



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

**What Are They Worth?
A Holistic Exploration of the Lewis Chessmen and the
Values Placed Upon Them**

Stephanie L. Carter

**PhD, Scottish Ethnology
School of Celtic and Scottish Studies
University of Edinburgh
2021**

Abstract

Humans interact with objects in every part of their daily lives and have been doing so for millennia. The oldest recorded objects are stone tools that were created over 3.3 million years ago and predate the timeline of known human ancestors. Things are inanimate and have no value until we engage with them. We systematically breathe life into them through the assignment of meaning and value. In turn, our lives are affected by the agency they hold over us. Values we place on things are influenced by what influences us: our history, our culture, our religion, our identity, and many other definers of what makes us who we are. Culture is important - it connects and binds us to our communities. How we interact with things can be achieved on an individual level or in a collective group. Understanding how we create value or add meaning to objects is important to understand our society, who we are, and who we want to be. One important example which highlights the array of values we put onto objects can be seen through the Lewis Chessmen. The Chessmen are a 12th-century collection of playing pieces found off Scotland's western coast on the Isle of Lewis. These pieces have been caught up in an array of values relating to Scottish identity, politics, and culture. Additionally, more worldwide values assigned to the pieces include their rarity, their use as props in popular culture, and as pieces of art.

This thesis is an insular examination of how one specific collection has been influenced and moulded by the values which have been placed on them. The theories, methods, and ideas presented could also be applied to many other museum collections and objects. This study has been done with a holistic approach of intentionally combining previous studies with new ideas, allowing for a fully inclusive exploration of the range of values that have become attached to this collection. This thesis is small, but the techniques employed could be a comparative example with other groups across the world who are fighting to retain their material collections and cultural relativity in an ever-changing and globalizing world.

Keywords: Scotland, Material Culture, Lewis Chessmen, Values, Holism, Museums

Contents

Abstract.....	2
Contents	3
List of Figures.....	6
Preface.....	8
Acknowledgements	9
Chapter I: The Strategy: Situating the Game	10
i. Rationale and Research Questions	10
ii. Defining Values	12
iii. Field Sites, Scope of Sources, and Methodology	14
iv. Thesis Outline	19
v. Conclusion.....	21
Chapter II: The Opening: Origins	23
i. The Origins of Chess.....	23
ii. The Isle of Lewis.....	25
iii. The Chessmen's Origins	30
Timeline of Ownership	33
iv. The Chessmen Go to the British Museum...but also to Scotland.....	35
v. How Were They Found?	38
vi. Where Were They Found?	43
vii. How Did They Get There?.....	48
viii. A New Piece Comes to Light.....	53
ix. Legends vs. Scholarly Predictions	55
Chapter III: The Analysis: The Particulars of the Hoard	61
i. The Chessmen	62
ii. The Materials and Craftsmanship	76
iii. The Condition of the Hoard	83
iv. Art Meets Science	88
v. Anthropomorphic Qualities in Determining Sets.....	92
vi. The Great Debate: Where Did They Come From?	95
vii. When Were They Made?	108
viii. Why Lewis?	113

Chapter IV: The Array: Where Do the Chessmen Live?	118
i. The British Museum.....	119
ii. National Museum of Scotland.....	136
iii. Museum nan Eilean.....	162
iv. Other Split Collections	177
Chapter V: The Positional: How the Hoard is Utilised in Special Displays	182
i. <i>A History of the World in 100 Objects</i>	182
ii. <i>The Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked</i>	191
iii. <i>26 Treasures of the National Museum of Scotland</i>	204
iv. <i>The Game of Kings: Medieval Ivory Chessmen from the Isle of Lewis</i>	208
v. <i>The Forgotten Kingdom? The Kingdom of Man and the Isles</i>	212
vi. <i>Vikings: Life and Legend</i>	220
Chapter VI: The Exhibition: The Use of the Hoard in Popular Culture	225
i. Books.....	227
1) <i>The Big Four</i>	227
2) <i>Rook, Rhyme, and Sinker</i>	230
3) <i>Doctor Who: Dark Horizons</i>	232
4) <i>The Chessmen</i>	235
5) <i>Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure</i>	241
ii. Children's Books.....	244
1) <i>The Sleeping Army</i>	244
2) <i>The Lewis Chessmen and What Happened to Them</i>	247
3) <i>The Chess Piece Magician</i>	250
4) <i>The Chessmen of Doom</i>	253
5) <i>Chess-Dream in a Garden</i>	257
iii. Television.....	259
1) <i>Noggin the Nog</i>	259
2) <i>The Walking Dead</i>	261
3) <i>Isabel</i>	264
4) <i>Doctor Who</i>	266
5) <i>Castle Rock</i>	267
iv. Film	270
1) <i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone</i>	270
2) <i>Brave</i>	275

v. Ads and Social Media	281
1) Festival of Museums.....	281
2) Social Media Presence.....	283
Chapter VII: The Pawn: The Politics Surrounding Material Culture	287
i. The Parthenon Marbles: A Call for Repatriation	287
ii. Scotland's Repatriation: The Return of the Lewis Chessmen	291
iii. The 2014 Scottish Referendum and Looking to the Future	298
iv. The Legal and Cultural Implications of Repatriation	300
Chapter VIII: The Defense: Who Owns Culture?	306
i. What is Culture?.....	307
ii. What is Material Culture?	309
iii. What is Scottish National Identity?	311
iv. The Lewis Chessmen: A Symbol of the Scottish Nation?	315
v. Ownership of Cultural Items and the Importance of Place	318
vi. Material Culture and Emotion.....	324
Chapter IX: Checkmate: The End of the Game	328
References.....	336

List of Figures

Figure 1: A map of the Kingdom of the Isles of Man.....	29
Figure 2: A timeline of ownership of the Lewis Chessmen.....	33
Figure 3: A map of the possible find sites of the Lewis Chessmen.....	44
Figure 4: Screenshot from BBC heading announcing the discovery of “lost” Chessman.....	54
Figure 5: Photo of a sketch of a king piece found at Dunstaffnage.....	59
Figure 6: Photos of three Lewis Chess kings to demonstrate stylised differences.....	64
Figure 7: Photos of three Lewis Chess queens to demonstrate stylised differences.....	65
Figure 8: Photos of four Lewis Chess bishops to demonstrate stylised differences.....	69
Figure 9: Photos of two Lewis Chess knights to demonstrate stylised differences.....	71
Figure 10: Photos of four Lewis Chess warders to demonstrate stylised differences.....	72
Figure 11: Photos of four Lewis Chess berserkers to demonstrate stylised differences.....	74
Figure 12: Screenshot showing the “popcorn” textured pulp of walrus tusk.....	79
Figure 13: Photo demonstrating how multiple pieces were cut from a tusk.....	81
Figure 14: Photo showing three undersides of pieces to see how they lined up along tusk ...	81
Figure 15: Photo showing two bishops that may have come from the same tusk.....	82
Figure 16: A Lewis King and Queen exhibiting damages.....	84
Figure 17: Lewis Warder discovered in 2019.....	86
Figure 18: Map of the Medieval European Gallery at the British Museum.....	124
Figure 19: Google Arts map: “Front” view of the case in the British Museum.....	127
Figure 20: The Lewis Chessmen in the British Museum.....	128
Figure 21: Google Arts map: “Back” view of the case in the British Museum.....	129
Figure 22: Display set up showing the dentine of tusk at the British Museum.....	129
Figure 23: Lewis Chessmen merchandise in the British Museum.....	131
Figure 24: British Museum shop online featuring the Lewis Chessmen.....	132
Figure 25: Front page of the British Museum website.....	134
Figure 26: Routes to the Chessmen in the National Museum of Scotland (NMS).....	144
Figure 27: Display sign into <i>Kingdom of the Scots</i> in the NMS.....	145
Figure 28: Former placement of the Lewis Chessmen in the <i>Kingdom of Scots</i> gallery.....	146
Figure 29: Former text panel on the Lewis Chessmen display.....	147
Figure 30: Gallery layout at the National Museum of Scotland.....	148
Figure 31: Google Arts map of the front of the Chessmen’s case at the NMS.....	149
Figure 32: Google Arts map of the back of the Chessmen’s’ case at the NMS.....	150
Figure 33: The Lewis Chessmen displayed at the NMS.....	151
Figure 34: A descriptive panel on the Chessmen’s case at the NMS.....	152
Figure 35: Medieval Church in Scotland panel at the NMS.....	155
Figure 36: Separated bishop with the Medieval Church display at the NMS.....	155
Figure 37: Chessmen used as a divider on the Tours webpage at the NMS.....	157
Figure 38: Chessmen are featured as a top item to see on the webpage at the NMS.....	157
Figure 39: Lewis Chessmen items in the NMS gift shop.....	159
Figure 40: Screen shot of searching the NSM website for the Lewis Chessmen.....	162
Figure 41: First Minister Sturgeon views the Lewis Chessmen at Museum nan Eilean.....	166
Figure 42: Outside Museum nan Eilean.....	167
Figure 43: Lewis Chessmen display at Museum nan Eilean.....	169
Figure 44: An example of signage near the Chessmen display, Museum nan Eilean.....	170
Figure 45: Signage on the Lewis Chessmen case, Museum nan Eilean.....	171
Figure 46: Five Chessmen on display at Museum nan Eilean.....	172

Figure 47: Still shot from <i>The King's Gift</i> , a film shown in Museum nan Eilean	173
Figure 48: Front page of the Museum nan Eilean website	175
Figure 49: Facebook post from the Museum nan Eilean	176
Figure 50: A pair of Rembrandt paintings which are housed in separate museums	178
Figure 51: One of the featured objects in the <i>100 Objects</i> series within the gallery space ..	187
Figure 52: A display of the <i>100 Objects</i> series book in the British Museum gift shop	187
Figure 53: Image of the <i>Unmasked</i> exhibition layout.....	193
Figure 54: A gallery set up of the <i>Unmasked</i> exhibition	195
Figure 55: The <i>Unmasked</i> exhibition space with an area for visitors to play games.....	197
Figure 56: Author V. Campbell's written entry for the <i>26 Treasures</i> exhibition	206
Figure 57: A QR code at the Chessmen's case in the National Museum of Scotland	208
Figure 58: A photo of <i>The Game of Kings</i> exhibition at The Met	209
Figure 59: Children playing in chess tournaments at the Met	211
Figure 60: The <i>Chronicles of Mann</i> on display at the Manx Museum	214
Figure 61: <i>The Forgotten Kingdom</i> exhibition at the Manx Museum	214
Figure 62: The Lewis Chessmen on display at the Manx Museum	215
Figure 63: The Lewis Chessmen on display at the Manx Museum	215
Figure 64: The children's interactive area in <i>The Forgotten Kingdom</i> exhibit	216
Figure 65: A competition display within <i>The Forgotten Kingdom</i> exhibit.....	217
Figure 66: Lewis Chessmen stamps commissioned by the Isle of Man postal department..	218
Figure 67: A booklet which was included with the Chessmen stamps	218
Figure 68: News article showing a Lewis Chess piece representing the <i>Vikings</i> exhibition	221
Figure 69: News articles showing a Lewis Queen piece representing the <i>Vikings</i> exhibit...	222
Figure 70: Agatha Christie's <i>The Big Four</i> cover showing a Lewis Chessman bishop	229
Figure 71: The front cover of R. Michael Phillips' <i>Rook, Rhyme, and Sinker</i>	232
Figure 72: Screenshot of the embedded YouTube video from Peter May's website	240
Figure 73: Page 52 from <i>Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventures</i>	243
Figure 74: The end page of Chapter 1 of Francesca Simon's <i>The Sleeping Army</i>	246
Figure 75: The last illustrated page, <i>The Lewis Chessmen and What Happened to Them</i> ...	250
Figure 76: The front cover of Douglas Brunton's <i>The Chess Piece Magician</i>	253
Figure 77: The front cover of John Bellairs' <i>The Chessmen of Doom</i>	254
Figure 78: The front cover of Rosemary Sutcliff's <i>Chess-Dream in a Garden</i>	258
Figure 79: Photo still of Peter Firmin's <i>Noggin the Nog</i> television show	260
Figure 80: Two scene photos from <i>The Walking Dead: Season 4, Episode 6</i>	262
Figure 81: Photo still from <i>Isabel</i> showing a Lewis Queen.....	265
Figure 82: A Comparison of two images representing a Chessman with a real piece.....	267
Figure 83: Photo still of a scene in <i>Castle Rock</i> showing a Lewis queen.....	269
Figure 84: Still of <i>Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone</i> showing the Chessmen	272
Figure 85: The Chessmen as "Wizard's Chess" from the <i>Harry Potter</i> franchise	275
Figure 86: A Lewis king in DisneyPixar's <i>Brave</i>	277
Figure 87: A screenshot of a now defunct "Scotland: A Brave Adventure" tour	280
Figure 88: The Festival of Museums logo featuring a Lewis berserker	282
Figure 89: Social media screenshots showing how the public uses the Chessmen	284
Figure 90: Screenshot of the British Museum's "News and Press Releases" webpage	291

Preface

My journey to this thesis has been a winding road of self-exploration and half my lifetime, it seems, has been waiting for this moment. When I was in young, I was forever fascinated with programmes on television which explored how different humans around the world lived their lives. Fast forward to my teenage years and the question of “what do you want to be” became more prevalent as my high school graduation and plans for university loomed. I finally realised that the topic of interest I had as a child had a name: anthropology. From my first day at university until I graduated with my bachelor’s degree, I doggedly pursued this passion to study humans, never once straying from my selected path. My first experience with museums occurred during this time. I was selected to participate with a limited number of other students in a museum exhibitions class within my anthropology department. Thus, the torch of passion for museums was lit. After graduation came my first relocation to Scotland. Why Scotland? Where I come from, our high school’s mascot was the “Highlander.” Within the band, I played the bagpipes and with my inquiring mind, I wanted to understand the traditions behind the instrument I was playing. My foray into Scottish culture, the love of my life, began where I was raised. The combination of all these experiences saw me boarding a plane to live in Aberdeen to begin a MLitt degree in Irish and Scottish Studies. Scotland got “in my blood,” but alas, after my studies, I returned to America. The degree just was not what I was thought it would be.

Fast forward another few years and I found myself back in my hometown and interviewing for a curatorial role in the local history museum. I believed this job was perfect for me. I got to learn the workings of a museum within a small institution where I was solely in charge of all aspects. However, I felt that the job on its own was not enough. I wanted to understand museum theory and have the educational “chops” to back the real-life experiences. So, I enrolled in yet another degree, this time a master’s degree in Museum Studies. I pursued this programme online after a difficult personal loss in my life. This online, yet extremely interactive programme, allowed me the time to be still and process the loss before making life-altering decisions. At the same time, I was pursuing the interest of museum conservation and was actively an intern in an objects conservation lab. I worked with objects, took care of them, preserved them for the future, and built a portfolio which would hopefully see me into conservation school. The very last class I enrolled in for my master’s programme was titled “Material Culture” and throughout the class, the revelation of “this is it” made me understand that I had finally found my niche. After coming to the difficult decision that conservation school would require a plethora of more prerequisites before I could even apply, and as I was turning the big 3-0, I decided to combine all my other educational backgrounds and pursue a PhD. I was looking for a material culture in museums programme in Scotland, for how perfect was that combination for me? However, no such programme exists, so I researched a programme that I thought my ideas for a PhD would mesh with and was accepted into the University of Edinburgh. Throughout my time in Scotland, I have kept one toe dipped into the practical world of museums through volunteer work and a 5-year employment with a council museum service.

I believe the unique combination of my background and unwavering passions have led me here to this, the culmination of my journey.

Acknowledgements

The African proverb of, “it takes a village to raise a child” is very apt for this thesis and my journey to get here. For the past seven years, this has been my child. I have carefully created and raised it into the finished product you see today. However, that journey was not undertaken alone: I had a village of amazing people assisting me through this process. I would like to thank the following people for their support through this journey:

- * My adviser, Professor Gary West.
- * To my viva examiners Professor Rob Dunbar and Professor Frank Rennie who both gave me the most amazingly gracious and complimentary comments I could ever expect!
- * To my friends and family for sacrificing eight years of my absence in your lives and who suffered through my often-chaotic state of mind.
- * To my work colleagues at East Lothian Museum Service for all the encouragement.
- * To Dr. David H. Caldwell for providing such insight into these amazing pieces, and who answered my seemingly endless questions with such kindness and patience.
- * To Nancy Marie Brown who also answered a plethora of questions, and who is own research has created new perspectives on the Chessmen.
- * To the staff at the following institutions for their never-ending patience and assistance:

The National Museum of Scotland, Ashley Ferrier at Museum nan Eilean, Morven Donald and other staff at the National Museum of Scotland’s library, University of Edinburgh Library - Special Collections, University of Edinburgh, Aberdeen Museum of Art, Shetland Museum of Art, Department of Celtic and Scottish Studies Library, Uig Historic Society, Allison Fox of the Manx Museum and the University of Edinburgh Graduate School.

- * To the following authors who took time to speak to me:

Peter May, Francesca Simon, Peter Firmin, Douglas Brunton, V. Campbell and R. Michael Phillips

- * To my array of proof-readers who became my second, third, and many more sets of eyes on this project.
- * To my friend Kristy Van Hoven, who also shared a PhD journey with me, giving me advice, amazing proofreading support, and who was a constant cheerleader along the way.
- * To my former Johns Hopkins University Museum Studies professors, Dr. Stephanie Brown and Dr. Sarah Chicone for giving me the confidence to do this in the first place, for supporting me throughout, and for giving me the validation that my work matters.
- * To John MacIver from Uig whose special attention to my questions and amazing retelling of local tales of the chessmen will remain with me forever.
- * To the people of Shetland, Lewis, and in particular, those in Uig who so willingly spoke to me.
- * To my constant companions, my cats Isis, Gracie and especially Osiris, who never left my side through this journey.

Chapter I: The Strategy: Setting the Game

“When you see them for the first time, something magical happens and they bewitch you,” relays Irving Finkle, a British Museum Curator. In his 2017 “Curator’s Corner” video, which can be found on *YouTube*, he talks not about something from the collections in his own department of the Middle East, but instead of a collection in the museum he saw as a child. He relays he has “never been able to get them out of [my] system” and has “always, always, been crazy about them.” In this video, Finkle notes “thousands and thousands of people have seen them...in fact, they are in the back of people’s minds.” Merely from these quotations alone, one would think Finkle was speaking of something “famous” such as the Rosetta Stone or the Parthenon Marbles, two of the most recognised items in the British Museum. In fact, he was speaking about a collection few know by name: the Lewis Chessmen.

i. Rationale and Research Direction

This thesis is a unique look at the Lewis Chessmen on a holistic level, taking in various elements to provide insight as to why these seemingly unknown objects are valuable on many levels and to multiple people/entities. Most research on the Lewis Chessmen to date has been undertaken to answer one or more aspects about the pieces through attempts in answering questions surrounding their “5 w’s.” The five questions most scholars attempt to research and answer have been: why were they on Lewis, who made them, where did they come from, when were they made, and what were they meant to be used for? This list is not exhaustive as the questions surrounding the Lewis Chessmen seem to grow exponentially even as answers are sought. Many who have undertaken the collection as a point of research have focused on exploring maybe one or two of these questions. Little, if any, research has brought together all the elements which attempt to answer some of these questions in a holistic way. Holism is an

attempt at “a comprehensive approach to the human condition” where in, modern researchers, and anthropologists in particular, are trying to view elements of humanity with a broader and, in turn, more interpretive way (Brenneis & Ellison, 2009, V-VI). Critics have called this concept and its application vague, containing “so little analytical worth” and being akin to New Age naïveté (Bubandt and Otto, 2010, 3). I believe by giving context to the pieces in a holistic way, we can see just why they are so valuable. Holism allows researchers to make “sense of observations by connecting them to a larger, experiential, meaningful, cultural, functional or societal wholes” and in the case of the Lewis Chessmen, this is a crucial element in understanding the fascination, reverence, and appeal they bring to so many (Bubandt and Otto, 2010, 1).

