

DICTIONARY OF ARTIFACTS

Barbara Ann Kipfer

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PREFACE

A Dictionary of Artifacts is for students, archaeology professors, archaeologists, museum staff, archaeology volunteers, and general readers who want informative definitions in accessible language about the vocabulary describing artifacts. More than 2000 entries cover all aspects of artifacts: specific artifact types, prominent examples of artifacts, technological terms, culture periods, words associated with the making of and description of artifacts (including materials and methods), principles and techniques of examination and identification, and terms regarding the care and preservation of specimens.

Artifacts are anything made and/or used by humans, including tools, containers, manufacturing debris, and food remains. The coverage includes vocabulary used to describe artifacts (e.g., plaited, tenoned), vocabulary concerned with their discovery, analysis, typology, dating, and conservation (e.g., cordage, seriation), and types of basic artifacts (e.g., abrader, milling stone). This is neither an encyclopedia nor an encyclopedic dictionary. This book does not include architecture (e.g., building components, features) or specific historical artifacts (e.g., the Hope Diamond). Only very major subtypes are defined; for example, not every type of adze, point, or ware is included. Major time periods are included, but only the ones that are fairly uncontroversial and those referred to in the definitions of other entries.

The entries in this book are terms regarding:

- artifact analysis, examination, and identification
- artifact care, handling, and preservation
- artifact decoration
- artifact description (shape, use-wear, function)
- artifact production and technology (including materials and methods)

- prominent examples of artifacts (but not every type of adze, point, ware, etc.)
- specific artifact types (in bone/horn, ceramic, glass, lithic, metal, shell, textile/basket, wood, etc.)

Knowledge about artifacts is helpful to students in many areas, especially in the field and on visits to museums. Artifacts are the tangible remains of our ancestors and awareness of them and their importance is beneficial to a student's well-rounded education. *A Dictionary of Artifacts* will also be useful for teaching. However, many very technological and methodological entries that are only of interest to professional archaeologists are not included, as well as the thousands of possible pottery types and – if you think about it – the whole gamut of possible artifacts (cell phone, cellophane tape!?).

While most archaeologists generally know the meaning of terms used in the areas of their own research, it is often difficult to find good definitions of artifacts for unfamiliar time periods or cultures. This book attempts to be cross-cultural and cross-Atlantic in selections and definitions. A certain number of out-of-date terms are defined because these terms appear in literature that is still read.

This book is an especially good introduction to the world of artifacts, culling the types of entries that are found in larger and more general archaeological dictionaries and adding to that list in useful ways without getting overly technical or specialized. The reader will not find very specific artifacts, all possible cultures, all of the highly technical words for a field – such as all the techniques and materials used for preserving ceramics or lithics in the laboratory. *A Dictionary of Artifacts* puts into one place the basic terminology for all categories of artifacts.

Barbara Ann Kipfer, PhD

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Bronze Age looped palstave ax. Courtesy of Museum Reproductions; Department of Archaeology Teaching Collection, University of Reading

Egyptian basket, New Kingdom, 1411–1375 BC. Courtesy of akg-images

Clay tablet showing record of food supplies, from southern Iraq, c. 3000 BC. Courtesy of British Museum

Hymn to Ur-Nammu, cuneiform script on clay, c. 2060 BC. Courtesy of akg-images

Knives. Courtesy of akg-images

Mud brick from Thebes stamped with name of Ramesses II, 19th Dynasty, 1250 BC. Courtesy of British Museum

Piece mold: terracotta mold of a man on horseback, Mesopotamia, 2000–1600 BC. Courtesy of British Museum

Pressure-flaked blade: ripple flaked flint knife, Egyptian, late Predynastic period, c. 3200 BC. Courtesy of British Museum

Woodland vessel. Courtesy of University of Arkansas Museum

A

abacus: a calculating table or frame, specifically one in which balls slide upon wires, used for the mechanical solution of arithmetical problems.

Abbevillian: name for the period of the earliest hand-ax industries of Europe, taken from Abbeville, the type site near the mouth of the River Somme in northern France. The site is a gravel pit in which crudely chipped oval or pear-shaped hand axes were discovered, probably dating to the Mindel glaciation. This was one of the key places which showed that man was of great antiquity. In 1939, Abbé Breuil proposed the name Abbevillian for both the hand ax and the industry, which preceded the Acheulian in Europe.

Abejas phase: first important agricultural phase in the Tehuacan Valley of Mexico, dated 3500–1500 BC, after the introduction of maize.

Abingdon ware: a Neolithic pottery c. 3900–3200 BC, found in a causewayed camp about 15 km south of Oxford, England. The pottery is fairly heavy and formed into round-bottomed bowls with frequent-stroke decoration and some having handles.

abrade: to scrape or wear away by friction or erosion. [abrasion (n.)]

abrader: a stone tool with abrasive qualities, such as pumice or sandstone, used in grinding, smoothing, sharpening, or shaping tools or other objects. [abrading stone]

absolute age: amount of time elapsed, with reference to a specific time scale, since an object was made or used.

absolute dating: determination of age with reference to a specific time scale, such as a fixed calendrical system or in years before present (BP), based on measurable physical and chemical qualities or historical associations such as coins and written records. The date on a coin is an absolute date, as are AD 1492 and 501 BC. [see relative dating]

absorption: process by which a liquid is drawn into and fills the pores of a permeable, porous body.

Abydos, tablets of: two hieroglyphic inscriptions containing the names of Egyptian kings that were found on the walls in a small temple at Abydos, Egypt. The first tablet has the names of the kings of the 12th and 18th dynasties and it is now in the British Museum. The second tablet begins with Menes, one of the first kings of Egypt, and has a complete list of the first two dynasties as well as a number of names from the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 9th, 10th, and 11th dynasties. It was discovered in 1864 by Auguste Mariette, who published the book *Abydos* in 1869.

