

EXHIBIT WATCH

## Devotion and Decadence

Luxury arts of ancient Rome are the focus of a unique exhibition hosted by New York University's Institute for the Study of the Ancient World. Titled **Devotion and Decadence**, the show presents a spectacular collection of ancient Roman silver artifacts found buried near Berthouville, France.

The Berthouville treasure, as it has come to be known, was discovered in 1830, when it emerged from under the plow of an unsuspecting farmer in rural Normandy. It consists of about 90 silver objects (statuettes and decorated vessels), some of the finest ancient Roman silver pieces to have survived to modern times.

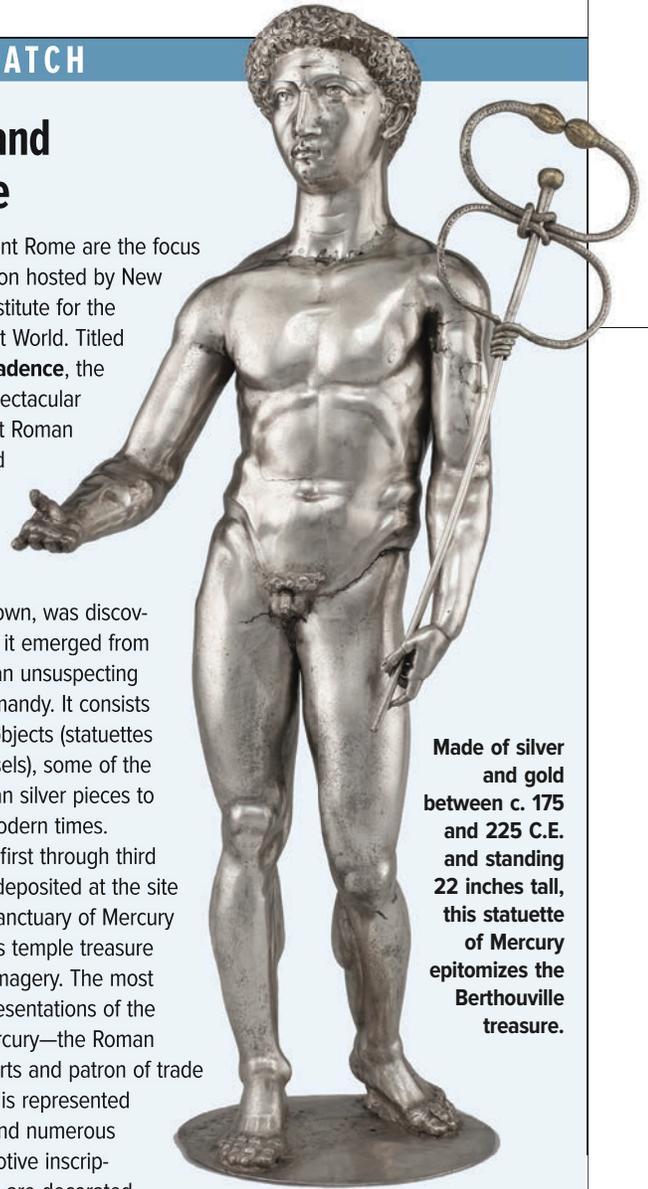
Produced in the first through third centuries C.E. and deposited at the site of a Gallo-Roman sanctuary of Mercury during antiquity, this temple treasure is rich in religious imagery. The most prominent are representations of the local version of Mercury—the Roman inventor of all the arts and patron of trade and merchants. He is represented by two statuettes and numerous reliefs, as well as votive inscriptions. Other vessels are decorated with relief scenes from Greco-Roman mythology and the Trojan War.

Many of the artifacts were apparently made locally, in which they exemplify the local silversmithing tradition and attest to interactions between Roman and indigenous Gallic culture. The Gallic and Roman names of donors engraved in the objects that were offered to the god Mercury underscore that the Berthouville shrine was a key place of intercultural exchange.

Organized originally by the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles—in collaboration with the National Library of France, which owns the treasure—the exhibit additionally showcases about 75 other luxury objects from the collections of the Bibliothèque nationale de France that aid the presentation of the diverse contents and contexts of the Berthouville treasure.



[biblicalarchaeology.org/exhibits](http://biblicalarchaeology.org/exhibits) For more on this exhibit and others, visit us online.



Made of silver and gold between c. 175 and 225 C.E. and standing 22 inches tall, this statuette of Mercury epitomizes the Berthouville treasure.

PHOTO BY TANNEE CRACCHIOLO, © GETTY & BNF

LETTERS

Star captionist in Houston

To the Editor:  
I was reading my latest subscription to *Biblical Archaeology Review* (a national archaeology magazine), and suddenly a name popped out at me—Ronald Burfield, Houston, MN. He had won 2nd Place in a cartoon caption contest.

I must admit, I don't know Ronald Burfield, so I looked him up in the telephone book, and there his name appeared.

I had no idea that anyone else was reading *Biblical Archaeology Review*, but since he does, he must be a fine fellow.

James Little, Houston

POLITICAL NEWS  
Re: separating immigrant

GOOD NEWS  
FROM  
MISSION 6

The MISSION 6 Playground Project has been awarded a \$100,000 grant.

Outdoor Recreation in the amount of \$100,000. This is a big step in the funds to complete the project.

Watch for more updates as we continue to fund toward the project. Tentative build has been planned for the month of May.

## Two Readers Meet at a BAR

At least two individuals read **BAR** in the small town of Houston, Minnesota—population 979.

In the July/August 2018 issue of **BAR**, we announced Ronald Burfield of Houston, Minnesota, as a runner-up for our November/December 2017 cartoon caption contest. Shortly after, James Little—another resident of Houston—wrote a letter to the editor of the town's newspaper, the *Houston Banner*, commending Burfield on his achievement. Although not acquainted with Burfield, Little celebrated the fact that another person in Houston shared his love of Biblical archaeology!

Burfield read Little's letter in the June 28, 2018, edition of the *Houston Banner* and shared it with us. We hope **BAR** continues to connect people—both near and far, past and present!

### WHO DID IT?

Which archaeologist first discovered the ancient city of Troy?

ANSWER ON P. 66