The research for this thesis did not start with the Lewis Chessmen specifically. In fact, the original application for the PhD programme began with an idea of looking at museum collections in Scotland and their relation to national identity. From this vague and extremely expansive idea, my research direction changed to focus exclusively on the Lewis Chessmen. While I was no stranger to the collection itself as I have a master’s degree in museum studies and had studied them previously, it was not until I delved into this intensive study that I recognized their importance not only in national identity, but also for use as a case study against other museum collections around the world. I did doubt whether one collection could entirely give me enough information for writing an entire thesis, but as you will see in the pages to come, the information about them is seemingly endless and is constantly proliferating even more.

Throughout my stint as a researcher, my aims have evolved as I discovered merely looking at Scottish museum collections and identity in general was too broad. I had to alter my original thinking based on what I uncovered throughout this process. After considerable

research and finally selecting the Lewis Chessmen for the focus of this thesis, I have uncovered this collection's relevance as a comparative to other museum collections and as a genre within material culture studies. Drawing on my previous educational backgrounds in both anthropology and museum studies, and including my passion for Scottish culture, I created this amalgamation of work. The main questions I aim to answer in this thesis are:

1. What values are placed on the Lewis Chessmen?
2. What impact can ideas of identity and politics have on material culture, and specifically, museum collections?
3. How and why are museum collections, specifically the Lewis Chessmen, utilized in popular culture?
4. Why does this research matter in the greater context of museums?

Before situating the details of my research and outline, it is necessary to address how the term values is used in the context of this work. The crux of this thesis is the examination of the values placed onto the chess pieces. By understanding these values, we can see the importance of material culture in humans' lives.

ii. Defining Values

The idea of value is not a new concept. In fact, its beginnings are rooted in ancient philosophical theory. At its core, value theory “concerns which things are good or bad, how good or bad they are, and, most fundamentally, what it is for a thing to be good or bad” (Hirose and Olson, 2015, 1). Hirose and Olson note there are many kinds of values which “may be possessed by different kinds of bearers” (2015, 4). They also relay there are three issues with value theory that need to be considered: how the value is measured, if one type of value can be

compared to another and lastly, how values, both different in type and possessed by different individuals, is combined into one collective whole (Hirose and Olson, 2015). Just like my beginnings into this research where my topic was broad, here too we see the infinite possibilities for this theory. Value is variable over many fields of study, across cultures, and from individual to individual. Bearing this expansive usage of value in mind, the concept is highly subjective and therefore extremely hard to measure. How one person finds value in something can be completely different to another, and the same can be said about differing cultures and community groups as well.

To pare down this seemingly endless concept to present a cohesive list here, I have allowed the research itself to guide me in determining the values which people/entities assign to the Lewis Chessmen. In turn, I then used the research information obtained to demonstrate how I determined the set of values for this work. I describe different values throughout the chapters in which they are relevant. The values given are by no means an exhaustive list due to the constraints of this thesis. However, an attempt has been made to show a variety of value examples, express how they have been assigned, and to explain who made these assignments. Items of material culture can have more than one value assigned to them and as we will see with the Lewis Chessmen, the associated values are bountiful. The importance of understanding the concepts and principles of value is essential in observing how meaning is created in society. What we deem important, both in communities and as individuals, shows how we are influenced based on current societal parameters. However, value also has significant impact on interpreting the past, and assists in preparing us for the future. What we treasure and assign value to gives insight as to what it means to be human. While this thesis focuses on a specific group of objects, the exploration of the theory of value and the implications this has on our society can affect and influence not just museums, but many other

entities including (but not limited to) the environment, religion, economics, and governing bodies.

iii. Field Sites, Scope of Sources, and Methodology

The sites where this research took place are extensive. First and most logically, several museums played a central role as research locations as they are responsible for the care, display, and access to collections. As the Lewis Chessmen are exhibited in three different museums, it was essential I visited and made observations at each. Utilising my background in museums, I notated differences in each of the three exhibition designs as it is an important feature in demonstrating how each museum conveys the story of “their” Chessmen. I practiced participant observation in gallery spaces to understand how museum visitors interacted with the exhibitions. This gave an important insight into the values each museum projects through the exhibition space in which visitors interact with. In visiting the actual museums, I was also able to observe the gift shops’ Lewis Chessmen-themed items for sale. Noting types and amounts of merchandise available in these shops was important in understanding different ideas of value placed on the collection by these entities.

I also gained insight through talks with members of the communities in several locations but specifically, from Uig on Lewis. As Uig is the generally agreed-upon find site of the Lewis Chessmen, I felt it was important to go visit “the place” and meet some of the locals. Who better to speak to about the Lewis Chessmen than the people who lived in the area where they were found? Many of the locals grew up knowing the traditional mythology the Chessmen came to be in Uig, and they relayed these generational stories to me.

In addition to my research at Museum nan Eilean, I also travelled to the Aberdeen Art Gallery and the Shetland Museum and Archives to gain further insight from museum professionals at each locale as to how the 2011 *Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked* exhibition affected

their local population. During my research, I also visited the Manx Museum which had a special exhibition featuring the Lewis Chessmen. While there, I again, made observations on exhibition design, visitor interaction, and other elements which allowed me to present another museum's value of the Chessmen.

In the attempt at creating a holistic presentation of the pieces, I compiled a myriad of source material too. I ruthlessly pursued the “putting my eyes on it” mantra of seeing physical primary sources including bills of sale, personal correspondence, visitor books from museums, original documents from exhibition design, Parliamentary records, and every available original observation created about the Chessmen. In addition, I also read every scholarly publication or article I could acquire to better gain insight into what people found interesting about the Chessmen. I was in constant contact via email and through phone calls with museum professionals, authors, Uig locals, social media pages/postings, political representatives, and an abundance of other relevant sources. My mission was to present an-as-whole-as-possible look at the Chessmen. Due to their prevalence in popular culture, I also purchased and read books in which they appeared, researched/watched television shows and films, and scanned social media outlets for mentions of the Chessmen. The internet proved to be an invaluable means in which to gain a great deal of my research material. As I was not in Scotland at the time of the 2011 *Unmasked* exhibition, for example, I relied on not only museum professionals to give me information, but also insights such as newspaper articles about the event.

Some of my methodology was based in ethnographic ideas of observation. As mentioned above, I found it extremely important and necessary to apply the theories of participant observation by actively going to sites of relevant interest. During these site visits, not only did I observe visitors, but I too became a visitor and interacted with the displays to gain better insight as to how the Chessmen were presented. The act of visiting locations allowed me to assess the Chessmen on a global (British Museum), national (National Museum of

Scotland) and local (Museum nan Eilean) museum platform. As Vered Amit notes in her book on ethnographic fieldwork, being physically present and conducting fieldwork as something “performed” is critical in understanding your scope of study (2000, 3). Within the confines of participant observation, it is important the researcher remains as unbiased as possible, allowing for outcomes to stand alone. For me, this became a slippery slope to navigate because I spent a very long seven years researching the Lewis Chessmen as my subject, but also, I built relationships with many of the people who have contributed to my research. While all attempts were made to deter biases from being formed, this closeness to my subject matter and its participants may have unknowingly created partialities. However, as I noted earlier in this introduction, my aim with this thesis was to gain a holistic view of the Lewis Chessmen and the values which are placed onto them. While gaining this all-encompassing view, I noticed very prominently relating themes of emotion, heritage, and culture, all of which are difficult to quantify in tangible ways. The importance of these themes tied in conjunction with the Chessmen meant I could not simply dismiss these in this thesis because they created unquantifiable data. The idea of this thesis was always going to be subjective as it is in the realm of subjectivity through its very core of assigning value. I have attempted to prove my position through quantitative and tangible use of source material, examples from photos, and through a combination of my educational experiences of anthropology, museum studies, and the study of Scottish culture.

Limitations and difficulties arose throughout the process of conducting the research for this thesis. First, I had limits of time. When researching an exhibition which occurred prior to my time of study, I found it difficult to find relevant individuals to speak to. In my fieldwork, I attempted to gather and interview persons on Lewis, Shetland, and in Aberdeen (the locations of the *Unmasked* exhibition) who had visited the exhibit and would be willing to speak to me about their experiences. Despite attempts and advertising on social media sites, in local

newspapers, and through word of mouth/snowball sampling, I was only able to glean a small collection of people to interview both on Shetland and Lewis. Those whom I was able to interview had a difficult time remembering the exact details of their interaction with the Lewis Chessmen through the exhibition, as my interviews took place well over a year after the *Unmasked* exhibition was completed. I also attempted to gain access to visitor books from this seminal exhibition from the National Museum of Scotland but was turned down due to privacy concerns. I was interested in analysing visitor comments from these primary sources to concretely confirm key ideas I had finalised to be included in this work. These included themes of nationalism, cultural ownership, and addressing the idea of having a relationship to “place.” I hypothesised that visitors may comment on these themes within the comments they left in the books. One single book from Museum nan Eilean, which I was kindly allowed to view, confirmed all my hypothesised themes. I do believe my ability to view the more extensive collection of visitor books and gain more personal insight from visitors of the *Unmasked* exhibit would have added much more quantitative data in which to prove my argument more fully.

In addition, location also proved to be a limitation I faced. Two of the location sites, the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland, were easy for me to visit on multiple occasions. Museum nan Eilean, however, is located on Lewis, a semi-rural and difficult-to-get-to island, which prevented me from making multiple trips to the museum. Also, as it was not until 2017 that Museum nan Eilean opened with the Chessmen on display, I was only able to visit the location once due to the time constraints of my course of study. An additional limitation arose with my desire to conduct participant observation within the exhibition spaces. I wanted to take photos in the galleries to visually preserve, for demonstration and quantitative purposes, how the visitors interacted with the Chessmen. Due to privacy concerns, it was exceedingly difficult trying to capture images without revealing individuals’ faces. One

overarching limitation I faced within the exhibition space and through observation was that no matter how many times I visited these different museums, I would never be able to fully capture all the different ways visitors interacted with the pieces.

One unforeseen limitation to my research was the accessibility to staff and exhibition notes at the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland. This limitation is most seen in Chapters IV and V. Multiple attempts were made to contact relevant departments and people in charge of exhibition and design decisions at each institution. However, limitations in resources, personnel, and time at each institution prevented any substantive research to be conducted with multiple members of staff. While some did graciously acquiesce, many times, my requests for further information were not able to be addressed. Due to these limitations, I was unable to connect with the both the people behind the museums but also, to the operational archives to answer some of the many questions and theories I had. Without this access, I needed to be resourceful. I pieced together observations from public resources such as museum educational texts and personal observations. I combined these resources with my professional educational background and previous curatorial and exhibition roles in the order to interpret the data I was able to gather. Drawing on these past experiences in combination with the observation of the spaces, created a host of additional insights that I was never able to concretely provide evidence for. As we'll see throughout this thesis, experiences in gallery spaces are unique to the individual observing. Ultimately, it is important to remember that museum exhibits are created purposefully with the intent to foster questions, to inspire wonder and exploration, and to provoke thought. My thoughts and theories came from the creation of a unique view: the professional juxtaposed with that of the visitor.

Another limitation about this kind of ethnographic work is that, as mentioned, some of the topics are subjective. The idea of someone's level of "Scottishness" or their idea of nationalism is completely open to interpretation by the person feeling the emotion or

connection. Other areas of subjectivity discussed in the coming chapters include political views, the idea of “home” and the nearly impossible task of quantifying how individuals see and define their culture.

When I introduced my ideas of this thesis for my submission to be included in this programme, I was interested to see what the impact a successful 2014 Referendum would have on Scottish museum objects “living” elsewhere in the world but, specifically, it was the Lewis Chessmen which most piqued my curiosities for a number of reasons. As the following chapters will outline, politicians have requested the pieces be returned to Scotland. I was curious to observe any post-referendum correlations with previous demands for repatriation. As the referendum did not receive the majority vote, I was unable to conduct any research in this vein of interest. “What if’s” are difficult to give credence to in a scholarly thesis, so while I touch very briefly on the topic of the Referendum and repatriation of the Chessmen, I make every attempt to not fall into this trap of what may have happened.

vi. Thesis Outline

This thesis is situated into nine chapters, including both this introduction and the conclusion. Each chapter is arranged around themes which I have found are vital in providing insight into the thesis’ main objective of showing value placed on the Lewis Chessmen.

Chapter II provides origins context for the chess pieces. I relay the origins of chess as a game and narrate a brief history of the Isle of Lewis. I provide an insight into the first scholarly writings around the Chessmen and include a self-made timeline of events created solely from these primary sources. I allow the reader to follow the chronological progression of the life of the Chessmen to their current homes at museums around the UK. I then begin the task of unravelling some of the numerous theories and scholarly attempts to answer questions such as how the Chessmen were found, where were they found and how did they get to be on

Lewis. My purpose in presenting previous scholars' works is to show not only the measurable amounts of written information, but then also to demonstrate that even with all those predictions, we still have no definite answers. Thus far, no scholars have attempted to provide an all-encompassing amalgamation of previous research in one piece of work. I did so in this thesis to create a sense of continuity and holism for better understanding the values associated with the Chessmen.

Chapter III provides a more detailed analysis of the chess piece hoard itself. Here, I delve into ideas of materiality and craftsmanship and to show the comparison of science against something intrinsically artistic. I also aim to give insight into other questions scholars have asked including where the pieces came from and when were they made. Again, I present the range of data available to show the breadth of the debate scholars have engaged in since the pieces' unearthing to the present time, which in itself, shows a measure of value and adds to the holistic narrative of the pieces' story.

Chapter IV gives detailed information on where the Chessmen are located. I present detailed analyses of the exhibition layout at each of the three museums where the Chessmen reside. This examination provides a case study on how collections which are split between differing museums are exhibited. I show through their display at the British Museum, the National Museum of Scotland, and Museum nan Eilean, that there are three distinct presentation styles based on the scope of the museum they are in at global, national, and local levels. This chapter also draws comparison between other museum collections which are split between multiple locales, an occurrence which is somewhat rare in the museum world. This discussion provides insight at how other museums facing this challenge deal with the issue of being only able to present a sample of a collection.

Chapter V is an in-depth look at exhibitions or special events from the last few years which have featured the Lewis Chessmen in some capacity. To show the frequency and breadth

of their use, I keep my scope of time mostly relative to the timeframe of this thesis. Like the previous chapter, I also rely on my museum educational background here to give a detailed description of these exhibitions, their contexts, and why they are important in relation to the values placed on the Chessmen.

Chapter VI touches on the ever-expanding use of the Chessmen in popular culture. Here I give detailed accounts of their usage in genres such as literature, film, and television to understand yet another set of values placed on the collection. Included in this chapter is the utilisation of the Chessmen in other public ways such as in ad campaigns and through social media. I also address the values subscribed to them through these media and advertising outlets.

Chapter VII is a presentation of themes of repatriation and politics. I use the Parthenon Marbles as a case study against the Lewis Chessmen, as the British Museum has been petitioned by countries of “origin” of each collection for their return. I present Scotland's call for the Chessmen's return, and the implications relating to this demand. Here, I explore the value added to objects by politicians to meet their agendas in the political arena. I also touch on the 2014 Scottish Referendum, as well as address the questions regarding the Brexit debate.

Lastly, in Chapter VIII, I present the remainder of my research. This chapter investigates the theories of culture, material culture, and national identity. Through these avenues, I present information about the Lewis Chessmen and Scotland to show additional values placed on the pieces through these subjective lenses. I also touch on ideas of material culture and place such as “home” and the emotional ties to objects.

v. Conclusion

In conclusion, I return to the crux of this thesis: the values places on material culture. I show how the Lewis Chessmen, Scotland's touted “best archaeological find,” have had a series

of values placed on them through a variety of individuals and entities for a multitude of reasons. I attempt to present the Chessmen in a first ever, holistic light, utilising my educational backgrounds in anthropology, museum studies, and Scottish culture in the aim of showing how these values are projected onto these inanimate objects. I also show how the themes of politics and identity produce a great effect when they are assigned to cultural artefacts. I present information on the utilisation of items of material culture in popular culture, and, I give a plethora of examples of how the Lewis Chessmen continue to make appearances in these forms of media and discuss the implications of the values placed on them. By presenting the material of this thesis, I am contributing to the examination of the role of material culture in society via multiple means, and not just through the lens of the museum. While I focus on the Lewis Chessmen exclusively, I also examine other cultural artefacts which share similar circumstances to provide more evidentiary understanding of the impact values placed on material goods can have.

Chapter II: The Opening: Origins

i. The Origins of Chess

For centuries, the game of chess has been played on a global scale by people of all backgrounds. Many modern scholars have concluded the game originated in India around the sixth century CE. From India, the game spread to Persia and into Islamic and Byzantine areas, undoubtedly through connections made via trade routes. One of the first known written accounts of chess is from the Persian romance *Kārnāmāk* in the CE 600s (Yalom, 2004). Michael Taylor notes the Sanskrit romance *Vasavadatta*, from the seventh century, also mentions chess through a description of the local rainy season: “the time of the rains played its game with frogs for chessmen which, yellow and green in colour, as if mottled with lac, leapt up on the garden-bed squares” (1978, 5). These eastern versions of chess were more focused on the king and his army and did not include female representations. The word chess comes from the Arabic word, *shāh*, or king (Taylor, 1978, 6). This game was “vividly represented by the mechanics of war, depicting tiny soldiers, elephants, chariots, horses, and so on” (Shenk, 2007, 32). Further adding to the discussion, James Robinson relays “the Arabic word for chess is *shatranj*, derived from the Persian *chatrang*, which in turn is taken from the Sanskrit *chaturanga*,” and “*chaturanga* means ‘four bodies,’ reflecting the four divisions of the Indian army: chariots (rooks), elephants (bishops), cavalry (knights) and infantry (pawns)” (2004, 44). Each nation or culture which embraced the game made their own changes to the rules and in the types of pieces used. In the Islamic world, the pieces were abstract and non-descript, vastly different to what we think of in terms of the modern game. The emphasis was on the function of the game, as opposed to style, as “chess is, after all a war game” (Stratford, 1997, 31). What was the Eastern king’s right hand, or vizier, eventually turned into the Queen once the game reached Europe. In his seminal work on chess and its origins, British Museum curator Frederic

Madden asserted “the game was imported (into Europe) from the East by the crusaders,” and that it possibly entered Europe through Greece (1832, 204-205). Many modern scholars believe this introduction came from Islamic-ruled Spain, spreading into centres of “cultural co-existence” such as found in Italy and France (Robinson, 2004, 13). One of the first mentions of chess in Europe came from the will of Count of Urgel in 1010 who “left his chessmen to a covenant of St. Giles” (Taylor, 1978, 6). The date of this will in the early ninth century shows chess being culturally ingrained enough to be included in a person’s prized possessions to pass on. It should be noted that during this time in Europe, the game of chess, as it related to kings and high-ranking officials, was mostly played by nobility and, to a small extent, the clergy.