Abydos ware: pottery of Canaanite (Syro-Palestinian) origin found in the royal tombs of the 1st and 2nd dynasties (the Old Kingdom) at Abydos, Saqqara, Abusir el-Melek, and other sites in Upper Egypt, dating to the Early Bronze Age II (3300–2700 BC). The pottery, often red-rose slipped and burnished or painted with geometric motifs, includes jugs, bottles, and jars. Most common are the red-slipped jugs, some of a hard-baked “metallic” quality, with handles attached to the rim and a typical stamped base. This pottery class took its name from Abydos, the first site at which it was found, in Upper Egypt.

acanthus: conventionalized representation of the leaf of the *Acanthus spinosus* plant, found on the lower parts of Corinthian and Composite capitals, and also used for enrichment of various elements in Classical architecture.

accession: an object acquired by a museum or collector as a part of a permanent collection; also, the act of processing and recording an addition to a permanent collection.

accession catalog: an accounting system used in the lab after artifacts and ecofacts are initially processed and providing the numbers with which artifacts and ecofacts are marked for storage. Its records describe and record what was found during an archaeological investigation and it is the primary record for all materials after excavation. [accession catalogue]

accession number: number assigned to an archaeological collection that identifies its origin; part of the catalog number.

aceramic: without pottery or not using pottery; a term applied to periods and societies in which pottery is not used, especially in contrast to other periods of ceramic use and with neighboring ceramic cultures. Aceramic societies may use bark, basketry, gourds, leather, etc. for containers.

Aceramic Neolithic: early part of the Neolithic period in western Asia before the widespread use of pottery (c. 8500–6000 BC) in an economy based on the cultivation of crops or the rearing of animals or both. Aceramic Neolithic groups were in the Levant (Pre-Pottery Neolithic A and B), Zagros area (Karim Shahir, Jarmoan), and

Anatolia (Hacilar Aceramic Neolithic). Aceramic Neolithic groups are rarer outside western Asia.

Acheulian: a European culture of the Lower Paleolithic period named for Saint-Acheul, a town in northern France, the site of numerous stone artifacts from the period. The conventional borderline between Abbevillian and Acheulian is marked by a technological innovation in the working of stone implements, the use of a flaking tool of soft material (wood, bone, antler) in place of a hammerstone. This culture is noted for its hefty multipurpose, pointed (or almond-shaped) hand axes, flat-edged cleaving tools, and other bifacial stone tools with multiple cutting edges. The Acheulian flourished in Africa, western Europe, and southern Asia from over a million years ago until less than 100,000 years ago and is commonly associated with *Homo erectus*. This progressive tool industry was the first to use regular bifacial flaking. The term *Epoque de St Acheul* was introduced by Gabriel de Mortillet in 1872 and is still used occasionally, but after 1925 the idea of epochs began to be supplanted by that of cultures and traditions and it is in this sense that the term Acheulian is more often used today. The earliest assemblages are often rather similar to the Oldowan at such sites as Olduvai Gorge. Subsequent hand-ax assemblages are found over most of Africa, southern Asia, and western and southern Europe. The earliest appearance of hand axes in Europe is still referred to by some workers as Abbevillian, denoting a stage when hand axes were still made with crude, irregular devices. The type site, near Amiens in the Somme Valley, contained large hand-ax assemblages from around the time of the penultimate interglacial and the succeeding glacial period (Riss), perhaps some 200,000–300,000 years ago. Acheulian hand axes are still found around the time of the last interglacial period, and hand axes are common in one part of the succeeding Mousterian period (the Mousterian of Acheulian tradition) down to as recently as 40,000 years ago. Acheulian is also used to describe the period when this culture existed. In African terminology, the entire series of hand-ax industries is called Acheulian, and the earlier phases of the African Acheulian equate with the Abbevillian of Europe. [Acheulean, Acheulian industry]

Achzib ware: a Phoenician, Iron Age II, red-slip pottery type consisting primarily of jugs with a trefoil mouth of “mushroom” rims, red slipped, and highly burnished.

acid etching: use of hydrofluoric acid to etch a pattern onto a glass surface.

acinaces: a short sword or scimitar, often very short and worn suspended from a belt around the waist, and used by Eastern nations of antiquity, especially the Medes, Persians, and Scythians.

- acisculus:** a small pick used by stone-cutters and masons in early Roman times.
- acilis:** a small javelin or harpoon, consisting of a thick short pole set with spikes. This massive weapon resembles a trident or angon. [aclys, aclyx]
- acoustic vase:** large earthenware or bronze vases that were used to strengthen actors' voices and were placed in bell towers to help boost the sound of church bells. A church in Westphalia contains fine 9th-century Badorf wares, and larger relief-band amphorae were used in 10th- and 11th-century churches. [acoustic vessel]
- acquisition:** first stage of the behavioral processes (followed by manufacture, use, and deposition), in which raw materials are procured.
- acratophorum:** a Greek and Roman table vessel for holding pure wine, as opposed to the crater which held wine mixed with water. This vessel was often made of earthenware and metal, though some were gold or silver.
- acrolith:** a Greek statue, of which the head and extremities were of stone or marble and the trunk crafted of wood which was either gilt or draped. The acrolith period was the infancy of Greek plastic art.
- acroterion:** a sculptured figure, tripod, disk, or urn, made of bronze, marble, or terra cotta, placed on the apex of the pediment of a Greek temple or other substantial building.
- activity:** used to describe the customary use of a given artifact, such as food preparation.
- activity area:** 1. A place where a specific ancient activity was located or carried out, such as food preparation or stone toolmaking. The place usually corresponded to one or more features and associated artifacts and ecofacts. In American archaeology, the term describes the smallest observable component of a settlement site. 2. A patterning of artifacts in a site indicating that a specific activity, such as stone toolmaking, took place.
- activity set:** a set of artifacts that reveals the activities of a person.
- acute:** in lithics, severe short angles coming to a sharp point.
- AD:** used as a prefix to a date, it indicates years after the birth of Christ or the beginning of the Christian calendar. Anno Domini (Latin) means "In the year of our Lord." The lower case "ad" represents uncalibrated radiocarbon years and AD denotes a calibrated radiocarbon date or a historic date that does not need calibration. There is no year 0; 1 BC is followed by AD 1.
- additive:** an organic or mineral material mixed with clay by the potter to modify its properties in forming, drying, and firing. [temper]
- additive technology:** manufacturing processes in which material is added to an original mass to form an artifact. Ceramic production and basketmaking are additive technologies.

