

ROMAN TREASURES – buried and rediscovered

21 November 2008 – 22 March 2009

Special exhibition in the Swiss National Museum, Zurich

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ROMAN GOLD TREASURES IN THE SWISS NATIONAL MUSEUM, ZURICH

The exhibition «ROMAN TREASURES – buried and rediscovered» opens at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich on 21 November. At its heart is the gold hoard unearthed in 1741 at Lunnern in the Reuss Valley. It had been buried almost 1,500 years previously, and the gold jewellery is one of the most valuable finds from this period. The richly documented history surrounding the discovery offers an insight into the Age of Enlightenment and the early days of archaeological research.

The 3rd century AD was a time of great political instability in the Roman Empire. With the danger of plunder ever present, many people sought a place of safety for their valuables. They hoarded and concealed them in their houses or gardens, somewhere nearby or at holy places. Many of these treasures are only now being rediscovered by archaeologists.

Numerous spectacular hoards buried around that time have been found in Switzerland and the neighbouring countries. They include gold and silver jewellery, silver and bronze tableware, as well as objects made of bronze and iron. Often these were accompanied by coins, which enable us to identify the approximate time at which the treasures were originally buried. Many of the items on show have never been exhibited in Switzerland before.

The gold treasure of Lunnern consists of 17 items of gold jewellery, including chains with elaborately worked clasps as well as various pendants, earrings and a bracelet– all of the highest quality and testimony to the excellence of antique goldwork. The exhibition presents and explains the techniques used by the goldsmiths of the period, some of which are still practised today.

Pictures and numerous documents related to the first excavations in Lunnern in 1741 provide an insight into the Age of Enlightenment. It was a period that saw some of the first museums established, in the form of *Kunstkammern* (chambers of art) and cabinets of curiosities, one of them being in Zurich's Wasserkirche church.

This fascinating exhibition is a voyage of discovery through an age long past. It is supplemented by a comprehensive programme of events for visitors both young and old, including guided tours with a Roman-style drinks reception and a range of workshops.

Exhibition publications

- «The Roman Gold Jewellery from Lunnern (ZH). A hoard from the 3rd century AD and its history» COLLECTIO ARCHAEOLOGICA 6, published by the Swiss National Museum and Chronos Verlag Zurich. In collaboration with the Zurich cantonal archaeology office and the University of Bern. Text in German, with summaries in English, French and Italian.
- «Roman Treasures –buried and rediscovered». This publication (in four languages) looks at the main areas covered in the exhibition, with brief, concise texts and numerous colour illustrations.
- «Auf den Spuren eines römischen Goldschatzes. Eine Zeitreise». Accompanying brochure for families.
- «Römische Goldschätze – vergraben und wiederentdeckt». Dossier for teachers.

Publications can be obtained from the museum shop or ordered from: buchbestellung@slm.admin.ch

Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm; Thursday 10 am to 7 pm; open on public holidays

www.goldschatz.landmuseum.ch

The website contains further information about the exhibition and the accompanying programme

All the media texts and a selection of images can be downloaded from the «press» section of the homepage www.goldschatz.landmuseum.ch

For further information, please contact:

Andreas Spillmann, Director, phone +41 (0)44 218 65 11, e-mail: andreas.spillmann@slm.admin.ch

Heidi Amrein, Project Manager, phone +41 (0)44 218 68 22, e-mail: heidi.amrein@slm.admin.ch

Anita Brumann, Assistant Project Manager, phone +41 (0)44 218 68 26, e-mail: anita.brumann@slm.admin.ch

Eliane Burckhardt, Head of PR, phone +41 (0)44 218 65 49, e-mail: eliane.burckhardt@slm.admin.ch