Robinson notes that from around the mid-eleventh century until the early thirteenth, a renaissance of sorts started taking place in Europe, which saw the growth of ideas and “intellectual transmission” through the modes of literature, philosophy, and sciences, mathematics, medicine, and astronomy (2004, 13). This period was given the title of “Romanesque” in the early nineteenth century to reflect the first rebirth of such innovative ideas since Roman times (Robinson, 2004). Influence came from all parts of the world, but especially from areas where peoples of different nationalities and faiths were co-habituating peacefully. Lund notes that “more contact abroad facilitated new cultural impulses and fashions, especially for nobility and higher status clergy” (2014, 266). This enlightenment saw the spread of artistic pursuits too, and during this time we find more elaborate and figurative chess sets being created. By this time in Europe the Church and Christianity were well-rooted in public consciousness and we see the introduction of the bishop in place of the traditional elephant chess piece. It is during this Romanesque period that the game of chess reached Northern Europe in the area better known as Scandinavia. One of the earliest mentions of chess in this area comes from “Snorri Sturluson’s telling of Knútr the Great and Jarl Ulf’s argument

over a chess game in CE 1028” (Lund, 2014, 266). Some scholars wonder if this game was really chess, or if it was referring to a more well-known Scandinavian game, *hnefatafl*. In the Viking era, *hnefatafl* was popular and was being played throughout Scandinavia. *Hnefatafl* derives from a game played in Rome and it was “in use in Scandinavia sometime before CE 400” (Lund, 2014, 263). Like the now familiar game of chess, *hnefatafl* was also a game of war and “required strategic thinking from its players,” and was, “a battle between two armies,” with the point of the game being the protection of the king (Lund, 2014, 263). While it was first played by the cultural elite, it soon evolved to include people from all walks of life, as demonstrated in graves in Denmark which included *hnefatafl* pieces in the burials of “ordinary people” (Lund, 2014, 265). However, *hnefatafl* was seemingly replaced in the Scandinavian cultural mainstream as the game of chess moved across Europe. Like *hnefatafl*, chess was associated first with elites, but “it did not take long before the preferences of the elite were adopted by other groups in society” (Lund, 2014, 266). Despite its decline in popularity as chess came into the public consciousness in the Middle Ages, *hnefatafl* had a long reign of play in this area of the world.

Few chess sets from this enlightened time of creation (the eleventh-thirteenth centuries) remain intact and unearthed for scholars of the modern era to examine. Undoubtedly one of the most famous and rare finds of sets from this time is the Lewis Chessmen. The mere fact that the pieces are still viable over a thousand years later and can be utilised for the game in which they were intended reveals their value as a rare and unique collection.

ii. The Isle of Lewis

The pieces were uncovered in the northwest part of the island of Lewis in a sandy inlet called Uig. The word Uig comes from the Norse word for “bay” reflecting the island’s historical

connections to the peoples of Scandinavia who settled there. Lewis is the largest of over 500 islands in the Outer Hebrides off Scotland's west coast. There are six hundred eighty-three square miles of jagged coastlines, pristine beaches, and a rugged, sometimes harsh landscape. As James Robinson wrote in his book, *The Lewis Chessmen* (for the British Museum), "it [Isle of Lewis] is a wild and remote terrain which conspires to keep its secrets" (2004, 5). Despite this remoteness, the Isle of Lewis has a long and complex history with its inhabitants.

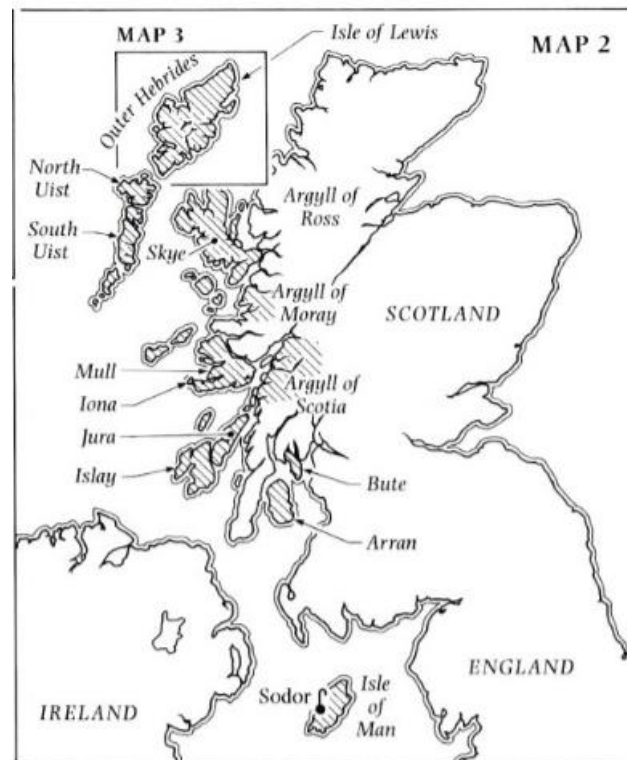
Human occupation on the island goes back at least five thousand years, as evident by the presence of the Calanais Standing Stones. This still-standing circle of stones was constructed in approximately 3000 BCE. Other Stone, Bronze, and Iron Age archaeological sites and numerous other standing stones in the area also attest to this early use of the island by humans. Many settlement areas on Lewis, both present and past, concentrate near the coastline. The topography of the island varies greatly. Inland areas are relatively barren and boggy, while areas such as Uig have been described as "a breath-taking sweep of whiteness" (Thompson, 1968, 27). Access to the water both for transportation and as a rich food resource proved more fruitful here than at other locations on the island. Historically, the sea was also the main source of income for the island and its people. Fishing was (and in some cases still is) a way of life on Lewis. The sea was intrinsically tied to the island and its people, and its folklore reflects this relationship too. Robinson notes, "the water affects the climate, the quality of light, and the character of the people, as it has frequently determined the course of their history" (2004, 5).

Prior to the arrival of Christianity, Lewis and other Hebridean Islands may have been inhabited by a group of people known as the Picts. This term was given to the people of Northern Scotland by the Romans in the 300s CE. After the monks of St. Columba arrived on the island of Iona in 563 CE, Christianity began to spread throughout the Western Isles.

Beginning in the late eighth century, peoples of Scandinavian descent, better known in this period as Vikings, raided, eventually settled, and ruled the outer islands now known as the Hebrides, Orkney, and Shetland. These seafaring people of the north (also known as Northmen) came from areas of Scandinavia, most likely Norway, and Sweden. One of the first mentions of these invaders in written text is thought to have come from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in 787 CE. This account reported that Vikings landed in what now is the United Kingdom, upon the beach at Northumberland (MacDonald, 1978, 17). When addressing the Celtic Congress in Cornwall in 1988, Finlay MacSween noted that, “as a race, they [Vikings] had incomparable skill in seamanship, and all their raids were launched from the sea” (6). Prior to settling the areas they invaded, the Vikings’ primary focus was on raids, and relic-rich monasteries proved to be amongst their favourite venues. Lewis historian Donald MacDonald, in his *Lewis, A History of the Island*, relayed that the Vikings “committed fearful atrocities, not only against foreigners, but also against their own people,” and their arrival on Lewis “lead to the practical extermination of the existing population and its replacement by ruthless, heathen foreigners” (1978, 17). According to MacDonald, until 853 CE, Lewis was still part of the Kingdom of Scotland; however, these invaders seemingly took over and by his reasoning, “as Lewis was the first Hebridean island on Viking western route, its inhabitants must have been constantly harassed” (1978, 17). Archaeological finds to corroborate Viking settlement on Lewis have been scarce: later medieval structures have been found and farms of this period have survived to modern dates, but their original use has been obscured by continual usage (Etheridge et al., 2014, 8). There are only two documented locations on Lewis that can positively be attributed to the Vikings: the sites of Barvas and Bosta (Etheridge et al., 2014, 8). Etheridge et al. notes that from these sites, the idea of continuity and the blending of both local and Norse practices have been discovered. Despite their very invasive beginnings, the Vikings settled and integrated themselves with locals to create a new culture.

The ruling of Lewis and other Hebridean islands passed from various nobles under the watchful eye of the kings of Norway. However, exact proceedings, who ruled as proxies, and the general day-to-day activities are seemingly unknown due to a lack of surviving records. One Norwegian king, Magnus Barefoot (1093-1103), decided he wanted “complete control of his scattered kingdom” and appointed one of his noble subjects to bring the “unruly” inhabitants of Lewis to heel (MacDonald, 1978, 19). His appointed representative did not fare well on the island and instead, took advantage of his post and position. King Magnus “was not the type of man to tolerate such actions, so he set off with a large fleet” and “devastated the island before proceeding to Skye” (MacDonald 1978, 19). The islands continued to be passed through various hands of Norse rulers until they came under the Kingdom of the Isle of Man during the mid-twelfth to the mid-thirteenth centuries.

As previously mentioned, this was a time of great upheaval and unrest in the history of Lewis and the Hebrides, and although written records of this time are sparse, scholars have been able to piece together a history of the period through several texts of the time including *The Orkneyinga Saga* (also known as *The History of the Earls of Orkney*, written in approximately 1230 CE) and more importantly in relation to Lewis, *The Chronicles of the Kings of Mann and the Isles* (written in approximately the 1250s CE). The inclusion of the Hebrides in these texts are testament to their importance in this era.



Map 2. The Norse Kingdom of Man and the Isles, c. 1150.

 Diocese of Sodor and Man

Figure 1. From: *The Lewis Chessmen and the Enigma of the Hoard*. N. Stratford, 1997, p.7.

Like the Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland were also ruled by Scandinavians during this time. After significant power struggles for control of the island, it finally came under the rule of the Kingdom of Man, also known as the “Dynasty of Sea Kings” in the 1160s and included the land from the Butt of Lewis to the Isle of Man (MacSween, 1998). Lewis Chessman scholar David H. Caldwell notes that in understanding the contextual relationship of the kingdom at this time, it is important to note that “the Isle of Man has to be distinguished from the rest” when evaluating early settlement of the islands (2014, 72). Caldwell writes that the Isle of Man was a more fertile area than most of the other islands and could, therefore, “support a much larger population,” so naturally, it became the location for the centralised government and the seat of power (2014, 72). This Kingdom had Scandinavian links and “was part of a wider

Scandinavian world with other territories settled by Scandinavian people, including Orkney, Shetland, and Iceland” and had “strong links with Ireland, particularly Dublin,” as well as with “neighbouring kingdoms of England and Scotland” (Caldwell, 2014, 73-74). According to *The Chronicles of the Kings of Mann and the Isles*, it has been interpreted that for a time, possibly in the mid-thirteenth century, the lands in the Kingdom were split between two rival ruling houses with Lewis and the Isle of Man being joined in one dynasty (Caldwell, 2014, 75). The rulers of this Lewis-Man amalgamation were descendants of Somerled and his wife. Somerled was a noble who married Princess Ragnhildis Olafsdatter of Man. Her father, King Olaf Godredsson was the ruling monarch over the Kingdom of the Isles of Man prior to this split of the dynasty. In 1248, the Norwegian King, Hákon IV “recognised a Somerled descendant...as a king, apparently to reign in the northern part of the Hebrides” but later, Hákon attempted to invade Scotland himself and failed (Caldwell, 2014, 75). After this defeat and Hákon’s death, the Treaty of Perth was signed in 1266, and Norway ceded the Hebrides, including Lewis, to Scotland.

iii. The Chessmen’s Origins

It is popularly believed that the Lewis Chessmen were found sometime in early 1831, as on 11 April of that year, they went on exhibition in Edinburgh at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. However, the questions of where they were found, how they were found, what precisely they are for, why or for whom they were made, and where they were made are still puzzling researchers almost two hundred years later. The exact spot of their location has been, and still is, contested amongst scholars. This discrepancy will be discussed later in this chapter. As we know it today, the hoard of ninety-four total pieces includes the following:

1. 60 Face pieces: 8 Kings, 8 Queens, 16 Bishops, 15 Knights, and 13 Warders.
2. 19 Pawns (not human figures)
3. 14 plain disks
4. 1 carved belt-buckle

The first public mention of the find was in June of 1831, two months after their exhibition in Edinburgh. As archaeological record keeping was not standardised as it is today, *The Scotsman's* article from 29 June 1831 describing their discovery is one of the first written accounts about the pieces and gives provides us with a valuable source of information about the discovery. It read as follows:

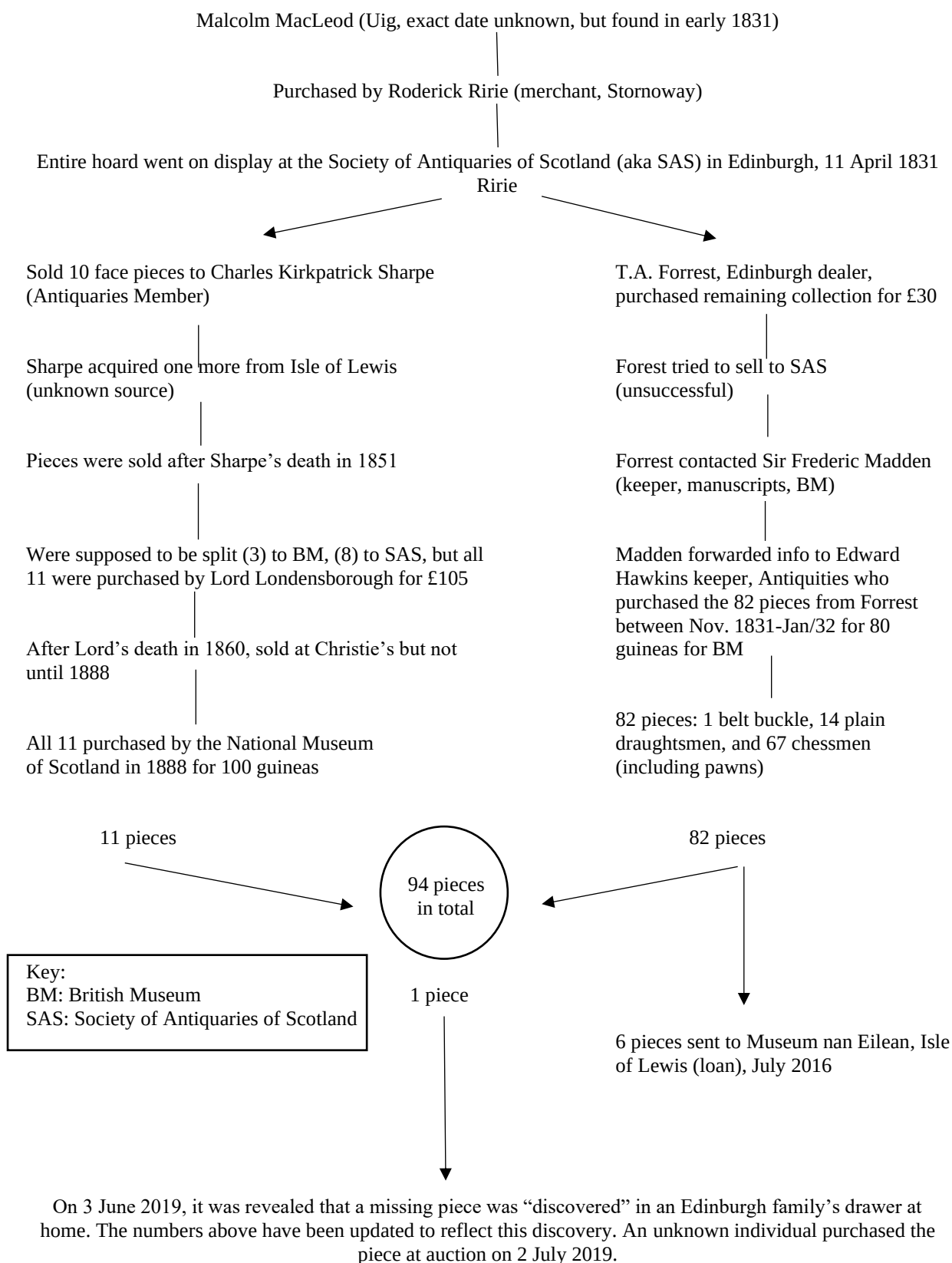
“Antiquaries- Some months ago a very curious discovery was made in the parish of Uig, Isle of Lewis, which must prove highly interesting to Scottish antiquaries. A peasant of the place, while digging in a sandbank, found upwards of 70 pieces of bone, most of them representing kings, bishops, and knights, dismounted on horseback. The figures are of excellent workmanship, and judging from the costume, certainly of very remote antiquity. It is impossible to describe the variety and richness of ornament displayed on the chairs on which the Kings and Bishops sit or to give our readers an adequate idea of the precision of detail in the dresses of the armed figures. These carvings, some suppose, to have formed part of a set of chess men, while other imagine that the group was intended to represent a court of justice, or some such solemn assembly. That they were originally carved for the ancient purpose of chess play seems the most probable conjecture and had been destined to relieve the sadness of cloistered seclusion, for they were discovered near the ruin known to have been a nunnery and still named, ‘Taignin Collechin dugh an Uig’ – the House of the Black Women of Uig. Pennant, in his Scottish tour of 1772, gives us a description and print of a curious little ivory figure, found in a

ruinous part of the castle Dunstafinage, now supposed to be lost. This carving, he conjectures, is meant to represent the Monarch of Scotland, seated in the coronation chair; but on comparison of the print with those newly discovered figures, it is obvious that the King in question must have belonged to a similar set of chess men. With the other articles was found a Buckle of the same kind bone or ivory, beautifully executed, and in perfect preservation, as are all the rest. We have been favoured with a sight of these ancient relics by Mr. J.A. Forrest, opposite the Tron Church, who has lately purchased them” (The Scotsman, 1831, 3).

This article gives a wealth of information about the pieces but, unfortunately, the actual details have tuned out to be not as cut and dry as the author penned. To understand the extremely complex beginnings of the Lewis Chessmen, the below timeline of events was created to allow the reader to follow the unravelling story contained later in this chapter. This timeline was recreated from primary sources to reveal a winding path for these pieces once they were unearthed.