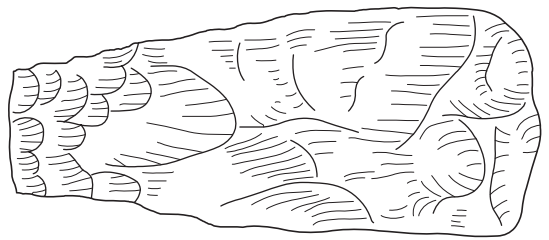
Adena: a widespread Native American culture of the Early Woodland period in the Ohio Valley and named after the Adena Mounds of Ross County. It is known for its ceremonial and complex burial practices involving the construction of mounds and by a high level of craftwork and pottery. It is dated from as early as c. 1250 BC and flourished between c. 700 and 200 BC. It is ancestral to the Hopewell culture in that region. It was also remarkable for long-distance trading and the beginnings of agriculture. The mounds (e.g., Grave Creek Mound) are usually conical and they became most common around 500 BC. There was also cremation. Artifacts include birdstones, blocked-end smoking pipes, boatstones, cord-marked pottery, engraved stone tablets, and hammerstones. Artifacts distinctive of Adena include a tubular pipe style, mica cutouts, copper bracelets and cutouts, incised tablets, stemmed projectile points, oval bifaces, concave and reel-shaped gorgets, and thick ceramic vessels decorated with incised geometric designs. [Adena point]

Adena-Rossville point: contracting stemmed point with a narrower section at the base than the main part of the arrowhead point.

adobe: Spanish term for sun-dried mud brick; also the name for a structure built out of this material. These claylike buff or brown mud bricks were not fired, but hardened and dried in the sun. The material was also used as mortar, plaster, and amorphous building material for walls. Adobe structures are found in the southwestern US and Mexico where there is heavy-textured clay soil and a sunny climate. These structures were often houses, temples, and large solid platforms in the shape of truncated pyramids.

adsorption: capacity of a material to accept and retain another substance, such as moisture, on its surface.

adze: a cutting tool, similar to an ax, in which the blade is set at right angles to the handle or haft. One of the earliest tools, it was widely distributed in Stone Age cultures in the form of a handheld stone chipped to form a blade. By Egyptian times, it was made of stone, metal, or shell and had acquired the handle. It is distinguished from the ax (working edge parallel with the haft) by its asymmetrical cross-section. This carpenter's tool was used for rough dressing of timber and possibly for tree felling and for hollowing out a dugout canoe. The adze also was used in the ritual ceremony "opening of the mouth" in Egypt; touching it to the mouth of the mummy or statue of the deceased was thought to restore the senses. [adz, adze blade]



Adze

- adze hammer:** a shaft-hole adze with additional hammer knob, normally of polished stone.
- Aeginetan marbles:** archaic Greek sculpture discovered in the temple of Pallas-Athene at Aegina, an island in the Saronic group of Greece. They are in the Glyptothek at Munich, Germany. Aegina's period of glory was the 5th century BC, which left a legacy of sculpture.
- egis:** a shield or defensive armor in ancient mythology, from the Greek word for shield; also used to describe the representation of a necklace on the head of a deity.
- egyptiaca:** a term sometimes applied to Egyptian objects found outside the borders of Egypt.
- aeolipilae:** name of a Greek metal vase with a narrow opening. It was filled with water and placed on a fire to make the chimney draw better or to indicate the wind's direction. [aeolipylae, eolipyle]
- aestel:** an object to point at words whilst reading.
- African red-slip ware:** a type of red gloss pottery made in North Africa from the 3rd to 6th centuries AD. The pieces had stamped decoration and were widely distributed.
- agate glass:** a striped-pattern glass created by mixing molten glass of different colors. The colored bands resemble those of natural agate.
- agateware:** any pottery that is veined and mottled to resemble agate.
- Age of Discovery:** a time of Western expansion through European exploration, discovery, and enlightenment about the world, which occurred from about the 15th through the 18th centuries, c. 1515–1800.
- aggregate:** an inert component such as grog or potter's flint in ceramic bodies (especially triaxial bodies). [filler, temper]
- aging:** storing prepared ceramic material (as a wet plastic clay body) to improve its working properties by thorough wetting of particles, slow compression, bacterial action (souring), and other processes.
- aiguille:** a needle-shaped drill for boring holes in rock or masonry.
- Ajuerado phase:** earliest phase of pre-village, pre-agriculture in Tehuacan Valley, Mexico, from c. 7200 to 7000 BC. There was hunting and gathering.
- alabaster:** a term used by Egyptologists for a type of white, semitransparent or translucent stone used in statuary, vases, sarcophagi, and architecture. It is a form of limestone (calcium carbonate), sometimes described as travertine. It was used increasingly from the Early Dynastic period for funerary vessels as well as for statuary and altars. Alabaster is found in Middle Egypt, a main source being Hatnub, southeast of el-Amarna. The sarcophagi of Seti I (British Museum) is a fine example. An alabaster (also alabastron or alabastrum) is also the name of a small vase or jar for precious perfumes or oils made of this material. It was often globular with a narrow mouth and often without handles.

