Universe'.⁷

Freud spent his working life cocooned in his ever-increasing collection of antiquities. On the one hand, and as Lynn Gamwell has suggested, they were his consolation and comfort, 'his colleagues during his early years of professional isolation and his lifelong struggle for the acceptance of his theories'.⁸ On the other hand they were his inspiration, they shaped and defined his writings. I would suggest that the Ancient World, from Freud's discovery of it at school to his final resting place in Golders Green, shaped and defined the man.

It has been suggested to me that Freud's 'last lodging', the bell krater, is womb-like.⁹ It recalls his nostalgic reflection that, 'the dwelling house is a substitute for the mother's womb, the first lodging, for which in all likelihood man still longs, and in which he was safe and felt at ease'.¹⁰ His friend Ernest Jones suggested that Freud saw death as 'a reunion with a loved mother'.¹¹ Could the krater

therefore, with its eschatological symbolism, be a final nostalgic statement of Freud's own final home-coming – his return into the bosom of his deeply loved Nature? If so, this is anything but the nihilism of the true atheist but rather the inner-childlike hope of the nostalgic pantheist.

- 1 Quoted in Muriel Gardiner (ed.), *The Wolf-Man and Sigmund Freud*, Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-analysis, London, 1972, p.139.
- 2 Most recently in Janine Burke, *The Gods of Freud: Sigmund Freud's art collection*, Random House, Sydney, 2006, pp.161-3.
- 3 Michael Turner, 'The Woman in White: Dionysus & the Dance of Death', *Meditarch*, no.16, 2003, pp.137-48.
- 4 Janine Burke, *The Gods of Freud*, p.12.
- 5 T. H. Huxley, 'Nature: Aphorisms by Goethe', *Nature* 1, 1869.
- 6 Sigmund Freud, 'The Future of an Illusion', *SE*, vol. XXI, p.16.
- 7 Sigmund Freud, 'Totem & Taboo', *SE*, vol. XIII, p.77.
- 8 Lynn Gamwell, 'A Collector Analyses Collecting: Sigmund Freud on the Passion to Possess', in S. Barker (ed.), *Excavations and Their Objects: Freud's Collection of Antiquity*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1996, p.12.
- 9 Eric Csapo (Professor of Classics at the University of Sydney and author of *Theories of Mythology*, Oxford, 2005), *pers. comm.*, 01.08.07.
- 10 Sigmund Freud, 'Civilization and Its Discontents', *SE*, vol. XXI, p.91.
- 11 Ernest Jones, *Sigmund Freud: Life and Work*, vol III, Hogarth Press, London, 1953-57 pp.301-02.

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The sealed South Italian Apulian bell krater of the 4th century BC containing Sigmund and Martha Freud's ashes (details)
Photo: Michael Turner



Edmund Engelman
*The Couch (close-up) with the armchair in which
Freud used to sit during analysis 1938*
Courtesy Thomas Engelman

Freud Today

Oscar Zentner and
María-Inés Rotmiller de Zentner

A true investigator never ages.
Novalis, *Kleine Schriften*

*The best book in the world is the world itself, shut
when most open...*
Baltasar Gracián, *El criticón*

At the dawn of the 21st Century – where success is largely measured by the possession and accumulation of material things rather than the possession and conquest of the unknown cause of our dreams and desires – what could be the place of Freud's discovery? Before attempting to answer this critical question we invite you to follow us on a little detour.

Seldom, if ever, has a man possessed at once the originality, the opportunity, and above all else, the courage, to defy the mores of his era to such a degree; revealing the wealth of an unknown topography, so familiar yet so alien, uncanny, even ominous. The context of his discovery was the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the turn of the 19th Century, at the dusk of its zenith, within the limits of its annihilation. This was an epoch in which avant-garde aesthetic expressions in the field of the arts had sprung from its splendid cultural decadence. Psychoanalysis was, as a witness, born from these ruins as a phoenix.

Although set against a scientific background, and well versed in anatomy, chemistry, neurology and neurophysiology, Sigmund Freud was seduced – and this is the right word – by the discursive structure of the fantasy of the hysterics, revealing the logic of sexual drives. It was this gift for articulation that opened the way for the formulation of the unconscious that constituted the apex of his discovery – the colossal disparity between what the subject thinks he wants and what, in fact, he desires.

Pursuing this principle that the subject might not want what he desires, and adhering to it, he forged in the structure of metaphors and metonymies the method capable of eliciting the causes of human suffering as well as creating favourable conditions to deal with them. As such, he was the initiator of a new discourse that not only accounted for the causality of illnesses but revealed the medical discipline's failure to address them. With this newly constructed method, he founded a new field, in which he held fast to the deductive heuristic value of singularity. He created psychoanalysis, paradoxically, as a science of the singular, and this *anomaly* of the field is such that it is legitimate to call it Freudian, for as long as the symbolic structure addressed by the psychoanalytic discourse does not come to an insurmountable impasse.