Figure 2: Timeline/Ownership of the Lewis Chessmen

(Created in 2016; (Ed: 2019) by Stephanie L. Carter, as taken from historical accounts)



As shown by the above chart and in many historic accounts, Malcolm MacLeod of Uig is the most often attributed discoverer of the pieces. According to Robinson, local historical reports have the hoard going on display in MacLeod's barn prior to them leaving the island (2004, 11). Probably not long after, MacLeod received £30 after the Stornoway merchant Roderick Ririe purchased them from him (MacDonald, 1967). The entire hoard, ninety-three pieces in total, were then "exhibited by permission of Mr. Roderick Pirie (Ririe) of Stornoway" on 11 April 1831 at the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in Edinburgh, which shows he still had control of the hoard at this time (Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1831, 198). According to Stratford, "the Edinburgh story of the hoard is not well documented" (1997, 9). Indeed, there are differing reports of how the collection came to be split. By one account, as mentioned in *The Scotsman* article above, Mr. T A Forrest, a merchant from Edinburgh, purchased the hoard from Ririe for £30. In 1997, Stratford claimed, "the first owner seems to have been Malcolm MacLeod of Penny Donald, who sold the hoard, or at least most of it through Roderick Ririe (or Ririe or Pirie), a Stornoway merchant, to Forrest in Edinburgh" (1997, 9). However, more recently in 2009, Caldwell et al. noted that:

a receipt in the possession of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe confirms that Ririe took 93 pieces, which is the complete hoard as known, to Edinburgh in 1831. Sharpe, a noted Scottish collector, bought ten face-pieces from Ririe before he later sold the bulk to Forrest, who later that year sold 82 pieces to the British Museum (169).

So even amongst leading scholars of Lewis Chessmen study, the exact details of the exchanges are still somewhat unclear. According to David Laing when addressing the Society later in 1833:

it was proposed at the time, by a few of the members, to make a joint purchase of the entire collection, and after settling aside a certain number for the Society's Museum, to apportion the others among the contributors. By some oversight or delay, this arrangement was frustrated; and a dealer in curiosities in Edinburgh stepped in and made the purchase (Laing, 1857, 367).

No matter which claim is correct, ten pieces “had quietly been purchased” by Sharpe, a member of the Society (Stratford, 1997, 10). At some point soon after his purchase, Sharpe acquired one more piece from a source on Lewis “that is most likely, on an arithmetical basis, to have been one of the ninety-three pieces in Ririe’s possession” (Caldwell et al., 2009, 170). It is interesting to speculate where this additional piece came from, if not easily explained away by the idea of bad calculations. According to Wilson, from Sharpe’s own authority, “the remaining one was obtained from a person residing in Lewis” (1836, 342). Could this errant piece demonstrate that the collection had been tampered with prior to leaving Lewis? Whether it was Ririe or Forrest who split the hoard, it occurred, nonetheless. Caldwell et al. also question the amount of background information Forrest had about the pieces and speculates he did not realise he was in receipt of only a portion of the hoard (2009, 170).

iv. The Chessmen go to the British Museum...but also to Scotland

At the same time as the above-mentioned actions, Forrest had also contacted Sir Frederic Madden, Assistant Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum, about the sale of the pieces in his possession. Madden passed the information on to Edward Hawkins, Keeper of Antiquities, who, after haggling over the price and with the Trustees of the British Museum, purchased the set of eighty-two pieces from Forrest for 80 guineas, or around £84 (if 1 guinea=approx. £1.05) between November 1831 and January 1832 (Stratford, 1997, 5). Just

as a side note, some sources state that the purchase price was £100; however, as previously noted, Hawkins supposedly haggled the price to a lower final figure. After the purchase, and in his report to the Trustees, Hawkins wrote, “there are not in the Museum any objects so interesting to a native Antiquary as the objects now offered to the Trustees” (Stratford, 1997, 5). For Madden, himself a skilled chess player and board-game aficionado, the pieces intrigued him. Spurred on by his personal interests, Madden researched and wrote an eighty-three-page “learned and elaborate dissertation” on the game of chess and his findings regarding the pieces found (Laing, 1857, 367). This seminal work, which was read in the British Museum on 28 January 1832, was, according to Madden, “called forth by a singular discovery, made in the course of the last twelvemonth, which throws no inconsiderable light on the early history of the game of chess, after its arrival in Europe” (Madden, 1832, 212). The hoard’s discovery brought forth a wealth of additional information needed to pursue the study of chess in Europe, and Madden’s research is still utilised by scholars today.

Madden and the British Museum both believed Forrest had deliberately concealed the fact that the hoard had been separated. In a letter dated 17 August 1832, Joseph Stevenson (also in the Manuscripts Department with Madden at the British Museum) wrote to David Laing, “there are some in the possession of gentlemen in Edinburgh seems very curious as the individual by whom they were sold to the museum stated that these were the whole which had been found.” It is possible that Forrest himself was first given false information which lead him to pass this on to Madden and the British Museum. Forrest was accused of “bad behaviour” regarding this incident, as Madden “set great store by keeping the hoard together and preventing its dispersal into small lots” (Stratford, 1997, 10). It is interesting to note that Laing, when addressing the Society in 1833, seemingly praised Sharpe’s “kindness,” in “securing specimens of the Lewis chess-men before the others were taken to London” (Laing, 1857, 368).

In the same address, Laing noted that the Society had received their original information with the viewing on 11 April 1831 from “extracts from a letter regarding the discovery of a number of figures carved in ivory,” but he goes on to explain that “no copy of this letter is preserved among the Society’s papers” (Laing, 1857, 369). It is possible to think that the letter’s owner simply took the letter back with them after the meeting, but according to librarians at the National Museum of Scotland’s library, which holds the Society’s archival collection, to this day, that letter is still missing, although original Society records indicate it was meant to be in the collection. Laing may have been suspicious when he also said, “it is evident, that to serve some purpose, contradictory statements were circulated by the persons who discovered or who afterwards obtained possession of these Chess-men, regarding the place where the discovery was actually made” (1857, 369). From this account, it seems he believed that Forrest had given false information when the pieces were sold. According to Virginia Glenn, this falsehood’s aim could have been to “avoid questions of ownership which may have arisen if they were found deliberately stored or hidden in a structure on an identifiable landholding, as opposed to merely lost on the common foreshore” (2003, 150). In a report on the operation on the Law of Treasure Trove from the Society’s “Fragments” catalogue of 1782-1890, “the claim of the museum to archaeological finds therefore, is not that of a mere private society, as it is too often supposed, but is public and national, and ought to have the support of all patriotic Scotsmen,” but, “the National Museum, as such, has no legal claim to these finds. They are bestowed entirely at the will of the Crown to assume possession of Treasure Trove or other articles of ownerless property” (1). This report goes on to call finders “ignorant” of the law as they are “of the humblest classes” (Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1782-1890, 3). This classist definition harkens back to Malcolm MacLeod’s frequent description as a peasant in texts about the find. It is possible that MacLeod did not know of such laws, but Ririe, a well-known merchant, who may have assisted MacLeod with the find, may have better understood these

laws if he dealt in antiquities often. It is curious to speculate if there were indeed deliberate falsehoods fashioned around these already mysterious pieces or if, this miscommunication was entirely accidental.

After Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe's death in 1851, his portion of the hoard, along with other possessions, was sold in Edinburgh in June the same year. The auction catalogue, which included the chessmen, listed them as coming from Skye and not Lewis. There is also an Uig on Skye, so it is probable the two may have been mistakenly matched up. Albert Denison, Lord Londesborough, also a collector of antiquities, purchased Sharpe's chess pieces for £105. At the time of the auction, Londesborough was bidding against both the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and the British Museum, both of whom were eager to acquire the pieces for their own institutions (Stratford, 1997, 10). Lord Londesborough died in 1860, but his possessions were not sold until 1888. It is at this auction that the Society of Antiquaries, now known as National Museum of Scotland, was finally able to purchase the eleven pieces for their collection. The eleven pieces which make up the National Museum of Scotland's collection are as follows: two kings, three queens, three bishops, one knight, and two warders. The British Museum houses the rest of the hoard.

v. How Were They Found?

There are several versions of the legend of how the chess pieces were found and many more tales of how they came to be in the sands of Uig. The terms "legend" and "tale" are used here simply to denote the fact that as there are several opinions as to the details of the find, yet none of them thus far have been confirmed as truth.

As the previous *Scotsman* article mentions, one version of events has a local man, now known as Malcolm MacLeod (or Calum nan Sprot) of Penny Donald, as the discoverer. It is

interesting to note that in several yet differing accounts of the find that MacLeod is specifically named as a “peasant,” including in the above article from *The Scotsman*. Whether or not this term was used (intentionally or not) in a derogatory manner, is unknown. Lewis was still very insular and difficult to get to at the time, so it bears the thought that perhaps he was considered a “peasant” from mainland reporters’ and scholars’ perspective. The first actual naming of MacLeod as the supposed discoverer (as mentioned, he was previously known as “the peasant”) comes over thirty years later in 1862 when Captain F.W.L. Thomas, when addressing the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, named him in his “Notes on the Lewis Chessmen” (1863, 413). Many years later, in his version of the find in his 1968 book, author Francis Thompson calls MacLeod what he probably was: a “crofter” (37). However, David H. Caldwell mentions in a footnote of his 2009 paper that after 1831, “there is no record of him [MacLeod],” and there is little else known about him (168). It is interesting to think on what happened to MacLeod and how much of a part he had in the hoard’s discovery. There were documented clearances at this time in parts of Lewis and according to an article written by the Uig Historical Society, “Malcolm and his family and neighbours were evicted from Pennydonald a few years later when the farm at Ardrol was created” (n.d.). While this information has not been verified with the Uig Historical Society, if MacLeod and his family did leave after local clearances, this could account for his disappearance after 1831.

Some scholars believe that the Stornoway merchant, and eventual purchaser of the hoard, Roderick Ririe, was involved with unearthing the hoard. Donald MacDonald, in his book, *Tales and Traditions of the Lews* noted, “a gentleman from Stornoway heard of the discovery and came over and dug out all the pieces...” (1976, 122). According to Caldwell, “he [Ririe] may have helped to recover the pieces or been closely related to someone who did” (2014, 172). How much either MacLeod or Ririe were involved is something we will never

know, but there is little evidence that someone other than these two were involved in the discovery of the hoard (Caldwell, 2014, 170).

Even the way in which MacLeod supposedly found the hoard has no definitive answer. As the article in *The Scotsman* mentioned, he was, “digging in a sandbank” (1831, 3). In 1833, just two years after the find, David Laing, in addressing the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland, read aloud comments made by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, one of the eventual purchasers of ten of the pieces. According to Sharpe, “these chess-men were discovered in the Isle of Lewis had never been under water; they were found in a vaulted room (as it was described to me), about six feet long; they were slightly covered with sand, and there was a quantity of ash on the floor” (Laing, 1857, 368). This is the first recorded mention of the pieces being found, not in a sand bank, but in an underground chamber of sorts. This has become a lasting inclusion of information in stories of how the Chessmen were found, despite the fact some scholars still relay the idea of the hoard being found in a sandbank. In 1851, some twenty years after the find, Daniel Wilson, in his *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*’s chapter, “Amusements,” noted that:

in the Spring of 1831, the inroads affected by the sea undermined and carried away a considerable portion of a sandbank in the parish of Uig, Isle of Lewis, and uncovered a small subterranean stone building like an oven, at some depth below the surface. The exposure of this singular structure having excited the curiosity, or more probably the cupidity, of a peasant who chanced to be working in the neighbourhood, he proceeded to break into it... (341).

His description precipitates that MacLeod’s discovery of the hoard was by happenstance of the weather rather than from the act of digging as denoted in *The Scotsman* article. In the section

titled “Purchased for the Museum” in the 1888 Meeting Minutes of the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, it was noted:

there is no circumstantial account of the discovery, but from a comparison of the various statements it appears that they (the chess pieces) were found in a chamber of dry-built stone which had been disclosed by the partial washing away of a bank of sand about 15 feet deep, at the head of the Bay of Uig in the island of Lewis. They were slightly covered with sand, and it was observed that there was a quantity of ashes on the floor of the chamber (9).

This rendition of the find closely reflects Sharpe’s mention of the underground chamber, down to the minute detail of ashes on the floor. It is possible that the Society relied heavily on Sharpe’s original statement to create this description. Even today, the Uig Historical Society, on their leaflet, which relays their version of the find story, note that they “were found in a stone cist in the shifting dunes of Uig Bay at Ardrol” (2008, front side). According to *The Oxford English Dictionary*, a cist is a burial chamber made from stone or a container which holds sacred relics (“cist”). In 1928, the 9th report of *The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland* gives a very lengthy, detailed, and somewhat differing account of the find’s particulars:

In a windswept gully in the sand at the South-eastern base of Eornal, a small hill rising 50 feet above it, and about 400 yards south of the high-water mark on the southern shore of Uig Bay, is a hut circle, formed by a single curb of stones set on edge and measuring 17 feet in diameter internally. About 9 feet to the north-east are a few tumbled stones, apparently the remains of a small structure. Two saddle querns, a hammer-stone and a few fragments of pottery, together with some shells of cockles and limpets and animal bones, were got beside the hut circle. The 78 chessmen of walrus

ivory, of which eleven are preserves in the Scottish National Museum of Antiquities, while the others are in the British Museum, were found in this gully in 1831 (23).

Here we see the pieces being found in a gully near a detailed description of a local archaeological site. Questions arise from this description including how Macleod knew to look (if he was actively looking) near this hut circle (if it was known to him at the time), and if this circle is still visible today. The account from the Royal Commission in 1928 is also the first to introduce yet another means of the hoard being uncovered: a cow. Following the above description from the Royal Commission, the report also relays that “the articles were exposed by a cow rubbing itself against a sandhill” (1928, 23). Since this introduction, many other Lewis Chessmen authors and scholars have included this cow in their version of the hoard’s discovery. Stornoway-born and well-known Lewis local historian/folklorist Donald MacDonald noted in his 1967 book *Tales and Traditions of the Lews*:

then one day in 1831, Malcolm MacLeod of Penny Donald, known as Calum nan Sprot, was herding his cattle amongst the sand dunes when he saw one of the beasts rubbing itself against a ‘baca grainmhich’(sandbank) and acting in a queer manner, so he went along to investigate and saw her pull out some whitish objects with her horn (122).

In his fancifully fictitious, yet semi-historical take on the story of the chessmen, modern-day British Museum curator Irving Finkel combines all the above ideas: the chamber, a sandbank being uncovered due to inclement weather, and the addition of MacLeod’s cow in his version of the hoard’s discovery. However, this story is told from the Chessmen’s’ point of view and describes their unearthing as follows:

One February there were unusually high seas. Day after day, the heavy rollers crashed onto the beach, dragging at the sands, undermining the tough grasses that struggled defiantly in the wintry air ... There was a cataclysmic upheaval, the Chamber was filled with blinding sunlight and freezing air, and the huge, dripping mouth of the Cow

suddenly swung into view ... their steady gaze unnerved the Cow. It backed off, still chewing, to look for more conventional fodder ... A heavy tread along the shingle could be heard, and then suddenly the grasses parted again, and another huge face loomed into view. This face was human, red, rough, and unshaven. Like the Cow, the Man rolled his eyes, and startled everybody with a sudden cry (Finkle, 1995, 10-13).

It seems that through time, like any legend or tale of old, the story of how the Chessmen were unearthed has grown and been embellished through oral tradition and no doubt, since the precise answers still escape scholars, this has added to their mythos. For the most part, the story is based mostly on local history, but as previously mentioned, archaeology was in its infancy at this time, and the find was not documented officially. It is safe to surmise that we will never really know for certain the particulars of the find, nor the parties involved; therefore, it will continue to be another Scottish legend which is passed on through the generations.

vi. Where Were They Found?

As previously mentioned, the exact burial spot of the hoard is also still debated amongst scholars today and currently includes two main contenders: a site of a possible ruined nunnery at Mèalasta (also seen as Mealista) in Uig, or just seven miles down the road at “Ardroil (beach) on the south side of Tràighe Uìge (*Uig Strand*),” which is a small inlet on the Western coast of the island (Caldwell et al., 2009, 15). Below is a map from Caldwell et al.’s book, *The Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked*, which shows the short distance between the two proposed find

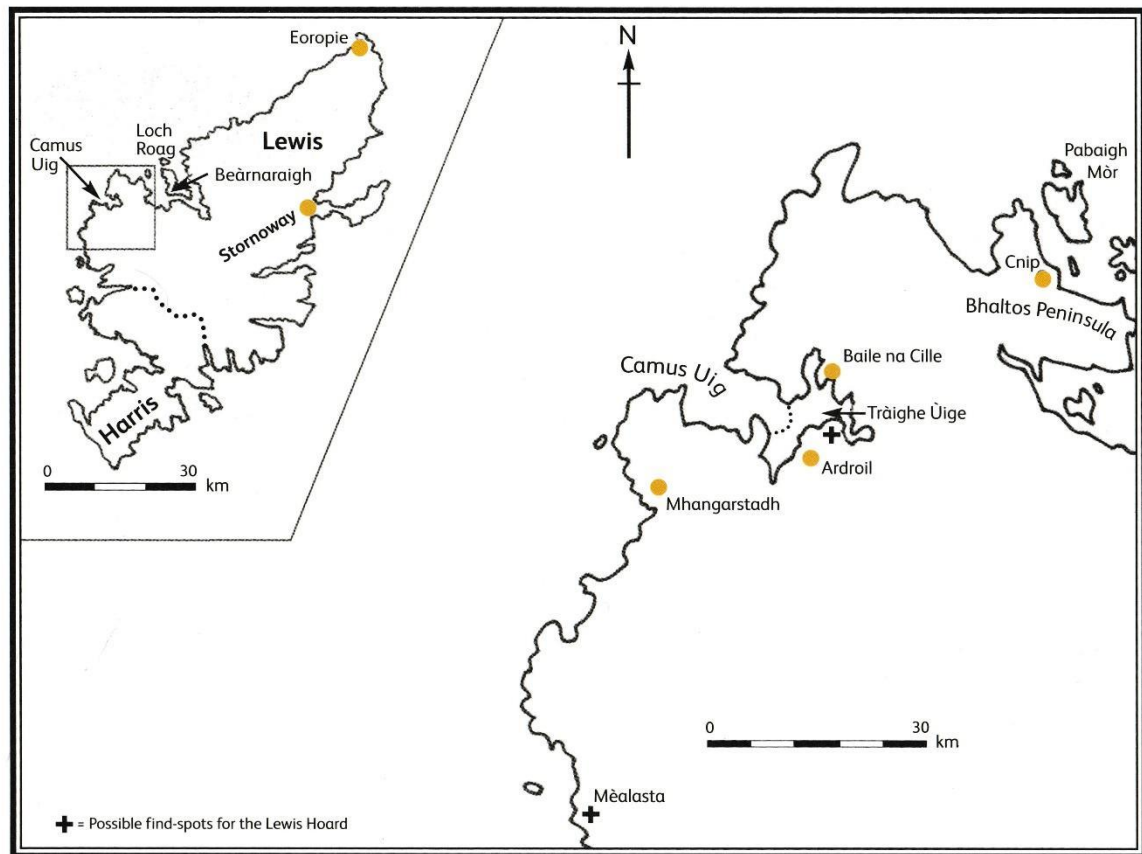


Figure 3: Caldwell et al, 2010, p.14.

locations, as denoted by the cross marks. According to some of the first known information about the pieces from purchaser Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, “the room [where they were supposedly found] is near a spot where tradition affirms a nunnery once stood. The name of the place in Gaelic signifies it as – ‘The House of the Black Women’” (Laing, 1857, 368). Interestingly, Laing claims “tradition” is the source of his information. In the *Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799*, Reverend Hugh Monroe noted “at Melista are the remains of a nunnery, called still in the language of our country, Teah na a cailichan dou, or the house of the old black women” (288). This is the earliest mention of the nunnery, and it is still unknown where the Reverend received his information. It is possible that this is the source of “tradition” that Sharpe quotes in his rendition, and it can be assumed that through time, this bit of information just came along with the story of the pieces, like oral traditions usually do. *The*

Scotsman's article, containing the first information to be seen by the public, also notes that the hoard was supposedly, "near the ruin known to have been a nunnery and still named, 'Taignin Collechin dubh an Uig' – the House of the Black Women of Uig" (1831, 3). In his pivotal 1832 work on the Chessmen, Frederic Madden of the British Museum, makes a claim differing to this theory, noting that "a private letter from Edinburgh states the story of the Nunnery to be fictitious, but that a ruin of some note exists not far from the spot where these chessmen were found" (1832, 212). However, it is interesting to observe that Madden, who wrote such a detailed account of the hoard, simply copied the version of events from *The Scotsman* article into his own work as fact and with which he agreed. Seemingly in favour of the sandbank theory, Madden noted in his 1832 report the idea that part of the pieces were stained a dark red colour, "but from having been so long subject to the action of the salt-water, the colouring matter, in most cases, has been discharged" (212). Contradictory to this claim, Laing stated in 1833 that, "Mr. Madden has certainly been misled by some erroneous statement regarding the sand-bank where they are said to have been discovered. I understand, they were actually found inside of a building where they could not possibly have been subjected to the action of the sea" (367-8).

