

# The “Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS)” A Solution for Switzerland?

By Peter-Andrew Schwarz



Students from Basel University during a survey with metal detectors at a Celtic and Roman find spot in Canton Jura.

Following the contribution by Michael Lewis, “Preserving the Past: Recording Archaeological Finds Made by the Public”, in the last issue of *Cahn's Quarterly* (CQ1/2018, pp. 4-5), I was asked whether the “Portable Antiquities Scheme” (PAS), which was introduced in Great Britain twenty years ago, could serve as an example or model for Switzerland.

Before delving any deeper into the matter, it is important to note that the legal situation in Switzerland is both clearer and – in line with the goal of ensuring the long-term protection of the country's cultural heritage – stricter than in Great Britain. According to Art. 724 of the Schweizerisches Zivilgesetzbuch (ZGB, Swiss Civil Code) all finds made in the soil are public property. They must therefore be handed over to the responsible cantonal authorities regardless of the circumstances under which and by whom they were found. Furthermore, all 26 cantons have either a specialist unit for archaeology or at least an official reporting office which is responsible for the protection of its archaeological heritage and for storing any finds.<sup>1</sup> The cantonal laws and directives not only describe the tasks and competences of

the specialist units but also specify, for instance, that the use of metal detectors is prohibited or requires a license.

However, due to their limited resources, which also have to cover rescue excavations in connection with building activities, these specialist units are generally unable to carry out proactive, i.e. systematic and comprehensive surveys. Such capacity bottlenecks can, on a case-by-case basis, be relieved with the help of university institutes for archaeology, but these, too, cannot ensure the long-term monitoring of an entire area.

Not least for this reason, many specialist units nowadays collaborate closely, sometimes on an almost institutionalised level, with non-professional volunteers. The basis for this type of cooperation is provided by the “Richtlinien für die Zusammenarbeit mit Ehrenamtlichen” (Guidelines for Collaboration with Volunteers) published in 2013 by the Konferenz Schweizerischer Kantonsarchäologinnen und Kantonsarchäologen (KSKA, Conference of Swiss Cantonal Archaeologists)<sup>2</sup> and the “Guidelines – Richtlinien für archäologische Untersuchungen” (Guidelines for Archaeological Investiga-

tions) published in 2015 by the Trägerverein Horizont.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, an important role is played by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Prospektion Schweiz (AGPS, Work Group Prospection Switzerland) which acts as an umbrella organisation and network for all parties involved in prospection, such as university institutes, cantonal specialist units and non-professional volunteers.<sup>4</sup>

The “Portable Antiquities Scheme” is based on a very different legal and institutional framework and cannot therefore be applied to the Swiss context, or only to a very limited degree. This does not, however, mean that PAS should be rejected *a priori*. Quite the contrary: The scheme shows impressively how great the potential of long-term, spatially comprehensive prospection projects and constructive public-private collaboration can be with regard to the investigation of the settlement history of specific areas – and not just in those cases in which the archaeological heritage can be protected only partially or not at all because of an insufficient legal basis, the lack of an institutional framework and/or deficient resources.

The rigorous and systematic reporting of finds in the context of PAS, i.e. their documentation in a central and publicly accessible data-



The Celtic potin coin of the Zurich type (top) and the Late Republican denar which was minted ca. 125 B.C. (bottom) were found during systematic prospections in the Brünig area. They indicate that this important mountain pass between central Switzerland and the Bernese Oberland was already used – at least sporadically – in the late 2nd to early 1st century B.C.

base, is of an exemplary character. In Switzerland coins are documented in such a way – albeit only to a certain degree. Since 1992, the internationally networked "Inventar der Fundmünzen der Schweiz" (IFS, Inventory of Coins Found in Switzerland), a venture of the Schweizerische Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften (SAGW, Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences) has documented all numismatic finds – both old and new – in a central database and publishes the annual bulletin IFS ITMS IRMS. In this organ all newly found coins in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein are published. The IFS may, however, make data on the coins available online only with the explicit permission of the cantons in which the finds were made.<sup>5</sup>

Links:

- 1 <http://www.archaeologie.ch/d.htm>
- 2 [http://www.archaeologie.ch/archaeologie\\_richtlinien\\_ehrenamtliche\\_version%2010-2013.pdf](http://www.archaeologie.ch/archaeologie_richtlinien_ehrenamtliche_version%2010-2013.pdf)
- 3 [http://www.archaeologie-schweiz.ch/fileadmin/user\\_upload/customers/archaeologie\\_schweiz/Partner/H2015/Arbeitsgruppen/Guidelines\\_Arch\\_20151102.pdf](http://www.archaeologie-schweiz.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/customers/archaeologie_schweiz/Partner/H2015/Arbeitsgruppen/Guidelines_Arch_20151102.pdf)
- 4 <https://www.prospektion.ch>
- 5 <https://www.fundmuenzen.ch/dienstleistungen/datenbanken/muenzen.php>