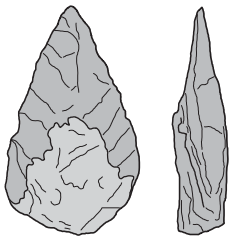
- alabastron:** a Greek container made of alabaster, but sometimes clay, used for unguents. [alabastrum]
- albarello:** a late medieval (15th to 18th centuries) Near East, Spanish, and Italian apothecary pottery jar. It was made in the form known as majolica or with a fine tin glaze over typically blue designs imitating the forms of Arabic script. Its basic shape was cylindrical but incurved and wide-mouthed for holding, using, and shelving. They average 18 cm (7 inches) high and are free of handles, lips, and spouts. A piece of paper or parchment was tied around the rim as a cover for the jar. Drug jars from Persia, Syria, and Egypt were introduced into Italy by the 15th century, and luster-decorated pots influenced by the Moors in Spain entered through Sicily. Spanish and Islamic influence is apparent in the colors used in the decoration of early 15th-century Italian albarelli, which are often blue on white. A conventional oak-leaf and floral design, combining handsomely with heraldic shields or with scrollwork and an inscribed label, frequently occurs. Geometric patterns are also common. By the end of the 18th century, albarelli had yielded to other containers. Albarelli have occasionally been found in Britain and the Netherlands. [albarelli (pl.)]
- albarium:** a white lime coating or type of stucco used in Roman times, used to cover brick walls after cement was applied. The mixture contained chalk, plaster, and white marble.
- album:** in Roman and Greek antiquity, a blank tablet on which praetors' edicts and other public notices were recorded for public information. It was also a space on the surface of a wall, covered with white plaster, upon which were written such announcements or advertisements. Afterwards, this term was extended to denote any kind of white tablets bearing an inscription.
- alembic:** a round apparatus formerly used in distilling, consisting of a cucurbit or gourd-shaped vessel containing the substance to be distilled and the upper part, the alembic proper, which was a head or cap. The beak or downward-sloping spout of the apparatus conveyed the condensed product to another vessel.
- Alexandrinum:** a type of mosaic used especially for Roman rooms, notably in the 9th century. It used tiny, geometrically shaped pieces of colored stone and glass paste that were arranged in intricate geometric patterns dotted with large disks of semiprecious stones. It often was of only two colors, red and black, on a white ground.
- Alfred Jewel:** an elaborate gold ornament which is an example of 9th-century Anglo-Saxon craftsmanship and found at Somerset, England in 1893 (now in Ashmolean Museum, Oxford). It consists of an enameled plaque with an oval portrait in different-colored cloisonné, enhanced with filigree wire and backed by a flat piece of gold engraved with

foliate decoration. Engraved around the frame are the Old English words which translate to “Alfred ordered me to be made,” assumed to be King Alfred.

alkaline glaze: a relatively low-fired glaze with a high concentration of alkali elements in its composition, often with wood ash in significant quantity.

Allerød oscillation: an interstadial (transient) period of glacial retreat at the close of the Würm glacial stage in Europe, dated to c. 12,000–11,000 years ago. This temporary increase in warmth allowed forests to establish themselves for a time in the ice-free zones. Radiocarbon dates show similar conditions prevailed in North America at about the same time. It was followed by another cold, glacial advance.

alloy: any of a number of substances which are a mixture of two or more metals, such as bronze (copper and tin), brass (copper and zinc), or tumbaga (copper and gold). An alloy has properties superior to those of the individual metals. They are not simple mixtures, but complex crystalline structures that may differ considerably from any of their constituents. Slight alterations of the proportions of the metals can bring significant changes in the properties of the alloy. Alloys containing only two major metals are known as binary alloys and those with three as ternary alloys. Gold is alloyed with various metals; when mixed with mercury it is called an amalgam, and with silver, it is called native gold. Bronze was the most important alloy in antiquity. The term is also used to describe the technique of mixing the metals.



all-purpose tool: a rare stone artifact that could be used for perforating, cutting, and scraping – normally larger than a thumb scraper or a drill but smaller than a large knife or scraper. It always has one end worked to a point for perforation with the opposite end worked in the form of an end scraper. One side is worked rather delicately for use as a knife. It is almost always oblong in shape.

altarpiece: a decorative piece connected to the altar.

alternate flaking: the opposite face of each edge is steeply flaked and each face opposing the beveled edge is flatly flaked.

alternating retouch: retouch that occurs on an edge of a lithic flake in such a way that it alternates between the dorsal and ventral sides from one end to the other of the edge. [alternate retouch]

Altitheermal: a warm, dry postglacial period in the western United States c. 5600–2500 BC. Coined by Ernst Antev in 1948, the term describes a time during which temperatures were warmer than at present. Other terms, like “long drought,” are also used.