According to CANMORE, an archaeological records website, Tigh nan Cailleachan Dubha was, "the alleged site of a Dominican nunnery," with the name applying to, "the remains of a typical black house structure," noting that, "there is still a strong local tradition regarding this site" (n.d.). Again, the idea of tradition, possibly in the form of oral history, is quoted here. At this point it is important to note the various Gaelic spellings for the supposed nunnery, and the question arises of accurate translations of the same. "Dubh" in Gaelic can mean a variety of things, from the description of someone's hair, the colour black, or the idea of darkness. Cowan and Easson dismiss the idea of this nunnery as "the fanciful explanation of

a place-name” (1976, 156). The Uig Historical Society’s website mentions that according to Uig tradition “the site is associated with fear, black magic, and sorcery” (2009).

CANMORE’s archaeological notes on the site include listings (some disputed through the years) for a shrine to Saint Catalan, foundations of a church, and a graveyard (n.d.”). Barrowman and Hooper noted in their 2006 report on Lewis chapel sites that, “the remains of a complex of several buildings” including various structures and, “graveyard and remains of the teampall” [*chapel*] (18-19). From this we see archaeological evidence proving the remains of an area of ecclesial use, but if it was a site of a nunnery in the times of the chess pieces, there is no absolute conclusive evidence. Amongst the structures at the Mèalasta site, a souterrain, or underground chamber, was noted by F.W.L. Thomas in his 1870 work on “primitive” dwellings of the Outer Hebrides. He mentions a beehive shaped structure being present at the site but noted that, “stones were removed for building” (Thomas, 1870, 171). Could this description of an underground chamber correlate to the same one mentioned by Sharpe? The idea of a nunnery being the find spot of the pieces, based *solely* on oral tradition seems less than plausible with the lack of documentation, but then the issue becomes one of oral tradition versus documentation. However, the existence of an underground chamber from the medieval period, at a site which shows extensive archaeological remains, *is* a plausible one. According to Caldwell et al. “these (underground chambers) are fairly widespread throughout Scotland,” noting that *Jarlshof* (a large broch) in Shetland is an example of such occurrence (2010, 18). Caldwell et al. also make the argument that based on the extensive remains of buildings at Mèalasta, it proves that it was once a settled location (2010). A bronze finger ring “engraved with crosses and dates to the twelfth or thirteenth century” was found there too (Caldwell et al., 2010, 18). As Mèalasta is by the sea and may have once been a populated place, it is not totally inconceivable that the chess pieces ended up here from a tradesman passing through.

One last reference to the nunnery has brought to light, the discrepancy of dates of the Chessmen find. From the Ross and Cromarty OS (Ordnance Survey) Name Books 1848-1852, Taigh an Cailleachan Dubh, also spelled Tigh nan Cailleachan Dúbha near Mèalasta was

a nunnery which was occupied by the order of the Black Nuns, and concerning which no information can be obtained, beyond a number of chess-men, having been found in its ruins about 70 years ago, which were in great preservation. They were sold to a Society of Antiquaries in Edinburgh and brought a good price. Nothing remains of it but the site (Scotland's Places, n.d., 87)

According to this report, a set of chessmen were found at this site and sold to the Society of Antiquaries in Edinburgh. As we know, the Society never got the pieces until much later, so it can be surmised that the author(s) may not have known the exact correct details of the find. This survey, dated from 1848-1852, says the pieces were found seventy years prior, making the estimated find date in the range of 1778-1782. Surely if this were the correct date of the discovery, the Reverend Monroe would have included such a find in his report for the statistical account, as it falls very conveniently just prior to the dates of the publication. As previously mentioned, modern theories put the find date to 1831. If the OS report's dates are correct, the survey was conducted a mere seventeen to twenty-one one years after the Lewis hoard was supposedly found in 1831. With the hoard being such an important and undoubtedly widely reported find, it does not seem likely that the person(s) writing this report would have forgotten that the hoard was discovered only twenty odd years prior, and not seventy years as it was written. Obviously, this brings up the issue of discrepancies and many more questions than answers arise from the text including the most obvious: were the pieces found at an earlier date? According to Caldwell et al. 2010:

it is not beyond the bounds of likelihood that pieces from the hoard could have remained in a local house or barn for fifty years, their value and interest unappreciated

until a travelling merchant – Roderick Ririe even? – saw them and spotted a chance to make some money. (19)

So, despite what all present writings say that the pieces were found in 1831, how can we really know they were found then?

vii. How Did They Get There?

Yet another mystery, how the pieces got to Lewis, is still also unknown. Modern scholars have taken educated guesses based on previous local lore associated with the hoard but have also conducted research to come up with more plausible ideas. The idea of the pieces being in situ for the supposed nunnery site was one put forth in the 1831 *Scotsman* article as they had, “been destined to relieve the sadness of cloistered seclusion” (3). Given the facts previously received from sources, this is not a far-fetched idea. There are two “tales” (again used to distinguish ideas that have not been proven) which point to very adventurous beginnings for the hoard. In his address to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1863, Captain F.W.L. Thomas said that, “in some manuscript volumes of legends and traditions of the Lewis, there is an account of the way by which these ivory figures came into the Lewis...” (411). He relayed that:

George Mor Mackenzie was tacksman of the farm at Baluakill and other lands, in the parish of Uig; and at one time he had held cattle at a remote shielding in the southern end of the Parish called Aird Bheag, near the entry to Loch Resort. Mackenzie employed a young man to herd the cattle there; on a stormy night a ship was driven ashore at Aird Bheag. On the following morning, Mackenzie’s herd saw from a hiding-place a sailor swimming ashore with a small bag upon his back. The herd pursued the sailor, overtook and slew him without ceremony, hoping to find riches and money on him. Burying the sailor in a peat-moss, he went to Balnakill to inform his master of the

fate of the ship, advising him to kill the crew, and possess himself of the wealth the ship was supposed to contain. But Mackenzie reprimanded his herd for this barbarous advice and directed him by no means to do them harm, but to conduct the survivors to his house. So, the crew all safely arrived at Balankill, excepting the sailor whom the herd had murdered. Mackenzie showed all manner of kindness to strangers, who stayed about a month with him, and in that time, they saved as much from the ship as more than satisfied Mackenzie for their keep. When the shipwrecked seamen left the country, the wicked herd, always afraid of detection, through living in a remote corner of the parish, went to where he had concealed the bag for the sake of which he had murdered the sailor, to examine the contents. These turned out to be carved relics of various descriptions and fearing the figures might be turned proof against him, he travelled not less than ten miles in a dark night and buried the carved images in a sand bank in the Mains of Uig. This herd never prospered thereafter, but went on from bad to worse, until for his abuse of women, he was sentenced to be hanged on the Gallows Hill at Stornoway. When he was brought forth for execution, he told of many wicked things which he had done, and, among others, how he had murdered the sailor, and where he had buried the images (Thomas, 1863, 412).

Thomas noted that this tale was told by Mr. Morrison of Stornoway “who was for many years a resident in the parish of Uig and was intimately acquainted with the folk-lore of that district” (1863, 413). This text provides a cache of information, be it legendary or actual truths. Baluakill, also known as Baile na Cille, is an area not far from the supposed find spot in the sands of Ardrol, adding an interesting layer to the already tangled web that surrounds the hoard. According to Hebridean Connections, it was a place associated with worship and the location of a “substantial farm” (n.d.). Aird Bheag, also listed in Thomas’ tale, is also close to the previously mentioned nunnery and is located south of Mèalasta. These areas are both

coastal, and it is possible that ships may have wrecked here at some point. In his notes, Thomas also attempts to vilify this tale through further biographical information on the tacksman, George Mor Mackenzie. According to Thomas, he learned the following from another part of the manuscript in which he evidently saw for himself: “George Mor was one of those to whom the Tutor of Kintail gave encouragement to settle in the Lewis after its subjugation by the Mackenzies. George Mor was one of the principle tacksmen, and a rich as well as a valiant man, a powerful swordsman, and a dexterous marksman with a bow” (1863, 413). The Tutor of Kintail, more commonly known as Roderick Mackenzie of Coigach, had apparently laid claim to what was traditionally MacLeod lands on Lewis in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Later in his report, Thomas noted that because the final conquest of Lewis occurred around the same time period, and the fact that he believed there was trade occurring through the waterways of the islands at the time, he concluded that the tale gave “a correct explanation of how the chessmen were brought into Lewis” (1863, 413).

The second tale of how the Chessmen came to be on Lewis comes from Dr. Donald MacDonald, a physician turned folklorist and local historian who gathered traditional stories of the Hebrides after his retirement from medical work. A native of Lewis himself, MacDonald’s gathered stories remained unpublished until after his death, after which, his wife saw to correct this oversight. In his 1967 *Tales and Traditions of the Lews*, MacDonald has a different yet similar tale of how the chess pieces came to be on the island, and he notes the story used to be told in “a ceilidh house near the old sanctuary of Balnacille when he was a boy” (120). The “he” in this instance, was a Reverend A.J. MacKenzie, who was born in 1887, and moved to Uig as a young child.

The beginning of the seventeenth century saw the end of the war between the Macleods and the Mackenzies for the possession of Lewis. Neil Macleod had been beguiled from his island fortress of Beirisay, taken to Edinburgh, and executed at the market cross in

1613, and the direct line of the Soil Torquil came to an end soon afterwards. When the MacKenzies took over in 1610, clansmen from Kintail followed the Chief who gave them farmlands, and among them was Calum Mór, noted for his skill as an archer and swordsman. To him the Chief gave Baile-na-Cille, and also some rough pasture in the Ard Mhór beyond the mountains which shut in Uig, and here in summer, his cattle used to graze in a long glen strewn with great boulders through the hills all along to Loch Hamnavay. The cattle were in the charge of the “Gille Ruadh” or red gillie, and on one of the days he was herding the cattle, he climbed to the top of Ardmor, and lo! he saw a ship riding to anchor in the loch below. There was no sign of life anywhere. He hid himself in an alcove in a cairn and watched to see what would happen. At moonrise he noticed a small dinghy being rowed to the shore from which a sailor boy jumped to land holding a weighty bundle. The place where the boat came ashore is still called Gleanna-na-Curach. The “Red Gillie” watched the boy and his movements, judged he wanted to get away from that ship. The “Red Gillie” left his hiding place and by a roundabout route met the boy at the bend of the glen where the river sweeps past the great boulders of Diuire (Guire). The “Red Gillie” spoke to the boy who told him he was tired of living with a rough crew and had made up his mind to escape though he did not know what kind of country he was in, but he thought land would be better than living with the kind of drunken sots that comprised the crew. As he had no money, he had taken away the playthings with which the sailors amused themselves, hoping to be able to sell them later. The “Red Gillie” was most kind and took the boy into the shelter of the cave formed of boulders where he was told the boy’s story about the bundle, and “once again as ten million times it has happened before and as ten million times it will happen again, the wicked prospered and the righteous suffered: but the wicked shall not prosper for ever, says the Great Book.” The herd servant, overcome by greed and a desire to own

the bundle, attacked the boy, killed him, and buried him in the cavern. The “Red Gillie” set out for home and arrives just as the first pale gleam of dawn was tingeing the sky. He hid the bundle of treasure, and sometime later when his master appeared, he told him about the ship at Ard Mhór and suggested that he – the master – should take some of his men and plunder her before she set sail again for the open sea. The master, Calum Mór, was horrified, and sternly commanded him never again to show his face within sight of the lands of Balnacille. Thus, he was prevented from unearthing his treasure, which he had buried in the sands of Uig, for he never saw these sands again. He tried his fortune around Stornoway, where he was caught red-handed in a dastardly deed for which he was hanged on Gallows Hill. The Lord Kintail raised this new erection – the gallows – on the hill across the bay opposite the ancient stronghold of the Siol Torquil. Among a long list of crimes to which he confessed was the story of the sailor boy and his treasured bundle. No one would believe his story and so the sand dunes of Uig kept the secret of the buried treasure (MacDonald, 1967, 120-122).

This is a rather lengthier and more detailed take on the story told by Thomas. It references the same people, the same area of Lewis, and the same historical context. Both Thomas and MacDonald claim to have received their stories from local sources, some years apart. If we take it as truth that MacDonald heard this story as a child on Lewis, and he was born in 1891, we can see that at least fifty years later this story was still being circulated in relation to the pieces’ find. Even as recent as 2008 on a leaflet that is handed out to visitors, the Uig Historical Society also tell the tale of the sailor and the murderous gillie. There is something to be said for local tradition and lore, and Lewis is certainly a location steeped in it. According to Caldwell et al, however, there is no record of the tale being told prior to the pieces’ discovery in 1831, which may have “had an unfortunate effect of reinforcing the idea that the hoard did not belong in Lewis but only got there by accident” (2010, 16). It is possible the tale created to

explain how the pieces got to be there, and the source of the tale was local storyteller Donald Morrison (An Sgoilear Bàn), who died in 1834 but left behind the manuscripts of his stories (Caldwell et al., 2010, 16). Caldwell et al. argue that if Morrison was indeed the source of the tale of the Chessmen, he also could have been the source for the idea of the pieces being found in a sand bank as opposed to the more likely spot at Mèalasta, despite the earliest account (Sharpe's description of an underground chamber via Laing in 1833) giving differing information (2010, 16).

viii. A New Piece Comes to Light

On 3 June 2019, the world's media outlets proclaimed the startling news that one of the five of the missing face pieces of the Lewis Chessmen's' total collection had been found. This piece, a warder, had been stored away in a family's drawer for some years, its identity as authentic unknown. In their press release, auction house Sotheby's stated that "on 2 July in London, Sotheby's will offer what appears to be the first additional piece from the Lewis hoard to have been discovered since 1831" (2019). As we have seen so far, every known piece belongs either to the British Museum or the National Museum of Scotland, so the possibility of this warder ending up in private hands via the auction block was a distinct possibility.



Figure 4: BBC headline, 03 June 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-48494885>.

To date, there has only been very general information revealed about the piece's provenance. According to a Sotheby's press release, the spokesperson for the family owning the piece gave the following account:

My grandfather was an antiques dealer based in Edinburgh, and in 1964 he purchased an ivory chessman from another Edinburgh dealer. It was catalogued in his purchase ledger that he had bought an 'Antique Walrus Tusk Warrior Chessman'. From this description it can be assumed that he was unaware he had purchased an important historic artefact. It was stored away in his home and then when my grandfather died my mother inherited the chess piece. My mother was very fond of the Chessman as she admired its intricacy and quirkiness. She believed that it was special and thought perhaps it could even have had some magical significance. For many years it resided in a drawer in her home where it had been carefully wrapped in a small bag. From time to

time, she would remove the chess piece from the drawer in order to appreciate its uniqueness. (Sotheby's, 2019)

The piece was purchased by the late antiques dealer for a mere £5. After over fifty years of the piece's quarantine in a drawer, the late owner's family decided to go into Sotheby's in London to have it assessed. Alexander Kader, who is Sotheby's expert in European sculpture, exclaimed "oh my goodness, it is one of the Lewis Chessmen" and noted that seeing the piece before him was a "delightful surprise" when the warder was brought in for analysis (Mezzofiore, 2019). The piece was sold at auction on 2 July 2019 for a staggering £735,000, as reported by news outlets all over the world. The lone pieces' discovery was big news in the media, especially with the delightful story that it had been just languishing in a drawer for many years. To date, the person or organisation which purchased the chess piece has never been revealed. It may be that once again, the hoard's contents have been split even more.

ix. Legends vs. Scholarly Predictions

One important aspect of how the chess pieces were found is the characterisation of MacLeod, the farmer who first saw them. As briefly mentioned earlier, his description and his role in the find itself may prove insightful into how people from more remote places were perceived. In his *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, Wilson, in a section titled "Amusements," wrote that when "the peasant" (supposedly MacLeod), broke into the subterranean chamber, he "was astonished to see what he concluded to be an assemblage of elves or gnomes upon whose mysteries he had unconsciously intruded" (1863, 341). This is the first mention in literature and publications of the idea that "the peasant" believed the pieces to be of some sort of supernatural origin. Wilson goes on to say that "the superstitious Highlander flung down his spade and fled home in dismay; but incited by the bolder curiosity of his wife he was at length

induced to return to the spot and bring away with him the singular little ivory figures, which had not unnaturally appeared to him the pygmy sprites of Celtic folk-lore” (1863, 341-2). In areas of his book, Wilson acknowledged that Charles Kirkpatrick Sharp, one of the purchasers of ten pieces, gave him most of the information about the pieces (and other antiques) first-hand, as its referenced in a footnote. This footnote reports that the two were in company together whilst Wilson was sketching one of the Lewis queens (1863, 344). Is it possible that Sharpe, one of the first persons to have the pieces in his possession, got this information from the Stornoway seller, Mr. Ririe, who in turn, received his information from the source: Mr. MacLeod? Or as previously mentioned, did Ririe assist in the uncovering of the hoard as MacLeod was so apprehensive about them, and then Ririe relayed this to Sharpe upon his purchase? In his 1967 book *Tales and Traditions of the Lews*, well-known folklorist Dr. MacDonald also mentions the idea of MacLeod’s reaction to the pieces as “idols or graven images of some kind which he did not understand” (122). This further implicates Mr. MacLeod as merely the uneducated and superstitious islander who did not know what he had found. In his 1968 book, Thompson noted that MacLeod, “on seeing what he thought to be an assembly of elves and gnomes, he fled home in great distress. His wife, of a bolder nature, went to see for herself...” (37). It may be no surprise that MacLeod, if he did find the pieces himself, may have had this reaction. Irving Finkle, in the 2006 *Masterpieces of the British Museum* television show commented, “I can believe very readily that the reaction to the person who saw them for the first time in the ground was that they were little devils or sprites and that they are instant reaction might have been fear” (Gingell). Through the three tales above, it is interesting to note that while some of the supposed otherworldly creatures of gnomes and elves come from traditional Celtic lore and legend, the idea of the pieces being idols, graven images, or devils is one from a more Christian-centric point of view. Legends, lore, fairy tales and the supernatural are not strangers to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. On Lewis, there is a

strong tradition of oral history, and if one had grown up in this era in an environment rich with tales of other worldly beings, MacLeod's supposed reaction is hardly surprising. In his *Hebridean Lore and Romance*, Norman Morrison has tales such as "Shabost Fairy Drama," and "The Demon of the Loch," as well as stories that included witchcraft, mermaids, the evil eye, the second sight, divination, omens, and premonitions (1936, 27, 41, 189). He also mentions that "it is very remarkable that in Lewis some of our famous religious men were very much afraid to walk out alone after dark for fear of meeting the devil" (Morrison, 1936, 191). It can be assumed that, indeed, if even men of the church were afraid of things, things that today, some may consider supernatural, it is not too far-fetched to believe a crofter in 1831 Lewis could also have been frightened at seeing a hoard of unknown faces staring at him from the site of their unearthing. It is possible that "learned people," people who reported and wrote about the find, discounted these ideas of the supernatural as easily as it was for them to call MacLeod a "peasant." In reporting "the peasant" seeing elves or gnomes, authors were (and still are) creating a mythos around the find of the pieces. In addition, they were perpetuating the idea of Lewis being "the other," where peasants dug in sandbanks and found things they believed to be supernatural beings.

