

A Roman Cavalry Helmet and the Phrygian Cap

The Crosby Garrett helmet is well preserved example of a two-piece Roman cavalry helmet in the style of a 'Phrygian Cap', discovered close to Carlisle in 2010 by metal detectorists. Grampus Heritage who lead the EVEHD project have been involved with local Cumbrian volunteers in surveying the site of the discovery to see if there are any associated Roman discoveries yet to be made. With sponsorship from the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery and the Portable Antiquities Scheme, Grampus and a local team identified earthworks which seemed to be part of a substantial enclosure surrounded by ditches, within which buildings had once stood. The enclosure, which measures as much as 500 metres (1,600 ft) long on its southern side, combines both native British and Roman methods of fortification. A sunken area within the enclosure may possibly have served as a paddock for horses, while the evidence for the buildings is concentrated in the enclosure's northern portion. The remnants of Romano-British field systems in the surrounding area show that the area was under cultivation and animal remains found on the site indicate that the inhabitants



also raised livestock, including sheep, goats and pigs. The presence of Roman pottery suggests that the inhabitants had adopted some elements of the Roman lifestyle, but their community may well have been there long before the Romans arrived. Archaeological evidence from the enclosure indicates that the site may have been first settled as far back as the Bronze Age, at least 1,000 years before the helmet was deposited.

The Crosby Garrett Helmet on show at Christies

Through EVEHD, a completely different strand of discovery was prompted by a volunteer, Christian Rieger who said he "went down the rabbit hole with the Phrygian cap" and joined with others through the EVEHD facebook page to discover something of the complex history and symbolism of this style of cap. The Crosby Garrett Helmet was restored and sold at

Christies for £2.3 million, an extraordinary amount of money. Cumbria's main heritage museum Tullie House, tried to find the cash but could not even raise one third.

Cristian Chirita, a Romanian volunteer, spotted the Ostrov Helmet (right) in Constanța Museum and joined the discussion"Coiful este decorat cu un vultur încins de doi șerpi onduțați, sub capetele șerpilor sùpine certecatorul Zaharia Covacef. este reprezentat zeul Marte nud, ținând în mîna stîngă scutul, iar în cea dreaptă, lancea. Zeul Marte are așezat pe cap un coif de pene este și Dioscur nud ce tine cu mîna dreaptă un cal în frîu, în picioare, cu boneta frigiana pe cap"; Translation: The (Ostrov) helmet is decorated with an eagle girded by two curled snakes. Mars is shown in the nude, holding the shield in his left hand and a lance in his right. Mars is sitting on a helmet



of feathers with Dioscurus, also nude and with his right hand on a bridle of a horse, standing with a Phrygian cap on his head.



A German volunteer, Hans Siegel added that he had seen a Trojan figure of an archer wearing a Phrygian cap in the Glyptothek in Munich (left).

Adding to the linking of the cap with ancient Troy a French volunteer, Marine Duteil, working with Grampus mentioned the figure of Paris seducing Helen, that can be seen on archaic pottery in the Louvre, Paris, France (below)



All four of the helmets feature the Phrygian cap style which has become very symbolic; here is a summary of what the volunteers discovered...

Liberty

In Europe and America the cap came to signify freedom and the pursuit of liberty after it was confused with the Pileus, a brimless felt hat given to emancipated slaves in ancient Rome. Accordingly, the Phrygian cap is sometimes called a liberty cap. As such a truncated, stylization of it were the caps of the North and the South in the American Civil War. It appears on the Cuban coat of arms and the coat of arms of the senate of North Carolina.



The fall of dictators

Following the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC, Brutus and his co-conspirators instrumentalized this symbolism of the *pileus* to signify the end of Caesar's dictatorship and a return to the (Roman) Republican system

Republicanism.



Symbolism in the French Revolution was designed to distinguish and celebrate the main features of the revolution and ensure public identification and support. In order to effectively illustrate the differences between the new Republic and the old regime, the leaders needed to implement a new set of symbols to be celebrated instead of the old religious and monarchical symbolism. To this end, symbols were borrowed from historic cultures such as the Romans and redefined, while those of the old regime were either destroyed or reattributed acceptable characteristics. These revised symbols were used to instil in the public a new sense of tradition and reverence for the Enlightenment and the Republic. One such symbol was the re-invented Phrygian cap – worn by revolutionary soldiers (left).

The importance for EVEHD

This short report shows the importance of 'engaging volunteers in European heritage discovery'. The theme came to light through the activities of the UK, German and Romanian partners and was interesting because of the linkages. Like many things that EVEHD has found, the threads of discovery go back to the Roman Empire and beyond. The discussions and links were brought about by Grampus's work in Cumbria and the astonishing discovery of the Crosby Garret Helmet but went into unknown channels because volunteers from other countries got involved via the facebook presence of the EVEHD project