Amarna period: a phase in the late 18th dynasty, including the reigns of Akhenaten, Smenkhkare, Tutankhamen, and Ay (1379–1352 BC), when important religious and artistic changes took place. The name is derived from the site of Akhenaten’s capital at Tell el-Amarna.

amber: fossilized pine resin, a transparent yellow, orange, or reddish-brown material from coniferous trees. It is amorphous, having a specific gravity of 1.05–1.10 and a hardness of 2–2.5 on the Mohs scale, and has two varieties – gray and yellow. Amber was appreciated and popular in antiquity for its beauty and its supposed magical properties. The southeast coast of the Baltic Sea is its major source in Europe, with lesser sources near the North Sea and in the Mediterranean. Amber is washed up by the sea. There is evidence of a strong trade in amber up the Elbe, Vistula, Danube, and into the Adriatic Sea area. The trade began in the Early Bronze Age and expanded greatly with the Mycenaeans and again with the Iron Age peoples of Italy. The Phoenicians were also specialist traders in amber. The soft material was sometimes carved for beads and necklaces.

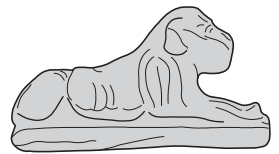
Amersfoot interstadial: an interstadial of the Weichselian stage that has radiocarbon dates between 68,000 and 65,000 bp, but it is possibly earlier.

amorphous: having no definite form or distinct shape.

amphora: a large Greek or Roman earthenware storage jar, with a narrow neck and mouth and two handles (“two-eared,” each called an *anem*) at the top. The body of the jar is usually oval and long, with a pointed bottom. It was used for holding or transporting liquids, especially wine or oil, and other substances such as resin. Its shape made it easy to handle and ideal for tying onto a mule’s or donkey’s back. They were often placed side by side in upright positions in a sand-floored cellar; sinking them into the sand or ground kept the contents cool. Amphorae were also made of glass, onyx, gold, stone, and brass and some had conventional jar bottoms with a flat surface. The container would be sealed when full, and the handle usually carried an amphora stamp, impressed before firing, giving details such as the source, the potter’s name, the date, and the capacity. Amphorae were probably not normally reused. [amphorae (pl.)]

ampulla: a small Greek or Roman globular flask or bottle with two handles and a short narrow neck. It was used for holding oil for bathers (called *ampulla oleria*) or wine, oil, vinegar, and other beverages for table use (then called *ampulla potaria*). These small containers were usually the form of a globe or bladder, though sometimes shaped like a lentil with rounded sides. [ampullae (pl.)]

amulet: small good-luck charms, often in the form of gods, hieroglyphs, and sacred animals and made of precious stones or faience. They were especially popular with Egyptians and other Eastern peoples, worn in life and placed in burials or within mummy wrappings. Amulets were supposed to afford protection and may have been thought to imbue the wearer with particular qualities. Some superstitiously thought amulets



could heal diseases or help the wearer avoid them. [meket, nehet, peripta, sa, wedja]

amulet capsule: a case or container for an amulet.

amygdaloid: almond-shaped; a term used to describe elongated ovate or cordiform biface tools.

anachronistic: pertaining to the representation of something as existing or occurring at other than in its proper time, particularly earlier, and involving or containing anything out of its proper time.

anaglyph: a term describing any work of art that is carved, chased, embossed, or sculptured – such as bas-reliefs, cameos, or other raised working of a material. Materials which are incised or sunken are called intaglios or diagraphs. The Egyptians also used the term anaglyphs for a kind of secret writing.

analysis: a stage of archaeological research that involves describing and classifying artifactual and nonartifactual data.

analytical type: arbitrary groupings that an archaeologist defines for classifying artifacts; groups of attributes that define convenient types of artifacts for comparing sites in space and time.

Anathermal: a period of cool climate in the area of North America that occurred from about 7000 to 5000 BC. This was Ernst Antev's name for the first of the Neothermal periods and it is thought to have started off cool before becoming somewhat warmer.

ancestor bust: small, painted, apelike busts that were the focus of ancestor worship in Egypt's New Kingdom. Many were of limestone or sandstone, with some smaller examples made of wood and clay.

anchor: a heavy object used to moor a ship to the sea bottom, typically having a metal shank with a pair of curved, barbed flukes.

anchor ornament: an anchor-shaped, terra cotta object with a perforation through the shank. These were widespread in the Early Bronze Age of Greece and appear later in Sicily and Malta. Grooving, as if from thread wear, suggests that these objects may have been part of looms.

Andean chronology: chronological systems of the Central Andes area with two main stages, Preceramic and Ceramic. The Ceramic is broken down into: Initial Period, 1900–1200 BC, Early Horizon 1200–300 BC, Early Intermediate Period 300 BC to AD 700, Middle Horizon 700–1100, Late Intermediate Period 1100–1438/1478, and Late Horizon 1438–1532. These Horizon periods are times of widespread unity in cultural traits. Intermediate periods are times of cultural diversification.

Andenne ware: a medieval glazed ware made around Andenne on the River Meuse. The potters produced ordinary unglazed wares as well as finer pitchers and bowls. The glazed wares were widely traded in western Europe from the late 11th century to the 14th century.

andesite: a dark, fine-grained volcanic rock.

Anglian: quaternary glacial deposits found in East Anglia, England. Other possibly related and isolated patches exist elsewhere in Britain, but they are older than the extreme range of radiocarbon dating and paleomagnetism shows them to be younger than 700,000 bp. This period sometimes equates with the Elster glacial maximum and dates to c. 400,000–300,000 years ago. During the Anglian-Elsterian glaciation in Europe a large ice-dammed lake formed in the North Sea, and large overflows from it initiated the cutting of the Dover Straits. In East Anglia, the deposits are stratified below Hoxnian and above Cromerian interglacial deposits, and Acheulian and Clactonian artifacts are found in the sediments. Most of the evidence of human activity in Britain and Europe is later than this time. Anglian is more often used to describe the group of deposits or the one glaciation (antepenultimate) of that time.

angon: a long spear with a double barb where one barb is longer than the other.

aniconic: a seal bearing no image.

animal bell: a bell worn by an animal, e.g., sheep, goats, cows and hawks, to inform the owner of the animal's position.