Modern scholars have given other hypotheses as to how the chess pieces came to be on Lewis. Scholars generally agree that if the chess pieces were not created locally, they most likely came onto the island through a merchant who was traveling with his stock and "buried his wares and did not survive to recover them" or that he hoped to "avoid paying the hefty tolls that law prescribes in the Kingdom of the Isles" (Caldwell et al., 2009, 166). This idea perpetuates, like the tale of the Red Gillie, that the pieces got on the island by accident via a shipwreck, combining both the legend and historical truths. The scenario is a logical one: finding game pieces on ships was quite common in the past. Caldwell et al. noted that a contemporary (eleventh century) shipwreck off the coast of Turkey contained finds of Islamic

chess pieces and remarked that shipwrecks closer to Lewis geographically--but further away in time, including Henry VIII's famed Mary Rose--also contained gaming items (2009). Archaeological remains also point to the importance of gaming paraphernalia through the inclusion of items in boat burials of the Viking era, showing a symbolic tie between ships and games (Caldwell et al., 2009). This information shows that it was entirely plausible that the hoard came to be on Lewis via a ship carrying a merchant's goods, affirming the idea that the local tales are not as far-fetched as some may have thought. However, there is yet another theory as to how the pieces arrived on Lewis.

As previously mentioned in the section on the history of the island, Lewis was an important part of both the Kingdom of the Isles of Man as well as having strong links to the rulers of Norway. At points in history, there certainly were times (which have been well-documented by historians) of important people living on the island. Caldwell et al. agree that "the most obvious explanation for the hoard should be that it belonged in Lewis to a person, and in a society, which valued its contents as gaming pieces" (2009, 168). The only other ivory gaming pieces to have been found in the British Isles, like the Lewis hoard, also have ties to this same area of the world. In an 1862 report for the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, John Alex Smith noted the discovery of "a chess-piece (a knight), carved from the tusk, it is believed, of a walrus or sea horse, was presented to the Museum of the Society by a former Lord MacDonald of Sleat (in Kilmuir, Skye) in 1782" (1857-59, 104-105). However, Smith was informed mistakenly by Lord MacDonald that "several chessmen, carved in ivory, were found in this loch at Monkstadt during the process of draining and are now in the possession of Lord Londesborough" (1857-59, 104). Obviously, there is some confusion in Smith's account as he seemingly combined both the story of the Lewis Chessmen and the piece found on Lord MacDonald's land in Skye. The mistake may have been made as there is an Uig on both Lewis and Skye, both islands off Scotland's west coast. The singular piece now belongs to National

Museum of Scotland according to Caldwell et al. (2009). Another piece--a king carved from the tooth of a sperm whale--was mentioned (and sketched) in Pennant's 1776 *A Tour in*



Figure 5: From Pennant's *A Tour in Scotland and a Voyage to the Hebrides*, 1772, engraving XVIV, 410.

Scotland and a Voyage to the Hebrides as coming from Dunstaffnage Castle near Oban. According to Caldwell et al., the piece, although lost, is “clearly in the same tradition as the Lewis Kings, but datable on stylistic grounds to the 16th century” (2009, 168). This piece was also mentioned in the 1831 *Scotsman*'s article which introduced the public to the discovery of the Lewis Chessmen.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide important background details which are relevant to this thesis' topic. This chapter has presented the origins of chess and introduced the Lewis Chessmen at a basic level. Also, the text has revealed many of the players who were involved from the time of their unearthing and includes a timeline of ownership created through primary historic texts and sources. In addition, the chapter began to look at several of the unanswered questions surrounding the Chessmen such as where and how they may have been

found and how they got to be on Lewis in the first place. Through all of this thus far, nothing is certain or concrete, much like the lore of the island itself. Virginia Glenn accurately points out that “all the stories still do not explain the presence of such a find” (2003, 150). Indeed, only hypotheses can be made about the topics discussed, possibly due to local legends, the lack of literary evidence, and a myriad of other factors. One could believe that the mystery and unanswered questions surrounding the pieces presents its own level of value too, as this adds to the rarity of the find. Some scholars disregard the local legends and lore surrounding the Chessmen, but in doing so, you take away from the rich trove of historical information, some of which may be relevant to the hoard’s history. According to Robinson, when the National Museum of Scotland obtained their portion of the pieces, “an attempt was made to purge the accounts of local legend” through the exclusion of the tales of elves and gnomes (2004, 10). Oral traditions continue to be part of the rich cultural heritage of Lewis, and in fact, the Uig Historic Society itself still perpetuates the idea that pieces came to be on the island through the murderous gillie. The Chessmen gain value as entities of local history and tradition, two important themes to the people of Lewis even today. A quote by Robinson summarises this chapter very succulently when he wrote, “a foolish peasant, a grasping merchant, and a slippery dealer; wealthy gentlemen, tireless scholars; a heartless herdsman, shipwrecked sailors, and a house of melancholic nuns: all played a part in the story so far” (2004, 11). The whos, whats, whens, wheres and whys of the Lewis Chessmen may never be truly uncovered. Part of Stratford’s book title is very apt as it seems we will never fully solve “the enigma of the hoard” (1997).

III. The Analysis: The Particulars of the Hoard

This chapter aims to give a concise overview of information published thus far about the Lewis Chessmen and tries to answer the question of what they are through an examination of their materiality and features. In so doing, we can observe the greater context and gain insight into their importance in society and history. This chapter will examine the ongoing debate as to the pieces' origins and date of production. In addition, we will see how the Lewis Chessmen are valued for their age, for their authenticity, for their unique materiality, and through their craftsmanship as pieces of art.

There are ninety-four known chess pieces from the Lewis hoard, and they include the following numbers:

1. 60 Face pieces: 8 Kings, 8 Queens, 16 Bishops, 15 Knights, and 13 Warders.
2. 19 Pawns (not in human form)
3. 14 plain disks
4. 1 carved belt-buckle

From early on after their unearthing, Frederic Madden, Assistant Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum, and an ardent chess enthusiast, knew the importance of the hoard. He worked diligently to convince the Museum's Trustees of the significance of the find. He worried in his 17 October 1831 journal entry that "if our Trustees do not purchase them, I fear the sets will be broken up and sold separately, which will be a great pity" (Stratford, 1997, 4). After the eventual purchase, Madden studied the pieces and constructed a ninety-two-page report titled "Historical Remarks on the Introduction of the Game of Chess into Europe, and on the Ancient Chess-men Discovered in the Isle of Lewis" in 1832. According to Stratford, this seminal work "still reads today as a tour-de-force of research" (1997, 8). Madden created the report, which

has a long and precise history of the game of chess, only because the unearthing of the pieces had allowed him to do so. Their unearthing enabled them to be studied and for new ideas about the history of the game to be hypothesized and researched. In this report, Madden described, in minute detail, the collection in the British Museums' possession. His account of the chessmen included descriptions of measurement, costuming, facial expressions, decoration, and ornamentation. From these detailed observations and with his own knowledge, he was able to draw conclusions as to their origins and usages through comparisons with other materials already known. Not until much later, in 2009, did Caldwell et al. take another such detailed approach in assessing and then describing the hoard.

i. The Chessmen

The Lewis hoard is made up of several face pieces including kings, queens, bishops, knights, and warders which “can readily be identified as chessmen” (Caldwell et al., 2010, 21). The previous chapter of this thesis details the history and origins of chess more closely, so that information will not be discussed here. Due purely to the number of pieces found, and especially those which are face pieces, scholars have, throughout the ages, varied on the idea of how many chess sets the Lewis hoard may represent. In Madden's 1832 report, he estimated that there were six or more sets (212). Bear in mind, he was not examining the entire hoard when he made this assumption as eleven pieces were already in the hands of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe. Later in 1851, Daniel Wilson hypothesised that the hoard comprised of “proportions of 8 or more sets” (342). Modern scholars such as Stratford, Robinson, and Caldwell now agree the likely number, again, based solely on the numbers of face pieces, is more likely to be four sets. Traditionally, the games of chess have sixteen pieces for each side of the board, containing one king, one queen, two rooks (in our case, warders), two bishops, two knights, and eight pawns. The Lewis hoard has eight kings and queens and sixteen bishops

which fit nicely into the estimation of four sets however, numbers of other face pieces show there are incomplete sets. The missing pieces are: one knight, three warders, and forty-five pawns. Stratford makes the claim that it is possible there are more pieces in private hands, which are unknown to scholars (1997). Recalling the additional piece Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe gleaned from someone on Lewis lends itself to the idea that some pieces could be still unknown to the public. After the “new” discovery of an unknown piece in 2019, it may be likely that the rest of the missing pieces are privately owned. One interesting object found with the hoard, which seemingly has no correlation to the game of chess, is an elaborately carved belt buckle, an item which rarely is included in scholarly study of the hoard. It is possible to hypothesise that the buckle may have held together a bag in which the pieces were contained. The bag, if there was such a vessel, was probably constructed of organic material such as an animal skin or fabric, which generally would not survive being buried in the damp ground, or chamber, for hundreds of years. Theoretically, this could be an answer for the buckle’s presence amongst the hoard. According to Caldwell et al., royal households utilised bags extensively to house a variety of items, including gaming pieces (2009). He also goes on to mention that it is possible that the bag, were there one, could have contained, “a wider array of objects than was recovered” (Caldwell et al., 2009, 181). As we have learned thus far, however, nothing is certain, and at most, the buckle’s inclusion is a speculation.

While similar in many ways, the pieces also show varying degrees of artistic liberty through differences in details. The faces themselves demonstrate humanistic properties; however, their bodies are disproportionate to true human form, including “comparatively large heads and clothing to the ground to create broad steady bases for ease of play” (Caldwell et al., 2010, 21). This craftsmanship to make the pieces robust, as well as the facial properties ascribed

to them, will be discussed in further detail below. The pieces are highly detailed, and Madden was very succinct in their description. According to Madden, the kings he saw

are represented as elderly men with large spade-shaped beards, moustaches, and hair falling in plaits over their shoulders, having low trefoil crowns on their heads, either plain ornamented with a border, and sitting on chairs of a square form, with high backs, which are richly carved with various scrolls, figures of animals, interlaced with arches, and tracery work. (1832, 213)

The two kings in the National Museum of Scotland's collection match Madden's description. He goes on to describe their attire and the fact that all the kings have their swords across their knees. Robinson noted that "the sword suggests conventional, physical strength but also implies the administration of unswerving justice" (2004, 15). Their swords are very prominently displayed and leave the viewer little doubt as to where the power lies. Madden



Figure 6: From Left to Right: King (short beard), National Museum of Scotland (H.NS19), King (long beard) British Museum (1831,1101.78), and King (no beard), British Museum (1831.1101.79). Photos copyright National Museum of Scotland and British Museum.

goes on to mention that there are several differences in the pieces too, despite their similar looks. Some of the kings are beardless, some have differing chair ornamentation, there are variants in physical size, some of their crowns are more elaborate than others, to name a few (Madden, 1832). Nancy Marie Brown, author of a book titled *Ivory Vikings*, describes the beard-free kings as “youths” (2015, 155), while Robinson agrees that the lack of beards is “unusual” and that the addition of the beards adds a “paternal characteristic” to the pieces which have them (2004, 15). In his review, Madden also compared the pieces to each other, wondering if they belonged in sets together based on certain details he observed.

The queens, Madden noted, “are also represented sitting in chairs, ornamented in a style similar to those of the kings, and crowned” while “the head rests upon the right arm, which is supported by the lefts. This is the case with three out of five instances, but No.1, the left hand holds a drinking horn, curiously shaped” (1832, 216-17). He also details the ornamentation on

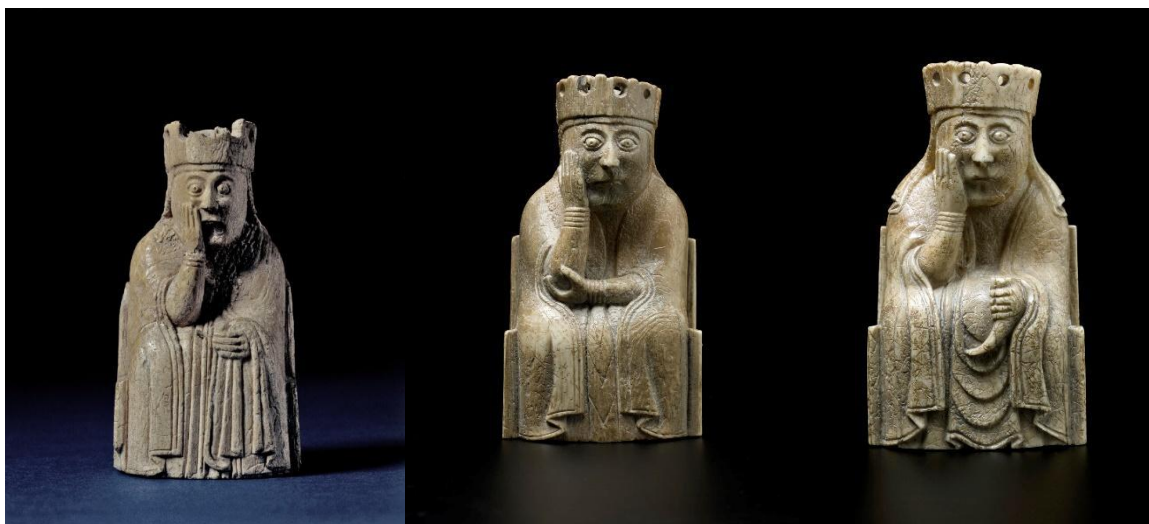


Figure 7: Stylistic comparison of three queens. From left to right: queen, hand in cloth, British Museum (1831,1101.85), queen holding elbow, National Museum of Scotland (H.NS21), queen holding drinking horn, National Museum of Scotland (H.NS23). Photos copyright British Museum and National Museum of Scotland.

their “chairs” as well as the style of their dress, including veils that drape down the backs of their heads. Madden goes on to explain that the appearance of the queen in the chess set is a

definitively a European occurrence, as denoted in the previous chapter. While today, the queen is the most valuable piece on the gameboard, that was not always the case. In the era assigned to the possible creation of the Lewis hoard (to be discussed later), the queen was a very restricted piece, and was only able to move one square, diagonally. At that time, the pieces were unimportant, weak, and they “slowed down the game” (Shenk, 2007, 54). Scholars credit the rise of the queen in prominence on the chessboard to that of the elevated role of women in European society. In addition, the societal rise of females in roles usually connected with male rulers was also an influential element for the chess queen’s new status on the board. In her article on the female figure in the game of chess, Emma Black compares the pieces on the board to that of a dynastic family, especially when compared as a sculptural group rather than a group engaged in war (2014, 48). She notes that this grouping is “more comparable with artistic propaganda celebrating an established dynasty and triumph rather than the act of battle” (Black, 2014, 48). Black further discusses specific representations in European society of powerful females within such dynasties, including the important role of mother of the ruler. One great example of this power female within a dynasty is Livia Drusilla. Livia was the wife of Augustus, ruler of the Roman Empire, and mother to Tiberius, heir, and future ruler (Black, 2014, 50). Livia, while having no official title, was indeed an adviser (perhaps comparable to the vizier as in the pieces of the Eastern chess games) to her husband and according to Black she “became one of the most important females figures in the history of sculpture” (2014, 52). In fact, Livia had statues dedicated to her and was worshiped in her own right as a goddess (Black, 2014, 52).

The spread of Christianity was also key in the development of the importance of the royal female. By the entrance of queens onto the chessboard in Europe in 990 CE, “society and artistic tradition was influenced by both pagan and Christian customs, which accepted or

demanded the representation of royal women in the display of a stable and victorious state” (Black, 2014, 56). Many queens were required to be pious and chaste, both elements associated with the Virgin Mary. Black notes that “the queen and the Virgin had a tradition of affecting each other’s imagery” (2014, 57). Queens of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries strived to emulate and qualities that the Virgin Mary possessed. The Lewis queens show their status, not through the display of weapons or other symbols of war, but instead, her own garments “should be viewed as symbolically significant as the armour and religious robes of the male figures” (Black, 2014, 58). One representation of this theory of clothing as religious armour is seen through the use of veils, which are present on all the Lewis queens. Veils were worn by women of the Bible and there are passages that specifically address this. In I Corinthians 11:4-10 it is written:

4Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.

5But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

6For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

7For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.

8For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.

9Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

10For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels

(King James Bible, 1769/2020).

The inclusion of veils on the Lewis queens gives scholars a reflective representation and insight about the society in which they were created.

There is one element of the Lewis queens which is extensively discussed by scholars: her pose. The gesture of her hand held up to her face and the possible meanings behind the gesture are points of much debate. Black argues that this gesture and whatever meaning it may convey is an “integral part in the construction of her identity” (2014, 61). Daniel Wilson in his 1851 book *Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* mentions that he believes the queen is showing a “contemplative” posture (343). Robinson wondered if this supposed contemplation was as the role of vizier and adviser to the king and therefore, the pose “expresses thoughtfulness” (2004, 44). He further argued that this head-in-hand pose could also have been as an expression of sorrow or grief, much like the Virgin Mary’s similar pose at the foot of the cross at the Crucifixion, which can be seen in some twelfth century art (Robinson, 2004). However, Black counter argues that Robinson’s suggestion that the queen is simply a substitute for the king’s vizier may be too much of a simplification (2014). She argues that “due to the lengthy pedigree of the imperial and royal women in European art, it is possible that the gesture of the Lewis queens has an older meaning which has gathered different elements of symbolism through time” (Black, 2014, 62). Black believes that one pose--the pose where the queen has her arm across her body--could be linked to gestures associated with Hellenistic women, where the pose demonstrated not contemplation but more abstract qualities such as chastity, defence, wealth, and status (2014). Again, Black harkens to Roman art such as goddess statues and that this pose for women, “travelled and developed as a female gesture of status in the classical world” (2014, 63). However, Black also agrees with Robinson that the gesture could also symbolise grief, especially in the context that the game of chess is a representation of war, which undoubtedly would bring loss.