The idea that what psychoanalysis considered an illness was not independent from the fact that the subject is a speaking-being implies that speech has effects; that the subject becomes ill by the word, and it is the word that can cure it also. The method of allowing the analysand through free association to link different aspects of his discourse proved the existence of an unconscious thought. This took Freud into the uncharted waters contained by the knowledge of his time. In this long and solitary journey he aligned himself, against all odds, both with the singularity of each case and with the principle of determinism, excluding chance from the life of the subject.

Within the supremacy that consciousness held as the seat of certitude, which allowed the fantasy of the subject to propose that the only unknown to be conquered resided outside of himself, Freud introduced the absolute uncertainty in the Cartesian certainty of the subject of the cogito: *I think, therefore I am*. In that way, the unknown of the real outside world was mirrored by the unknown real of the internal world.

How did Freud reveal this? He did so through the dream that no longer was to be a phenomenon without meaning, through the lapsus-linguae that

never again was to be an unnoticed mistake, through the joke that never again was to stop expressing a truth that the subject did not know, through the symptom that is a suffering not without *jouissance*, and that never again was to be an expression of suffering only. All these examples, some of which he called the psychopathology of everyday life, introduced, as we said, the uncertainty that, as Lacan later proposed, would become his *I think where I am not, I am where I do not think*. It is self evident that such a postulate, which almost amounts to the proposition of a different epistemology, is a true subversion.

The psychoanalytic cure was both conceived in the structure of language and in the figure of the analyst being invested with the keys of a knowledge. The latter as transference-love was the artifice of analytic efficacy as well as the point of maximum resistance. But this schematic description says little about the method he invented. Wittgenstein remarked that Freud spoke of the resistance to psychoanalysis but avoided speaking of the seduction it provokes. Jacques Lacan analysed the reasons for such seduction with his many years of seminars dedicated to the work of Freud.

Michel Foucault situated Freud, as he situated Marx; as the founder of a discourse, remarking that these authors have the particularity of not only being the authors of their works, but that they produce as a surplus, a qualitative difference; the possibility, and the parameters of a new field.

Controversial as it may be, the legacy bequeathed by Freud with psychoanalysis certainly exceeds the multiple destinies it has so far had in most fields of knowledge. In its relation to other discourses, it moved from being exiled to the East of Paradise to progressively becoming the mandatory reference for modernity and post-modernity. This dubious recognition has brought with it new problems, forcing it also to respond to the wild transferences addressed to it from other discourses, and to reconsider its relation to

knowledge, while its true concern resides in its relation to a knowledge that is not known.

The value of the subject's history in psychoanalysis is akin to the fact that there is no time in the unconscious, a timelessness intrinsic to the structure of the unconscious, not made *in* time but *with* time. In this, therefore, it is similar to St Augustine's proposal that God did not create the world *in* time but *with* time.

There is not a single area of knowledge that has not been touched by Freudian psychoanalysis, whether accepting and incorporating it, or rejecting it. It seems as if psychoanalysis situates itself as an almost mandatory reference point for modernity, from literature to ethnology, from philosophy to art, moving across the laws that structure society.

In the aftermath of Freud's progressive illness and death, and broadly speaking, from approximately the 1930s onwards, different currents within psychoanalysis appeared; to name the most important ones, Annafreudism, Kleinian Psychoanalysis, Ego Psychology, Object Relations, and Self Psychology. All of these groups, despite their differences with Freud, remain within the International Psychoanalytical Association and, strictly speaking, do not depart from the main Freudian tenets.

In distinction, a paradigm took place with the theses introduced by Jacques Lacan, who rigorously interrogated Freud in a novel manner to a point that eventually led to what we consider a discontinuity with Freud's theories. His teachings were heavily based in a singular reading, interpretation, and transformation of Freud's works. After being expelled from the International Psychoanalytical Association, Lacan created his own school, *L'école freudienne de Paris*, a school that was as much outside from the IPA as from many of the tenets ascribed to Freud by the groups mentioned above.

After Lacan's dissolution of *L'école freudienne de Paris*, and since his death in 1981, the field of psychoanalysis has been dispersed in

several currents, the majority of which claim to be Lacanian, and a number of new schools and groups branched off, mainly the Freudian-Lacanian and the Lacanians.

Lacan told us in 1980 at the Caracas seminar; *I am Freudian, it is your turn if you want to be Lacanian*, although, as time moved on, the factual propositions in his seminars increased the difference with Freud. The rationale for this shift is that, as Freud himself acknowledged, ideas in fields of knowledge should not be identified with eternal truths. This was much anticipated by Freud himself distinguishing psychoanalysis both from a *Weltanschauung* and from religion.