animal style: a term describing a type of gold production whose themes were animals and which arose from the Scythians, a seminomadic people from the Eurasian steppes who moved from southern Russia into the territory between the Don and the Danube and then into Mesopotamia. During the 5th to 4th centuries BC, this style appeared on shaped, pierced plaques made of gold and silver, which showed running or fighting animals (reindeer, lions, tigers, horses) alone or in pairs facing each other. The animal style had a strong influence in western Asia during the 7th century BC. Ornaments such as necklaces, bracelets, pectorals, diadems, and earrings making up the Ziwiyeh treasure (found in Iran near the border of Azerbaijan) show evidence of highly expressive animal forms. This Central Asian Scythian–Iranian style passed by way of Phoenician trading in the 8th century BC into the Mediterranean and into Western jewelry. The most popular themes are antlered stags, ibexes, felines, birds of prey and, above all, the animal-combat motif, which shows a predator, usually bird or feline, attacking a herbivore. The joining of different animals and the use of tiny animal figures to decorate the body of an animal are also characteristic. Animal bodies were also contorted – animals curved into circles and quadrupeds with hindquarters inverted. The term is shorthand for this complex of motifs and treatments, which for long periods represented the art of the vast steppe zone of Europe and Asia. The transformations they underwent in the course of their long history on the steppes often leave the sources and affiliations of particular versions obscure.

ankh: Egyptian hieroglyphic sign for life, consisting of a T-shape surmounted by a loop. It represents a sandal strap or the handle of a mirror. The ankh is commonly shown being carried by deities and pharaohs and was widely used as an amulet. Temple reliefs frequently included scenes in which a king was offered the ankh by the gods, thus symbolizing the divine conferral of eternal life. It was used in some personal names, such as Tutankhamen. It was adapted by Coptic Christians as their cross.

anklet: an ornamental chain worn around the ankle.

annealing: the treating of a metal or alloy with heat and then cold – or the repeated process of heating and hammering to produce the desired shape. After casting metal, it may be necessary to further process it by cold working, hammering, and drawing the metal – either to produce hard cutting edges or to produce beaten sheet metal. Hammering makes the metal harder, though more brittle and subject to cracking, because it destroys its crystalline structure. Annealing, the reheating of the metal gently to a dull red heat and allowing it to cool, produces a new crystalline structure which can be hammered again. The process may be repeated as often as is necessary. The final edge on a weapon may be left unannealed as it will be harder and last longer.

annular: ring-shaped.

annular ring nail: a nail with sharp-edged ridges that lock into wood fibers and greatly increase its holding power.

ansa: Latin term for handle or anything handlelike, such as an eyelet, haft, or hole. Any vessel or vase with large ears or circular handles on the neck or body is said to have ansae. [ansae (pl.)]

ansa lunata: a handle or handles on a vessel or vase going in two opposite directions or in two diverging projects. The term describes Terramara pottery of the Apennine culture and vessels of central Europe of the Middle to Late Bronze Age.

antefix: ornamental tiles fixed to the eaves and cornices of ancient Greek and Roman buildings to decoratively conceal the ends of the rain tiles. The term also refers to vertical ornamental heads of animals, etc. that were the spouts from the gutters. [antefixal (adj.)]

anterior scar height: bivalve measurement.

anthropoid: of human form; manlike. Taken from the Greek term for man-shaped, it is used to describe sarcophagi and coffins and other artifacts of human shape. The term is also used to describe a being that is only human in form or an anthropoid ape (gibbons, orangs, chimpanzees, gorillas). [anthropomorphous]

anthropomorph: a representation of the human form in art, such as those found on ancient pottery; figure, object, or rock art with or using a human shape. The term also refers to the attribution of human

features and behaviors to animals, inanimate objects, or natural phenomena. [anthropomorphic figure; anthropomorphism (n.); anthropomorphous (adj.)]

anthropomorphic: manlike; used to describe artifacts or art work decorated with human features or with a manlike appearance. [anthropomorphous]

antimony: a brittle metallic substance that has been used in the preparation of yellow pigments for enamel and porcelain painting. It forms a fourth constituent in alloys, along with nitrogen, phosphorus, arsenic, bismuth, and some others in forming triads and pentads.

antler: lowest, forward branch of the horn of a deer – bonelike material that is grown and shed annually. Antlers indicate the sex of the species, for example only male red deer, fallow deer, and elk (moose) have antlers. They may also indicate whether a site is occupied seasonally as they are naturally shed in the winter, except for female reindeer that shed their antlers in spring. Antlers were a valuable material for making many tools.

antler sleeve: a section of deer antler carved into a cavity or hole at one end to hold a stone axhead. The piece was either set into a socket in a haft or perforated to attach to the haft. This material was used for its resilience and shock-absorbing value in toolmaking. Roughly trimmed antler picks have been used in construction and flint mining.

anvil: a block, usually of iron, upon which objects are shaped and hammered, e.g., in smithing.

anvil stone: a stone on which other stones or materials (such as food) are placed and crushed with a stone tool.

anvil technique: a prehistoric method of making chipped stone tools that involves striking a stone repeatedly against a static boulder used as an anvil. [anvil flaking]

aplastics: intentional or accidental inclusions in pottery clays before firing; particulate matter in a clay body that does not contribute to plasticity or that reduces the plasticity of the clay. [aplastic, temper]

apothecary jar: a jar used to store medicines, drugs, or the constituent parts of medicines and drugs.

apotropaic: of statues, etc., supposedly having the power to avert evil influences or bad luck.

appliqué: decoration or ornament applied to or laid on another material, such as metal on wood or embroidery on cloth; a ceramic finishing technique that involves joining shaped pieces of a plastic body to a leather-hard surface by pressure. The applied pieces can be functional (e.g., handles) or decorative (e.g., figures).