The Lewis hoard also contains sixteen bishops. Like the queen, the bishop piece was a western addition to the game, as it reflected the Christian influence in society. Five of the

bishops are seated like all the kings and queens, however the remaining eight are in a standing position. As with the kings and queens already discussed, here too can we see similarities, yet differences are also present between the individual pieces. Caldwell et al. remarks that in the bishops we see “the greatest variety in terms of design” (2010, 32). Like his descriptions of the other face pieces, Madden also went into detail about the bishops’ style of dress but focused especially on the position of their mitres. This position, which will be discussed in further detail later in this thesis, was an important detail in trying to approximate their date of creation. It is interesting to note that the garments the Lewis bishops wear are similar to counterparty vestments worn by clergy today (Caldwell et al., 2010). All the bishops hold croziers; however,



Figure 8: Top from left to right: Bishop making the sign of blessing, National Museum of Scotland (H.NS25), Bishop holding crozier, National Museum of Scotland (H.NS26). Bottom from left to right: Bishop with book in left hand, British Museum (1831,1101.89), Bishop with opened book in right hand, British Museum (1831,1101.89).

All photos copyright National Museum of Scotland and British Museum.

some also additionally hold a book while others have hands “raised in the attitude of benediction” (Madden, 1832, 222). Madden reflected that the book which some of the bishops hold could be “an Evangelistarium or volume of the Gospels,” an understandable object for a bishop to possess (1832, 223). As discussed in the chapter containing information on the history of chess, we see that the bishop appeared on the game board in place of the traditional elephant. One important aspect of the Lewis bishops is that, thus far, nothing comparative has been found in the archaeological record. Stratford reflects that, “the Lewis bishops have no known predecessors among surviving European chessmen” (1997, 35). This means that to date, these pieces are the oldest example of the inclusion of the bishop in the game of chess, an important aspect in terms of adding value to the collection. Few scholars have reflected on the issue that while some of these pieces are seated, others are standing. Perhaps this was just a design element in which the creator(s) took artistic liberty with, but we can also wonder if there was an alternative meaning for this difference, as all the kings and queens of the hoard are seated. The thrones in which the kings and queens sit reflect their status in society as important and royal. In society, bishops were also seen as royalty, as “princes” of the church. So, why some are given thrones while others simply stand is unknown.

According to Robinson, “the ancestry of the knight can be traced back to the ‘cavalry’ in the original game” (2004, 45). Madden believed them to be the “most interesting proportion of the whole” (1832, 229). The fifteen knights of the Lewis hoard all sit on sturdy horses and “wear helmets and are armed for battle, carrying spears and shields, with swords slung around their shoulders” (Robinson, 2004, 23). The shields are kite-shaped, and each one bears a different design, suggesting perhaps the idea of heraldry. Before the invention of motorised vehicles, wars, for the most part, were fought on the backs of horses. To state that a warrior and his horse were intrinsically linked is proved truthful by the countless famous horse and

rider pairs which history remembers. In some chess sets the horse itself, be it just as a head or the whole figure, has replaced the knight entirely and has become what Madden called the “epitome of the whole figure” (1832, 235). The horses the Lewis knights are on look out of proportion to the size of the figure astride. They animals also very strongly resemble Shetland ponies (Caldwell et al., 2010, 33).



Figure 9: From left to right: Knight with conical helmet, National Museum of Scotland (H.NS27), Knight with rounded helmet, British Museum (1831,1101.104). Photos copyright National Museum of Scotland and British Museum.

These diminutive chess horses were purposefully created as such, which also impacted the way the knights themselves were crafted. This important aspect will be discussed further on in this chapter. Other than the different symbols on their shields and some differences of their headgear and hairstyles, the knights generally look line one another. Madden reflected that, “there is but little to remark on the history of the chess Knight, since its name and move have always remained pretty much the same” (1832, 235). As mentioned earlier, there is only one knight missing to create the four complete sets that scholars believe the Lewis hoard reflects.

The last of the face pieces in the Lewis hoard are the rooks. Madden was the first to name these pieces warders, a title which scholars today still refer to. According to the Oxford

English Dictionary, a warder is from the Old Northern French word for “to guard” (n.d.). Madden, a scholar and knowledgeable chess player himself, noted that despite his extensive understanding, the appearance of these unusual armed soldiers were like “none of the



Figure 10: From Left to Right: Warder with conical helmet, National Museum of Scotland (H.NS28), Warder with rounded helmet, British Museum (1831,1101.122), Warder with shield in front, British Museum (1831,1101.121). All photos copyright National Museum of Scotland and British Museum.

Bottom: “new” chess piece revealed to the public 3/6/19. Photograph courtesy of Sotheby’s.
[https://www.dropbox.com/sh/eli3mm25tes9212/AAAbJI0UUaNZreuSgzUaLaJna?dl=0&preview=A+Lewis+Chessman+%5BA+Warder%5D+\(4\).jpg](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/eli3mm25tes9212/AAAbJI0UUaNZreuSgzUaLaJna?dl=0&preview=A+Lewis+Chessman+%5BA+Warder%5D+(4).jpg). Accessed 03/06/2019

descriptions of the game as played in the south of Europe” (1862, 240). He believed them to be unique, special, and important clues in determining the locality in which they were made.

All the warders, thirteen in total, are in a standing position, ready to defend the royalty in their care. These warders are sometimes equated to foot-soldiers, as they ride no horses. As

a whole grouping, the warders also show some similarities to one another but like the other face pieces, they also reflect differences in details of dress and head-coverings. Like the knights, they also have swords, but theirs are drawn in differing displays, and their kite-shaped shields are also in various poses.

Like the knights, the warders' shields are unique in each of their designs. Until the time of the end of this thesis, no other pieces of the hoard had been found. On 03 June 2019, a warder was presented to the world by Sotheby's auction house. The above photo shows its marked difference in colour to its fellow warders. To date, there has been no scientific analysis of why this "new" piece would display such a different colouring than the entire rest of the hoard, but no doubt, future analysis may reveal more about it.

One specific and vastly different type of Lewis warder are the pieces that have become known as berserkers. There are only four of these special kinds of warders in the entire Lewis hoard, and they reflect a unique look. All four of the berserkers have their shields out in front and their swords raised, ready for battle. Their shields are also kite-shaped in design, and they, like the knights and other warders, also exhibit unique designs amongst the four of them. One of the berserkers wears no helmet but rather, it appears he has some sort of chainmail-like covering on his head. What makes these pieces utterly unique is the action of them biting down onto their shields. All of them display both their teeth and a frenzied look in their eyes. Madden, the first person who conducted an in-depth study of the hoard, described them as being "characteristic of the Scandinavian berserker, who were unarmed warriors subject to fits of madness on the eve of battle, under the influence which they performed the most extraordinary



Figure 11: Top, from left to right: Berserker, National Museum of Scotland (H.NS29), Berserker, British Museum (1831.1101.124). Bottom from left to right: Berserker, British Museum (1831.1101.125), Berserker, British Museum (1831.1101.123). Photos copyright National Museum of Scotland and British Museum.

feats” (1832, 271). Madden gleaned this information from Snorre (also written as Snorri) Sturleson, an Icelandic poet and historian who lived from 1179-1241 CE. Sturleson is best known for his Saga, *Heimskringla*, which told of the of the Kings of Norway. One section, the *Ynglinga Saga*, is where Madden got his information on the berserkers. He noted in his report that Sturleson wrote that:

the soldiers of Odin went forth to the combat without armour, raging like dogs or wolves, biting their shields, and in strength equal to furious bulls or bears. Their

enemies they laid prostrate at their feet: neither fire nor weapon harmed them; this frenzy was called Berserksgangr (1832, 271).

This saga was not translated into English until 1844, over ten years after Madden's report. As the Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum, Madden was, by all accounts, a "remarkable palaeographer and scholar of early vernacular literature" and therefore, able to read the sagas for himself (Stratford, 1997, 5). According to Robinson, Madden had expert knowledge of and the ability to read Norse sagas (2004). In his account of the pieces, Madden goes on to explain that the armour which the berserkers wear is an anomaly, as the term berserker itself may have originally meant bare-shirt, as in without a shirt or possibly even bear-shirt, as in a shirt made from a bear pelt (1832). In either case, as Robinson pointed out, the term was used to reflect the idea of "wildness" (2004, 26). Although the Lewis berserkers are armoured and are positioned in a battle stance, the act of biting the shield itself was probably utilised to reflect this idea of wildness and frenzy. It is unknown if part of the missing four warders would have been berserkers, but mathematically, if the hoard represents four sets, this special, unique piece might have been limited to one per board, meaning the four berserkers we know of presently may make up the total numbers represented in the original collection.

The hoard also contained nineteen pawns. Unlike the elaborately carved face pieces, the pawns are very plain and are the only chess pieces that are not in human form. The pawns present a particularly interesting case as traditionally in the history of chess, they were represented as the foot-soldiers of the game. However, as previously mentioned, the classification of foot-soldier has been given to the hoard's warders. Robinson notes that these plain, unassuming pieces had "no identity in the social world embraced by the chessboard" (2004, 27). In the last part of the thirteenth century, Italian preacher Jacobus de Cessolis "personified the pawns as craftsmen, labourers, innkeepers, and merchants" or in other words,

the lower and working classes of society (Robinson, 2004, 27). The pawns range in sizes but, for the most part, they are octagonal in shape. Ornamentation is scarce, with only two of the nineteen having any decoration. One has a small knob at the top, while some have concave, and some have flat surfaces. For the hoard to have contained four complete sets, there needed to be eight pawns for each side, or sixteen per board. At only nineteen surviving, this reflects the greatest loss in pieces at forty-five. The pawns also represent the greatest variety in actual size. Because of this, Robinson suggests an alternative argument that because of this anomaly “in excess of four complete sets were deposited in the sand dune” (2004, 30).

ii. The Material and Craftsmanship

Almost all the Lewis chess pieces were made from Atlantic walrus tusks, sometimes known historically as “morse” ivory. Scholarly study has confirmed that five of the pieces, three warders and two pawns, were not made from walrus, but were fashioned from the teeth of another creature of the sea: a sperm whale. This number of whale pieces, like many topics concerning the hoard, have been debated amongst scholars as well. Ivory, especially that from an elephant, was and still is, a sought-after commodity for the creation of fine carved goods, both for religious as well as more secular uses. The use of and demand for ivory has continued through the ages due to its desired colour and durability. It has always been a rare commodity, but in the medieval era until the middle of the thirteenth century, the trade of importing elephant ivory from India or Africa into Europe essentially vanished. To this day, the reasons why this occurred are still unknown, but there may have been political and/or economic reasons for the trade’s decline. There is even a gap in the archaeological record of ivory pieces, correlating with this loss of raw materials. In its place, teeth, bones, antlers, and horns from other animals began to be used to counteract the disappearance of elephant ivory. The item most sought after

in this era became walrus tusk. Walrus ivory became prized for several reasons. First, the tusks could grow to greater lengths than bones and antlers, allowing a greater surface area and size from which carvings could be made. However, walrus tusk is still small compared to elephant tusk, so only smaller items could be created from the material. Second, when carved and polished, the tusk exhibits a creamy ivory colour and shows even more lustre than elephant ivory. As elephant ivory became almost impossible to get and with the ever-expanding need for religious objects for the now-established Christian church, the new star, walrus ivory, became the hot commodity in Europe, especially during the time the Chessmen were created. As Nancy Marie Brown noted, walrus ivory became “the most sought-after commodity of the North. It was Arctic gold” (2015, 27).

Although more readily available than elephant ivory, walrus was still a precious resource, probably driven by the fanciful notion that the beasts which provided them were exotic in nature. According to Elizabeth Pierce, these mysterious animals, for few Europeans had a strong grasp of what they looked like, were portrayed in artistic works as “a fierce creature with stout legs, feathers, a waving mane, or with tusks as fangs” (2014, 169). Their value as a rare commodity was heightened as the act of obtaining the tusks and preparing them were feats in their own right. The mere effort it took to kill and harvest the many tusks needed to create for almost four complete sets of chessmen adds to their value as rare objects of art. Walruses, at this time, were found on the coasts of Norway, Iceland and Greenland. Vikings, who settled in parts of these areas may have been surprised to see walruses there, but unlike most of the rest of Europe, they had probably encountered them before. More than the tusks, Vikings mostly utilised the skins of the animal to create a durable type of rope used in riggings for their boats. Pierce argues that a possible contributing factor in the decision for them to settle “in a land with a harsh climate and inland ice sheet” may have been due to the abundant walrus

population, which they considered a precious resource (2014, 177). When the popularity of walrus ivory skyrocketed in medieval times, it may have been a bit of a shock to these people that a part of the animal they did not really utilise suddenly became extremely valuable.

Greenland became the centre of walrus hunting and ivory trade during medieval times. The act of hunting the dangerous walrus and then procuring the tusks from the carcasses also added to the high value of these items. Entomologically, the word walrus may have come from the Old Norse words for whale, *hvalr*, and horse, *hross*, but these whale horses were later renamed *Odobenus rosmarus* or tooth-walking seahorse (Brown, 2015, 26). There are many stories and legends that tell of the treacherous undertaking that was the walrus hunt and how in many instances, man lost out to these formidable beasts. Nancy Marie Brown writes that walruses are “streamlined killing machines” and that they are “highly dangerous at sea or on land, being prone to attack unprovoked” (2015, 24). National Geographic relays that walruses can weigh up to 1.5 tons and range in length from 7.25 to 11.5 feet (n.d.). Brown notes that as Vikings had no harpoons and that because historical accounts are scarce, it can only be hypothesised as to how they killed the walruses, but as dead walruses sink, it is probably that on land the most viable place to hunt and recover them (2015, 26). While not as large as their elephant counterparts, male walrus tusks can reach up to a metre in length and while female tusks are smaller in length, they have the benefit of being less curved (Robinson, 2004, 60).

After the walrus was deceased, the hunters generally removed the head and discarded the body to allow for ease of transportation. The remains were then prepared once the hunters returned to their homes. Detritus from this process has been found throughout the archaeological record. The process of decay made it easier for the hunters to extract the tusks from the frontal bones of the skull; however, the tusks still had to be chipped away from the bone slowly in order to ensure an as-complete-as-possible tusk could be recovered (Pierce,

2014, 170). Sometimes, the tusks were left in the skull, creating an even more marketable and valuable piece. Many of the tusks that were traded in the medieval period primarily came from Greenland. While walrus were less available in Iceland, they did sporadically appear on the coastline. It is very plausible that walrus ivory, and the creations which were crafted from it, came from Iceland as well (Pierce, 2014, 173).

The tusk of the walrus is comprised of four main parts: enamel, cementum, dentine, and pulp (Dandridge, 2011). However, this thesis will concentrate on the outer and inner dentine. The outer dentine is the surface area and was most utilised, because “its very fine, dense texture provides an ideal medium for predictable, consistent carving” while the inner, more dully coloured pulp was avoided at all costs due to its “popcorn texture” (Dandridge, 2011). There is a distinction of colour between the two, and carvers needed to be incredibly



Figure 12: Underside of one of the Lewis chess pieces, showing the inner, “popcorn” textured pulp (Dandridge, 2011).

careful to not cut into the inner core to expose its “darker, marbly, unappealingly translucent,” and less desired colour (Brown, 2015, 29). Dandridge notes that the creamy colour of the outer dentine becomes opaquer through time and from handling since exposure to the oils on human

hands allows the surface to “acquire a pearly quality” (2011). The inner layer was also more prone to cracking, making the carved piece more unstable if this occurred. As the outer layer of dentine was very thin, carving was a delicate process and required the artist to possess great skill to not cut into the undesired inner dentine. Despite the desire to create as much of the carvings in only in the creamy ivory layer, there are many instances of the inner dentine showing through on the Lewis hoard, sometimes in more severe cases than others. Tate et al. wondered if this occurred “because the carver appreciated the contrasting effect, was simply less skilled, or because the ivory available had a thinner primary dentine layer” (2011, 252). Unfortunately, the carvers were probably at the mercy of the quality of tusks they were given in which to carve, so it is not difficult to see how occlusions of the inner layer on finished pieces may be visible. However, as Tate et al. noted, “we do not know whether the difference in appearance from the two dentine layers was seen as something to avoid or something to exploit” (2014, 15). If the crafters were allowed artistic license in their work, some may have chosen to expose this inner dentine as an exotic augmentation rather than see the inclusion as a flaw. As recounted several times, the hoard’s individual pieces all contain stylistic differences, but thus far, there are no additional discernible differences between each of the museums’ collections of pieces other than the noted colour difference due to the visible layers. Possible reasons for this occurrence will be discussed farther along in this thesis.

Walrus tusks exhibit a naturally occurring curvature, so much planning had to be undertaken to utilise the material as economically as possible. As previously mentioned, walrus tusk was a precious resource; manufacturers undoubtedly took great care in calculating the measurements of what pieces were to be carved and where so that little was wasted. Robinson, in his 2004 book about the Lewis hoard, included an image of how a full tusk compared to some of the Lewis Chessmen. This photo also depicts a recreation of how the pieces, which

range in size and shape, may have been planned out to maximise use of the tusk. This image also shows how some of the pieces may have gotten their shape based on the tusk in which



28 A walrus tusk with facsimiles of the Lewis chessmen, illustrating how the ivory was cut up to produce pieces of different size.

Figure 13: Robinson, 2004, 60.

they were carved. For instance, the knights on horseback needed the widest section of the tusk, while some of the warders and pawns may come from the tip of the tusk due to their more



Figure 14: From left to right: a more solid core, a more “popcorn core” and an open cavity (probably from a sperm whale). These bases exhibit different areas of the tusk being utilised. Photo from Tate et al., 2011, 252.

pointed shape. This may also account for the range of heights of the chess pieces. The bases of the pieces, as exhibited in the photo above, can allow researchers to “map” from what sections of the tusk each piece was carved, depending on the amount of the inner pulpy dentine that is visible (Tate et al., 2011, 252). In a 2006 paper on ivories, Poplin & Rahimifar examined several pieces through the ages. Their examination of two bishops from the Lewis hoard gave more insight into how carvers best utilised the tusks at their disposal.



FIG. 12. – Sole de deux pièces d'échecs de Lewis du Musée britannique (Londres). Il s'agit de deux évêques très ressemblants et de même hauteur (*i.e.* sortant du même tronçon) qui correspondent dos à dos (où le sciage a mis à nu la matière interne de la dent [ostéodentine], moins belle à voir). Le cliché montre ce dépôt central sur la partie gauche, bien conservée. La partie droite a beaucoup plus souffert, mais la corrosion a rendu lisibles les couches constitutives de l'ivoire périphérique et de sa chemise de ciment, ce qui peut aider à réunir des pièces tirées des défenses du même animal. Les agents naturels ont fait du matériel de Lewis un monument taphonomique d'une inégalable exemplarité.