Indisputably, however, Freud's relevance to psychoanalysis today is demonstrated as the necessary reference point for any psychoanalyst as much as for the groups and schools mentioned above. Paraphrasing Jorge Luis Borges' definition of what a classic is; Freud is strictly speaking a classic, in that he is a continuous interlocutor of those fields and of the contemporary, par excellence.

It is in this context therefore, that we should perhaps ask, as the pertinent question, where is *not* to be found the relevance of Freud for psychoanalysis today?

Trained in Buenos Aires, Argentina, María-Inés Rotmiller de Zentner and Oscar Zentner are practising psychoanalysts in Melbourne. They introduced Jacques Lacan in Australia in 1977, founding *The Freudian School of Melbourne*, the first English speaking Lacanian school of psychoanalysis, and editing *Papers of the Freudian School of Melbourne*, the first Australian psychoanalytic publication. Both resigned from *The Freudian School of Melbourne* in 1992. Since then they are directors of *Lituraterre - space for the articulation of the psychoanalytic discourse*.

List of works

Sigmund Freud's Collection

Female figure (Ishtar)

Syria, Orontes Valley, Middle Bronze Age, c.2000–1750 BC
clay, 11.7 x 4.5 cm
LDFRD 3725

Collection Freud Museum London

Cylinder seal (+ clay impression)

Old Babylonian, c.19th–18th century BC
hematite, 2.6 x 1.5 cm
LDFRD 4243

Collection Freud Museum London

Shabti figure of Senna

Egyptian, New Kingdom (18th Dynasty),
Tuthmosis III–Amenophis IV, 1479–1400 BC
limestone, 28.5 x 8.7 x 8.3 cm
LDFRD 3271

Collection Freud Museum London

Head of Osiris

Egyptian, Third Intermediate period,
1075–716 BC
bronze, 30.5 x 7.0 x 8.5 cm
LDFRD 3128

Collection Freud Museum London

Isis suckling the infant Horus

Egyptian, Late period (26th Dynasty)
664–525 BC
bronze, 24.0 x 9.4 x 4.8 cm
LDFRD 3037

Collection Freud Museum London

Donation Stele

Egyptian, Ptolemaic period, dated 301 BC.
limestone, 53.0 x 36.0 x 6.0 cm
LDFRD 4581

Collection Freud Museum London

Baboon of Thoth

Egyptian, Roman period, 30 BC–AD 395.
marble, 22.0 x 9.5 x 10.5 cm
LDFRD 3133

Collection Freud Museum London

Corinthian black-figured Alabastron

(Mistress of animals)

Greek, Archaic period, c.600 BC
terracotta, 28.2 x 15.0 cm
LDFRD 3699

Collection Freud Museum London

Sphinx

Greek, South Italian, late 5th–early 4th
century BC
terracotta, 21.0 x 15.0 x 8.0 cm
LDFRD 4387

Collection Freud Museum London

Athenian black-figured Lekythos

Haimon Painter (Workshop)

Greek, Classical period, c. 490–470 BC
terracotta, 16.2 cm
LDFRD 3683

Collection Freud Museum London

Balsamarium

Etruscan, 3rd century BC
bronze, 9.4 x 7.2 x 6.5 cm
LDFRD 3029

Collection Freud Museum London

Eros

Greek Hellenistic period, probably from
Tanagra, c.300–250 BC
terracotta, 8.5 x 5.0 cm
LDFRD 3897

Collection Freud Museum London

Artemis

Greek, Hellenistic period, from Myrina, 2nd
century BC
terracotta, 31.0 x 13.0 x 8.3 cm
LDFRD3273

Collection Freud Museum London

Athena

Roman, 1st or 2nd century AD, after a
Greek original of the 5th century BC
bronze, 12.5 x 4.5 x 3.8 cm
LDFRD 3007

Collection Freud Museum London

Phallus (winged)

Roman
bronze, 4.8 x 3.5 cm
LDFRD 4680

Collection Freud Museum London

Phallus (double)

Roman
bronze, 4.8 x 8.0 cm
LDFRD 4682

Collection Freud Museum London

Phallus (double)

Roman
bronze, 7.0 x 7.0 cm
LDFRD 4684

Collection Freud Museum London

Head of a Guardian Figure

Chinese, Ming Dynasty, 15th–17th century
AD
bronze, 17.0 x 15.0 x 15.5 cm
LDFRD 3444

Collection Freud Museum London

Table screen

Chinese, Qing Dynasty, 19th century AD
wood and jade; screen (without stand) 19.0
x 12.6 x 2.5 cm
LDFRD 3001