Peter-Andrew Schwarz is Vindonissa Professor for Provincial Roman Archaeology at Basel University and as part of his teaching and research activities has carried out various prospection projects in Cantons Aargau, Baselland, Jura and Obwalden. He is *inter alia* member of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Prospektion Schweiz (AGPS), the Commission of the Inventar der Fundmünzen der Schweiz (IFS) and the Commission du Patrimoine Archéologique et Paléontologique (CPAP) of Canton Jura.

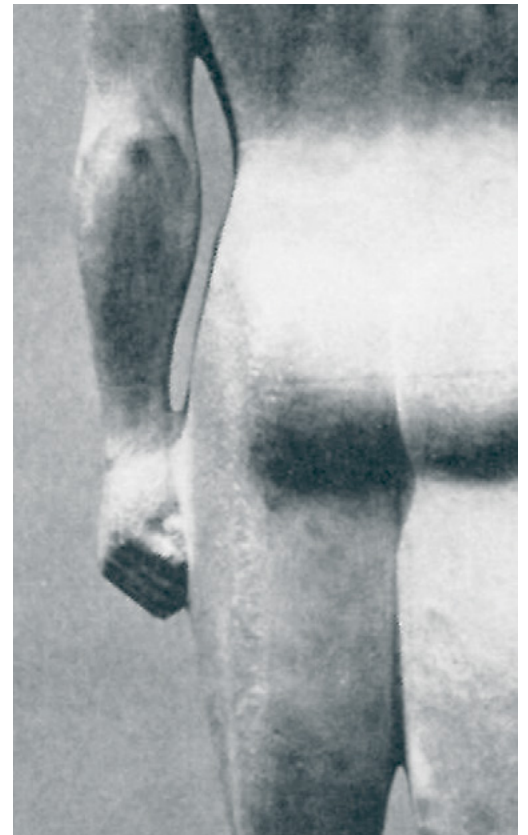
## My Choice

# A Hand of a Kouros

By Jean-David Cahn



A HAND OF A KOUROS. L. 16.5 cm. Marble. Greek, Archaic, ca. 550 B.C. CHF 18,000



KOUROS OF TENEA (Detail with left hand). Ca. 560 B.C. From: G.M.A. Richter, *Kouroi*, 1988, fig. 249.

Surviving Archaic sculpture is very rare and generally in a poor state of preservation. Notwithstanding this, the sculpture of this period has provided us with some of the finest works of art created in Antiquity. The intensity and sheer energy of the sculptures testifies to the skill of the craftsmen who made them and surprises and moves us despite the often corroded and battered condition of the pieces. Take, for example, this life-size left hand of a kouros who was depicted in the typical pose, striding forward energetically. The hand originally touched his left thigh – the contact area is clearly visible – and it is clenched to form a fist in a gesture of strength and youthful potency. But see how elongated the hand is with its refined fingers and slender thumb! Power and elegance are in perfect harmony with each other.

Dating a fragment like this hand is not easy due to the rich local variety of landscape styles, but I would suggest a date of ca. 550 B.C. It is particularly close to the kouros of Tenea in Munich, who has slightly shorter fingers but the same inwardly curled finger tips. Possibly sculpted on one of the Greek Islands, the hand appears to have been broken

off in Antiquity as the fine iron-oxide patina covers the entire surface including the areas of breakage.

Archaic sculpture is very rare on the market and this is also reflected in the limited museum holdings outside Greece. It is therefore considered exquisite to be able to show Archaic sculpture, which in view of its artistic quality is undoubtedly a match for Classical sculpture – I personally prefer Archaic over Classical art. From a historical point of view, the Archaic Period is extraordinarily interesting. It was an aristocratic society in which something akin to an awareness of its own intellectual identity began to emerge. This was the period when the oral tradition was increasingly fixed in writing and when the Iliad and the Odyssey were first written down. Preceding the period of radical social change that followed in the wake of the catastrophic Persian invasion of Greece, it appears to me as a still slightly innocent world, lacking a single dominant centre of power and without the ambition to totally destroy its enemies on the battlefield. This fragment representing the hand of a kouros thus speaks to me of the almost Arcadian time before the loss of the Archaic smile.