Apulian pottery: an important type of south Italian pottery, mostly decorated in the red-figured technique. Production seems to have

started in the late 5th century BC and may have been influenced by Athenian pottery. One of the early centers may have been Tarentum. In the middle of the 4th century the scenes became more ornate with additional figures inserted in the field and an increased use of added colors. Plain wares were also produced.

aquamanile: used for holding water and washing hands, usually in the shape of an animal.

arc style: an early style of Celtic art in which compass-drawn geometric motifs predominate.

archaeological chronology: establishment of the temporal sequences of human cultures by the application of a variety of dating methods to cultural remains.

archaic, Archaic: a term used to describe an early stage in the development of civilization. In New World chronology, it is the period just before the shift from hunting, gathering, and fishing to agricultural cultivation, pottery development, and village settlement. Initially, the term was used to designate a nonceramic-using, nonagricultural, and nonsedentary way of life. Archaeologists now realize, however, that ceramics, agriculture, and sedentism are all found, in specific settings, within contexts that are clearly archaic but that these activities are subsidiary to the collection of wild foods. In Old World chronology, the term is applied to certain early periods in the history of some civilizations. In Greece, it describes the rise of civilization from c. 750 BC to the Persian invasion in 480 BC. In Egypt, it covers the first two dynasties, c. 3200–2800 BC. In Classical archaeology, the term is often used to refer to the period of the 8th to 6th centuries BC. The term was coined for certain cultures of the eastern North America Woodlands dating from c. 8000 to 1000 BC, but usage has been extended to various unrelated cultures that show a similar level of development but at widely different times. For example, it describes a group of cultures in the eastern US and Canada that developed from the original migration of man from Asia during the Pleistocene, between 40,000 and 20,000 BC, whose economy was based on hunting, fishing, and shell and plant gathering. Between 8000 and 1000 BC, a series of technical achievements characterized the tradition, which can be broken into periods: Early Archaic 8000–5000 BC, with a mixture of Big Game Hunting tradition with Early Archaic cultures, also marked by post-glacial climatic change in association with the disappearance of late Pleistocene big game animals; Middle Archaic tradition cultures from 5000 to 2000 BC; and a Late Archaic period 2000–1000 BC. In the New World, the lifestyle lacked horticulture, domesticated animals, and permanent villages.

archaic majolica: a series of jugs and bowls of the early 13th to late 16th centuries in Tuscan and Italian towns. They were decorated with geometric motifs, leaves, and other forms outlined in brown and set into green or brown backgrounds. They were sold as far apart as Spain, North Africa, and northern Europe. There seems to be a connection to earlier Byzantine and Persian products. [archaic maiolica]

archaistic: imitatively archaic; affectedly and deliberately antique.

ard: an ancient light plow with a simple blade that was used to scratch the surface of the soil rather than turn furrows. It was drawn by animals or people and grooved the ground, but it had no mold board or colter and therefore did not turn over the soil. With this type of plow cross-plowing was usually necessary, with a second plowing at right angles to the first.

Ardagh Chalice: a large, two-handled silver cup decorated with gold, gilt bronze, and enamel, that is one of the finest examples of early Christian art from the British Isles. Discovered in 1868, along with a small bronze cup and four brooches in a potato field in Ardagh, Ireland, the chalice may have been part of the buried loot from a monastery after an Irish or Viking raid. The outside of the bowl is engraved with the Latin names of some of the Apostles. There are similarities between the letters of the inscription and some of the large initials in the Lindisfarne Gospels, which probably dates from about AD 710 to 720. Thus, the Ardagh Chalice is thought to date from the first half of the 8th century. The chalice displays exceptional artistic and technical skills applied to a variety of precious materials. So far, its manufacture has not been attributed to a particular workshop but the chalice does have similarities to the celebrated Tara brooch and the Moylough belt-reliquary. It is now housed in the National Museum of Ireland at Dublin.

Arezzo vase: red-clay Arretine pottery of which many fine examples have been found in or near the town of Arezzo in Tuscany, an important Etruscan city. The red-lustered ware was ornamented in relief and shows evidence of Greek origin.

argillite: a compact metamorphic rock formed from siltstone, shale, or claystone and intermediate in structure between shale and slate. It is cemented by silica but has no slaty cleavage.

Argonne ware: pottery type of the 4th century AD, usually red. Vessels are decorated with horizontal bands of impressed geometric patterns, executed with a roller stamp. The ware was made in the Argonne, northeast Gaul. [Marne ware]

armlet: a band or bracelet worn round the upper part of a person's arm.

armor: protective clothing with the ability to deflect or absorb arrows, bullets, lances, swords, or other weapons during combat. There are three main types: (1) armor made of leather, fabric, or mixed materials reinforced by quilting or felt; (2) mail of interwoven rings of iron or steel; and (3) rigid armor of metal, plastic, horn, wood, or other tough material, including plate armor of the Middle Ages' knights. Armor was used well before historical records were kept by primitive warriors. The first was likely made of leather hides and included helmets. It was found that in the 11th century BC, Chinese warriors wore five to seven layers of rhinoceros skin. Greek heavy infantry wore thick, multilayered linen cuirasses in the 5th century BC. Armor is found along with arrows, clubs, hammers, hatchets, and other weaponry and is often ornamented. The defensive armor, shield, and thorax were called hopla, and people wearing them were called hoplites. [armour, arms, body armor]

Armorican ax: rather plain and shoddily made type of socketed bronze ax produced in the period 650–600 BC at the very end of the Bronze Age of northern France (Hallstatt II). Mostly found in large hoards, in which few examples appear to have been finished or used. This has led to the suggestion that they were somehow connected with emergency trade in metal rather than finished products.