Collection Freud Museum London

Films

Sigmund Freud's home movies 1930–1939

A compilation of films, with added
commentary by Anna Freud prepared in
1978, supervised by Clifford Yorke.
24:00 mins
Courtesy Freud Museum London

Sigmund Freud: His offices and home, *Vienna* 1938

by Gene Friedman, 1974
from photographs by Edmund Engelman
Filmmakers Library, New York
16:00 mins
Courtesy Freud Museum London

Photographs by Edmund Engelman

*Entrance door to practice of Sigmund
Freud, Bergasse 19* 1938
gelatin silver print, 28.0 x 35.5 cm

*The writing arrangement in Freud's study;
desk with antiquities* 1938
gelatin silver print, 28.0 x 35.5 cm

*The couch in the consulting room of
Sigmund Freud* 1938
gelatin silver print, 28.0 x 35.5 cm

*The Couch (close-up) with the armchair in
which Freud used to sit during analysis* 1938
gelatin silver print, 28.0 x 35.5 cm

*Portrait of Sigmund Freud at his desk with
antiquities* 1938
gelatin silver print, 28.0 x 35.5 cm

Sigmund Freud sitting at his desk 1938
gelatin silver print, 28.0 x 35.5 cm

*View of the study from the door; writing
desk in foreground* 1938
gelatin silver print, 28.0 x 35.5 cm

View from consulting room into study 1938
gelatin silver print, 28.0 x 35.5 cm

All photographs courtesy Thomas Engelman

Books

Ernest Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian
Resurrection*, 2 vols. London: Medici
Society Ltd., 1911.
State Library of Victoria

Howard Carter and Arthur Mace, *The Tomb
of Tut-Ankh-Amen, Discovered by the Late
Earl of Carnarvon and Howard Carter*, 2
vols. London: Cassell, 1923.
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Percy Handcock, *Mesopotamian
Archaeology : An Introduction to the
Archaeology of Babylonia and Assyria*,
London: Macmillan, 1912
State Library of Victoria

Johannes Overbeck, *Pompeji*, Leipzig: W
Engelmann, 1884.
State Library of Victoria

Acknowledgments

MUMA gratefully acknowledges the following people for their contributions to the exhibition:

Guest curator Dr. Janine Burke, art historian and honorary professor in the School of English, Communications and Performance Studies at Monash; Michael Molnar, Director, and Keith Davies, Librarian, Freud Museum, London; David Ellis, Director, Michael Turner, Senior Curator, and colleagues at the Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney; The Engelman Estate for their support in making Edmund Engelman's photographs available for the exhibition and publication; Lenders to the exhibition including the State Library of Victoria and the University of Sydney; Maria Prendergast, Suzanne Heywood and Professor Isaac Schweitzer for their much appreciated support in the development of the project; catalogue essayists, Oscar Zentner, María-Inés Rotmiler de Zentner and Michael Turner; Sofia Marques, Sculpture Conservator, Victoria & Albert Museum, Alayne Alvis, Objects conservator, Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney and Penny Byrne, conservator, Melbourne; Andrew Foster and Tom Ingpen of POD Museum and Art Services; Stewart and Donna Russell at Spacecraft for printing exhibition murals; Brian Scales for exemplary construction; MUMA's staff; volunteers Renee Cosgrave, Katia Lallo and Masha Makarova; installation crew Jess Johnson, Danny Lacy and James Needham; Yanni Florence, designer of MUMA's publications. Many thanks are also due to Associate Professor Robert Nelson for contribution to public programs; and to Rae Frances, Dean, Faculty of Arts, for agreeing to officially open the exhibition.

MUMA also acknowledges the Mercure Hotel for our guests' accommodation.

At the Nicholson Museum, thanks are also due to the following staff for their contributions to the exhibition in Sydney: Dr Elizabeth Bollen (Curatorial Assistant), Maree Clutterbuck (Collections Manager), Dr Craig Barker (Education & Public Programs Manager), Georgia Cunningham (Exhibitions Manager), Alayne Alvis (Conservator), Julie Taylor (Collections Officer), and Catherine Timbrell (Administration Officer).

Sigmund Freud's Collection: an Archaeology of the Mind

Monash University Museum of Art
5 September – 17 November 2007

Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney
2 January – 30 March 2008

Developed by Monash University Museum of Art,
in association with the Nicholson Museum, University of Sydney

Guest Curator: Dr Janine Burke
Assistant Curator: Dr Kyla McFarlane
Catalogue design: Yanni Florence
Pre-press: John Selton, Optimo Imaging
Print production: Gus Smith, Econoprint
Installation: David H Thomas, Jess Johnson, Danny Lacy, and James Needham

Catalogue published by
Monash University Museum of Art
September 2007 Edition 600 ISBN 0 9775782 6 7
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• PROF. D^E FREUD •
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