

Thanks to the generous funding received from the Finds Research Group, I was able to attend the group's visit to Leiden in November 2023. This was a highly enjoyable and valuable visit, and I am very grateful to the committee for providing the funding which enabled me to take part.

The visit began on the morning of Friday the 10th when we were greeted at the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden with a fascinating introduction to the new exhibition "The Year 1000" by curator Annemarieke Willemsen. This provided us with some background to the decision to put on an exhibition covering a period which has not necessarily received the same attention within the museum previously. Following this initial talk, Annemarieke and project assistant Pleun van Lieshout led us up to the main exhibition itself for a guided tour.

"The Year 1000" is a very well-presented exhibition, making good use of multimedia displays, but as is to be expected the real stars of the show are the artefacts. This combination of objects from the museum's own collection and loans from across the Netherlands and further afield provides a clear overview of both daily life and the area's position with a broader network of trade, politics, and religion in the early medieval world. In terms of display several artefacts, notably the ship timbers reused within domestic buildings, were of particular interest as they have clear parallels with items in the York Archaeology collection which we have recently put on display for the first time. Other highlights included the Middle Eastern fabrics transported to the Netherlands as wrapping for relics, preserving fragile materials which might have otherwise been lost, and providing a transmission point for decorative motifs.

Following lunch, my group was taken on a guided tour of the Roman galleries by curator Jasper de Bruin. For me, the highlight of these galleries was the cavalry helmet from Peel, an exceptional piece of work with an unusual and striking post-depositional patina. We were then taken into the collections store by Pleun to see the recently acquired Henk van Wijk collection of medieval and early modern pewters. Pleun's expertise was especially helpful in terms of understanding the devotional items of pilgrim badges and ampullae.

After a short walk across town, we arrived at the Textile Research Centre where Dr Gillian Vogelslang-Eastwood gave us a good introduction to and tour of the large collection, made up principally of donated clothes and costumes from across the world, including a fragment of textile from Çatalhöyük. We also had time to explore the contrasting exhibition of 1920s fashion curated by an intern at the centre, which included some interesting colonial adaptations of Western costume.

The following day, we took the train to Haarlem. After admiring the Art Nouveau decorations at the station, we moved on to Teylers Museum, the oldest museum in the Netherlands. This is a very traditional museum, complete with 19th-century wooden cases, housing an impressive collection of palaeontology, natural history, and geology, alongside historical scientific instruments and curiosities. I particularly enjoyed the display of magic tricks and illusion cabinets.

After lunch, we visited the Archaeological Museum of Haarlem, located in the basement of the Vleeshal on the Grote Markt. In addition to their standing display of material recovered from excavations in the city, the temporary exhibition "Haarlemmer Hout" showcased some

of the exceptional wooden items from their collection. These included some really unusual items: a very fragile-looking songbird cage and a wooden rattle for use by people suffering from leprosy to alert passers-by of their presence.

We finished off our day in Haarlem with a guided walking tour of the city, highlighting in particular the high number of almshouses, established in the early modern period and still active today as homes for single people of limited means.

On the final day I took the opportunity to return to the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden for another look around "The Year 1000", and a chance to explore the rest of the museum, before reconvening with the rest of the group for a final pancake lunch.

The trip was expertly organised and managed by Annemarieke and Pleun, covering as it did a number of different sites and areas of interest in a comparatively short time. On a personal level, I really valued the opportunity to go around the exhibitions at Rijksmuseum van Oudheden with their curators, as it provided a real insight into the decisions made when working with national collections and designing a "blockbuster" exhibition which centres finds. Particular elements, such as the innovative coin display with projected videos showing close detail, have fed directly back into approaches to my own work, and will act as inspiration for the exhibition on which I am currently working. It was also a real pleasure and benefit to view these displays alongside other members of the FRG, whose generosity in sharing their expertise and experience with different areas during the trip helped to inform my understanding. I look forward to building on the professional relationships established during the visit and will draw inspiration from the displays in my own work communicating finds to the public as a Collections Officer.

I am very grateful to the Finds Research Group for generously supporting my attendance on this trip.