Armorican coin: collective name for coinage issued by a range of tribes living in Brittany, France during the early 1st century BC.

Armorico-British dagger: type of bronze dagger found in the Wessex I phase of the Early Bronze Age (c. 1700–1500 BC) in southern Britain. It has a flat triangular blade, lateral grooves, six rivets for attaching the blade to the hilt, and sometimes a small tang or languette to assist securing the blade to the hilt. Traces of wooden and leather sheaths have been found with some blades; the hilts were probably of wood. [Breton dagger]

Arretine ware: a type of bright red, polished pottery originally made at Arretium (modern Arezzo) in Tuscany from the 1st century BC to the 3rd century AD. The term means literally “ware made of clay impressed with designs.” The ware was produced to be traded, especially throughout the Roman Empire. It is clearly based on metal prototypes and the body of the ware was generally cast in a mold. Relief designs were also cast in molds which had been impressed with stamps in the desired patterns and then applied to the vessels. The quality of the pottery was high, considering its mass production. However, there was a gradual roughness to the forms and decoration over the four centuries of production. After the decline of Arretium production, terra sigillata was made in Gaul from the 1st century AD at La Graufesenque (now Millau) and later at other centers in Gaul. Examples have come from Belgic tombs

in pre-Roman Britain and from the port of Arikamedu in southern India. The style changes and the potters' marks stamped on the vessels make these wares a valuable means of dating the other archaeological material found with them.

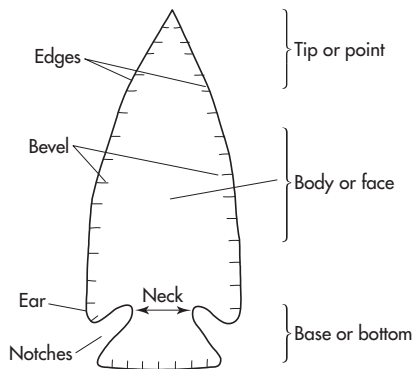
arris: sharp ridge or edge formed by the junction of two smooth surfaces, especially on the midrib of a dagger or sword, or in moldings. [arris, arrises (pl.)]

arrow: a weapon consisting of a stick with a sharp pointed head, designed to be shot from a bow.

arrow straightener: a stone with a regular, straight groove on one face.

It is thought to have been used to smooth wooden shafts of arrows, so the name is misleading. [arrowshaft straightener]

arrowhead: a small object of bone, metal, or stone that has been formed as the pointed end of an arrow for penetration and is often found at sites of prehistoric peoples. The earliest known are Solutrean points of the Upper Paleolithic. Arrowheads are often the only evidence of archery since the arrow shaft and bow rarely survive. The term projectile point is generally preferable because it avoids an inference regarding the method of hafting and propulsion. Most often, arrowheads were placed in a slot in the shaft, tied, and then fixed with resin. [arrowhead, projectile point]



articular surface: portion of a bone connecting with other bones.

artifact: any object (article, building, container, device, dwelling, ornament, pottery, tool, weapon, work of art) made, affected, used, or modified in some way by human beings. It may range from a coarse stone or a needle to a pyramid or a highly technical accomplishment – these objects are used to characterize or identify a people, culture, or stage of development. The most common artifacts are pieces of broken pottery, stone chips, projectile points, and tools. The environment may play a part in the nature of an artifact if it has been seriously

altered by people through fire, house and road construction, agricultural practices, etc. Therefore, the line is sometimes hard to draw between a natural object and one used by man, but there is no doubt when it can be shown that people shaped it in any way, even if only accidentally in the course of use. Artifacts are individually assignable to ceramic, lithic, metal, or organic, or other lesser used categories. A sociotechnic artifact is a tool that is used primarily in the social realm. A technomic artifact is a tool that is used primarily to deal with the physical environment. [artefact]

artifact type: a description of a category of artifacts that share a set of somewhat variable attributes, such as spoons or tables; a population of artifacts that share a recurring range and combination of attributes. [artefact type]

artifact typology: placement of materials in a geographic, temporal, etc. context with other similar artifacts; the study of artifact classes with common characteristics; classification according to artifact type. [artefact typology]

Arundel marbles: a collection of marbles and ancient statues taken from Greece and Asia Minor at the expense of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel (1585–1646) and given to Oxford University in 1667, which came to be known as the Arundel (or Oxford) marbles. [Oxford marbles]

aryballos: term for a small Greek vase or a large Inca pottery jar. The Greek flask was one-handled, normally globular (quasispherical or pear-shaped), with a narrowing neck. It was used mostly for oil, perfume, unguent, or condiments and stood about 5–8 cm (2–3 inches) high. Aryballos were originally made at Corinth from about 575 BC. There were painted patterns on them until 550 BC and sometimes patterns were engraved. From the Greek for “bag” or “purse.” The Inca version was a large jar with a conical base, tall narrow neck, and flaring rim. It was used for carrying liquids, designed to be carried on the back by a rope which passed through two strap handles low on the jar’s body and over a nubbin at the base of the jar neck. [aryballus]

arystichos: a Greek or Roman vessel for drawing water, especially from amphorae. [arusane, arustis, aruter, ephebos, oinerusis]

as: a small Roman bronze coin, four of which made a sestertius and 16 made a denarius.

askos: an asymmetrical vessel, often squat and duck-shaped, with an off-center mouth, convex top, and single arching handle. It was originally shaped like a leather bottle (uter) for holding water, oil, or wine. Some examples have two mouths, one for filling and one for emptying, and others are quite unbalanced and have strange mouths. It later