Figure 15: Photo showing two bishops that may have come from the same tusk. (Poplin & Rahimifar, 2006, 1129)

They compared, back-to-back, two bishops of similar heights. The photograph above displays the pieces' undersides, providing the visual confirmation that they were carved from same tusk. Despite the rate of advanced corrosion of one piece versus the other, this clear match gives insight into how the creators of the pieces utilised the ivory to their best advantage (Poplin & Rahimifar, 2006, 1129). Detailed investigations such as this may assist other scholars in the identification of pieces which came from the same tusk which in turn, could give more insight into the carving process.

iii. The Condition of the Hoard

Walrus ivory is a hardy substance and when the chess pieces were carved, mindfulness and great care was taken to ensure their durability. According to Tate et al., a special mineral-organic makeup in ivory gives it its “very exceptional mechanical properties, being hard and elastic at the same time” (2014, 12). This durability was enhanced through the intentional stylistic carving of the pieces to produce objects with low centres of gravity and a solidness in the details they contained. No bodily elements such as delicate hands or parts of weaponry were left exposed to easily be broken thorough use or handling but instead, the carver purposefully kept such details closely compact to the core of the piece in order to increase the durability. These pieces were made to be used, but also to last. This desire to design the pieces to be solid and durable can be best seen in the following ways: the blocky, 2-D carving-style of the horses’ legs, on all of the king’s and warders’ swords which were carved into the body shape, through the queen’s hands, which are carved into the faces so that nothing protrudes, and with the bishop’s croziers which were carved tightly about the face and body so that no overhanging areas could potentially be broken off. This specific design style to keep the pieces compact and void of delicate areas do add to the for the pieces’ appearances as stocky and oversized, including a distinct lack of discernible necks. Robinson noted that “although carving a neck would have given greater naturalism and grace, it would also have upset the considerations of balance and breakability” (2004, 61). Some areas on some of the kings’ and queens’ crowns exhibit breakage, as these areas were carved out into more 3-D effect, leaving the areas exposed to potential damage.



Figure 16: From left to right: damage to the queen's crown, British Museum, 1831,1101.85, and king exhibiting a lack of neck to keep the pieces front obtaining damage, British Museum, 1831,1101.79. Photos copyright British Museum.

As the Lewis hoard was created over ten centuries ago, it is safe to say that damages have occurred through time, even on these very hardy objects. Damages could have occurred through several factors such as from the environments they encountered and through their handling over time. However, Caldwell et al. claimed that “examination of the individual pieces has so far failed to detect any signs of wear and tear resulting from handling, but this is by no means surprising given the toughness of ivory” (2009, 196). In his chapter on the hoard, Daniel Wilson observed that one of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe's pieces had a section of ivory attached to it with ivory pins and that “it was so neatly done that Mr. Sharpe's attention was called to it for the first time when I was drawing the pieces” (1863, 344). It is unknown if this patch was done in the original carving workshop or at some other time in the hoard's timeline. As mentioned, ivory was a precious commodity and economically minded artists may well have mended or utilised another piece of ivory to cover a flaw or a section of visible inner dentine to preserve the piece.

The pieces range in condition from some that are in exceptionally good shape to others which are crumbling. Robinson stated that neither walrus ivory nor whales' teeth are "preserved well in the ground" and that "the climate of the Isle of Lewis is not necessarily kind" to these types of materials (2004, 63). Stratford wondered if the pieces' variable range of condition was the result of some of the hoard being in more damp areas than the rest (1997, 54). He pointedly noted that "there is no evidence for the intervention of sea water, only of general damp and perhaps major fluctuations of temperature" (Stratford, 1997, 9). As Tate et al. pointed out, "the condition of the chessmen is not like that of ivory which has been submerged in saltwater for any length of time" due to the lack of "biogenic calcareous material, which would be expected from a marine environment" (2011, 255). The surface colour of the hoard also varies from piece to piece. It is interesting that the National Museum of Scotland's collection has been described as having a greyer tone as opposed to the creamier ivory colour of the British Museum's collection (Glenn, 2003, 154). This may have occurred as the two sets were split and possibly, they were treated in different ways over time. It is also possible that changes in colour have happened as a result long-term display of the pieces in their respective museums. A study to understand this difference in colour between the collections, thus far, has not occurred. The new warder, which was discovered in 2019, is strikingly different in colouring from all the other chess pieces. At the time of this publication, no scientific studies have been conducted on this new piece to analyse it. As noted previously it is unknown as to



Figure 17: Lewis warder discovered in 2019 showing a large degree of damage including the loss of an eye and part of the shield.
 Photograph, copyright of Sotheby's, 2019.
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/eli3mm25tes9212/AAAbJl0UUaNZreuSzgUaLaJna?dl=0&preview=A+Lewis+Chessman_1.JPG, accessed 03/06/2019

who purchased the piece and where it is now.

Tate et al. 2011 also examined markings and surface damage on the portion of pieces belonging to National Museum of Scotland. They were able to see tool marks, gouges, and other scratches that may have been left because of the carving process. Tate et al. also observed that one of the National Museum of Scotland's pieces which has discolouration and cracks may have got this damage through some sort of fire (2011, 256). If this is so, this could be an interesting clue into the piece's past. We may also get more insight into the pieces' history when analysis is done on the new warder discovered in 2019, as the significant damage may reveal more about the journey undertaken. Tate et al. also observed that most of the National Museum of Scotland's collection had a network of channels covering many of the surfaces and through careful study have, they concluded that these marks occurred "after the pieces were carved" as they overlap features that were originally placed (2011, 254). Stratford, in an appendix titled "Technical Observations," acknowledged also observing channelling on the

pieces in the British Museum and declared them to be from “tiny insects such as exist in sand” (1997, 54). Yet on the opposite page, a scientific report on the pieces noted that these “worm-holes” may have originated due to “etching by acids secreted by plant rootlets” (Stratford, 1997, 55). In defence of this argument, Stratford believed that the “extreme fragility of the surfaces and broad seams or cracks...cannot be accounted for by submersion in water” (11). In 2009, Robinson also commented on these channels stating that they were a “result of the burrowing action of insects which live in the sand” (63). Contradictorily, Tate et al 2011 claims that there are “no insects that eat ivory in a similar way” and concludes that after rounds of testing, the channels could have possibly been created as the result of “ectomycorrhizal fungi associated with plant rootlets” (255, 257). Ongoing investigations on the flora of the west coast of Lewis may one day yield definitive information so that scientists and scholars can correlate the results with the theories of damage thus far presented.

One may wonder if those who collected the hoard at the find site only selected the most in-tact and less-damaged pieces from where they were unearthed. This could be one explanation as to why the hoard numbers do not make up a total of complete sets. Tate et al. also hypothesised that the seemingly random buckle found with the hoard, if it was utilised in conjunction with a bag, may have protected the pieces until the time that the bag’s organic material disintegrated (2011, 256). The fact that the hoard contained so many intact pieces from such a long time ago, is quite remarkable, and Robinson stated that this may be attributed to the fact that they were probably concealed in an underground chamber (2004, 63). The sheer volume of items recovered, and their amazingly preserved condition add yet more layers of value, as no other chess set has ever been found with so many pieces of quality and in such quantity. The craftsmanship for durability to last through hundreds of years, their uniqueness, and the pieces’ age adds additional types of value to these extraordinary pieces.

iv. Art Meets Science

Several art-meets-science studies have come to fruition since 2009, in which different approaches to understanding more about the Lewis hoard has yielded more insight. David H Caldwell, former Keeper of the Chessmen at National Museum of Scotland, has spearheaded unique, scientific research surrounding the hoard. To more readily test the theory that the hoard was made by various craftsmen, Caldwell attempted to match the pieces up by height, since they vary from 70mm to 103mm with, “very little of this variation (being) accounted for by differences in relative height between different types of pieces” (Caldwell et al., 2009, 181). Robinson made the startling remark that due to the pieces’ heftier sizes, the largest of them would have required a board to be at least 82cm square (2004, 62). This estimated size of the gaming board may show that these sets may not have been a portable items, but more so, they may have been intended to be in a static position. It is also curious to wonder which came first, the chess pieces to fit the board, or the board to fit the pieces. Caldwell’s simple height test yielded the results of four distinct groupings of pieces, which would fit into some scholars’ predictions that the hoard was made of this number of games. Groups one and two of the study yielded pieces with similar heights to each other, while groups three and four showed much greater variation (Caldwell et al., 2009, 182). From these results of variation, Caldwell hypothesized the following: the hoard may have been comprised of more than four sets, that it is possible they are not all chessmen, or that grouping by height may not be an adequate way of testing out these theories (Caldwell et al., 2009, 182).

Yet another, very hotly debated topic and another area for scientific techniques to be utilised is regarding the appearance of the Lewis hoard itself. This debate began with their original researcher, Frederic Madden. According to his detailed account, the pieces might not

have always been the ivory colour they are today. In his 1832 paper, Madden noted that “for the sake of distinctions, part of them were originally stained of a dark red or beet-colour; but from having been so long subjected to the action of salt-water, the colouring matter, in most cases, has been discharged (212). In his further descriptions of each individual piece in the British Museum’s possession, he noted whether they belonged to the “red set” and described them as retaining “the colour very deeply” (Madden, 1832, 219). In his 1833 talk before the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, David Laing read a note from Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, the original purchaser of what today is the National Museum of Scotland’s collection. In this reading, he said his information came directly from a letter from Sharpe himself, yet there is no mention of any red colouring on Sharpe’s pieces. Interestingly Wilson, who supposedly received some of his information for his 1851 chapter on the Lewis hoard from Sharpe’s own mouth as well, also never mentioned the notion of a red colouring on the pieces. Today, there is no visually observable red colouring on any of the pieces of the Lewis hoard in either museum’s collection. This inclusion from Madden has created intrigue, resulting in significant scientific studies to understand if his claim was accurate or not. In his 1997 book, Stratford mentions a scientific study conducted by the British Museum on its collection of pieces. Researchers were looking for the possibility of this red pigment discussed by Madden. As previously mentioned, damage to the pieces has occurred through time and the cause of damage, other than from handling, has been debated between the supposed saltwater they may have been submerged in, to ivory-eating creatures, and most recently, to plant root systems. This report, probably dating near to Stratford’s publication date of 1997, declared that there was very little, if any, original pigmentation found on the pieces as per their examination under microscopes. The scientists did however notice minute green patches on four of the pieces. Researchers at the time hypothesised that this inclusion may be a white, lead-based pigment that turned green through aging/exposure (Stratford, 1997, 55). However, this inclusion of

pigmentation was a puzzle to the team as the location of the green flecks seemed to be only on smooth, original surfaces. They also observed that some red or brown iron oxide particles “which are commonly seen on museum objects which have been in storage for long periods” were visible on a few pieces but agreed that it probably was not original (Stratford, 1997, 55). No further information about these colour inclusions was noted by Stratford.

In their 2014 publication which studied the surfaces of the Lewis hoard at the National Museum of Scotland, Tate et al. explained that the pieces, being considered a valuable commodity, may have at some point been coloured or even gilded in different areas or surfaces to highlight not only their economic worth, but for their artistic qualities too (11). Stratford noted that the addition of colouring, to add to the finished results of carvings, was not an unusual occurrence in Romanesque sculpture (1997, 11). If this were the case, then the lack of visible pigmentation may be due to “the loss of polychromy” caused by the “effects of biochemical degradation over time” (Stratford, 1997, 11). Concurring with the scientists who conducted the report on the British Museum’s hoard, Tate et al. also found no visual representations of the red dye that Madden so pointedly mentioned. Technological advances in microscopes and other relevant examining equipment occurred between Stratford’s 1997 study and Tate et al.’s 2014 experiment. Tate et al. examined the pieces more closely under these advanced microscopes and found “some areas which showed possible pigmentation and darker layers” (2014, 20). An XRF (x-ray fluorescence) examination detected trace elements of mercury on some surfaces of all the pieces, with the hypothesis that this presence may be attributed to the remains of cinnabar, “a strong red pigmentation vermillion which was well known in the Middle Ages” (Tate et al., 2014, 21). Cinnabar also breaks down over time, turning black when exposed to certain elements and conditions, which Tate et al. questioned as the cause of the National Museum of Scotland hoard’s displaying a greyer hue than their

British Museum counterparts (2011, 21). The fact that all the Scottish pieces exhibited this greyer tone and the British Museum's pieces did not, is still puzzling and remains unaccounted for. Without absolute scientific proof of the red colouring mentioned by Madden, researchers are unable to prove that the pieces were differentiated by multiple colours, possibly to divide the sides of the board. However, the unveiling of the newly discovered, darker reddish-brown warder in 2019 may give more credence to Madden's declarations. Even today, modern chess sets may have opposing colours to represent differing players. Tate et al. wondered if the observance this colouration by Madden on the pieces could have been due to an application of highlight on selected prominent features rather than that of a full colour coverage of the entire piece. If the pieces were in fact coloured differently as Madden noted, it would be very unusual for only the eleven in the Scottish collection to bear this difference while the substantial number of pieces located in the British Museum does not, especially in light that there are almost four complete sets in total. As noted, Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, the original owner of the National Museum of Scotland's hoard, never mentioned the red colouring himself. Glenn noted that there does not seem to be a connection between Sharpe's selections to create matches but rather, it is possible that the incentive for his picks may have been based on trying to choose a representative of each piece or of those with characteristics he enjoyed (2003, 154).

Additional theories as to Tate et al.'s findings of mercury on the surface of the pieces of the National Museum of Scotland's hoard could also be attributed to historic museum practices of utilising certain pesticides in collections, especially of those containing materials of natural science, anthropologic, and other collections containing animal or human remains (2014, 23). Being made of walrus ivory, it is possible that the channels on the surfaces of the pieces could have been made by some sort of pest and in order to prevent the spread of the infestation, the pieces could have been treated with a substance containing mercury. Tate et al.

find this unlikely, but it was a common museum practice up until the 1960s on many collections. Two other theories as to how the mercury may have come to be on the surfaces is from gilt, which utilises mercury for its application, and from sealing wax, which could have been used to take moulds of the pieces (Tate et al., 2014, 23). The test which Tate et al. conducted and subsequently discovered mercury traces, was only applied to the pieces at National Museum of Scotland. To date of this thesis, the same, more scientifically advanced tests have not been conducted on the British Museum's collection.

The chess pieces have been deemed valuable enough for multiple scientific tests to be conducted. In this case, their value lies not only in the art realm, but in the scientific one as well. Modern techniques for analysing these precious commodities are expensive to perform and potentially dangerous for the item, so the fact a researchers undertook these investigations gives insight as to how valuable they are considered. The Lewis Chessmen have become valuable as vehicles for scientific study. They have bridged the gap between the more subjective world of the arts with the data-driven, finite field of science.

v. Anthropomorphic Qualities in Determining Sets

Many scholars and laypeople alike agree that one of the most interesting features of the Lewis hoard is their faces. They exhibit anthropomorphic, humanistic qualities in which we all relate. Through the ages, people have been trying to understand the expressions from their ivory-carved facial structures. Some have wondered if they were carved to be comical, while others have described them with verbs like pensive, worried, bored, contemplative, and frenzied. To better understand their history and possible connections to each other, research of an inventive nature was undertaken to analyse them through forensic anthropologic techniques. This process treated the pieces “as if they were living people” in order to “identify any

‘families’ of chess people” (Wilkinson, 2014, 1). Caroline Wilkinson, an anthropologist specialising in facial reconstructions, spearheaded this unique research along with David H. Caldwell and Mark A. Hall in 2009 and throughout subsequent following years. Wilkinson has worked on the facial reconstructions of famous historical figures such as Richard III and Robert the Bruce, both of which were very intently followed in popular culture. Utilising magnification and measurements, Wilkinson analysed certain facial features-- the mouths, noses, and eyes, both horizontally and vertically. Craftspeople probably had general styles of creating works, and if they were creating a series of chess pieces, it is not unreasonable to wonder that they would “tend to give them the same facial features, in the same way as a modern cartoonist” (Caldwell et al., 2009, 183). With these scientific techniques, Wilkinson was able to group fifty out of the sixty total face pieces into five different groups. The remaining ten did not fit into these categories either due to too much damage or they were too different from the rest of the groupings. Two of these ten outlier pieces, a king and a warder, exhibited such differences from the rest of the hoard that they could possibly have come from entirely different workshops or were later replacements for missing pieces, assuming the hoard was not brand new when it was deposited (Caldwell et al., 2011, 63). Once the groupings of height (as previously mentioned above) were combined with these groupings of facial morphology, the team produced the results of four sets. The team believed that from these groupings, the work of five individual craftsmen were responsible for the pieces’ creation. Each set had specific corresponding facial attributes and ranged in quality of workmanship. From the results, Caldwell et al. believed that the groupings showed clear evidence that “most of the chessmen were produced at the same workshop, [probably] a large establishment with four or more master craftsmen working on ivory chess-pieces at any one time” (2009, 185). We also must remember that these items were handmade, and considerations of variability based on this factor is also something to understand. It may be the idea of creating matching sets was not on

the carvers' minds, as we have seen that each piece varies in individualistic design. This variable design could have also been the result of several commissions over a period of years. Some of the pieces appear to be unfinished and exhibit shoddy workmanship, leading Caldwell et al. to hypothesise there was a division of labour amongst craftsmen through three main stages of production—the selection of a sizable tusk or tooth, carving it to shape, and then adding finishing elements--and that these errors were more likely to be from the pressure to deliver large quantities rather than reflecting a workshop that regularly produced substandard work (2009, 186). From this facial grouping, the range of skill level the craftsmen exhibited could also be seen from those who were “reckoned a genius” to others “with less ability or sense of design” (Caldwell et al., 2009, 189). One interesting common thread for all the pieces are their piercing, bulging eyes, perhaps conveying an “amuletic or apotropaic quality” about them (Caldwell et al., 2009, 190). Like the previous section titled “Art Meets Science,” here too we can see their unique value as pieces worthy of investigation. Their rarity due to their human-like features has allowed researchers to perform experiments usually reserved for actual humans, connecting us to these items of material culture in a very physical way.

As much as we think we know about the Lewis Chessmen in fact, we do not know as much as we would like. Ideas of how they got to be on Lewis and where and how they were found are still debated amongst scholars with no definite answer. The fact is that researchers--despite the ongoing debate since the 1800s--have yet to come to any conclusive answers regarding the Lewis Chessmen. Almost everything surrounding them is subjective, yet they are tangible pieces of material culture created by someone(s), somewhere, for some unknown purpose. This ambiguity itself adds another layer of value to the pieces, creating an aura of the unique and rare.

Since the pieces were found in 1831, scholars have been trying to answer two extremely complex and interconnected questions about the Lewis hoard: *where* did they come from/or were made, and *when* were they made? These unanswered questions can be linked, as answering one may answer the another. One may also give proof to the other, making the act of answering these questions independently nearly an impossible task. The following sections will be an attempt to untangle and present the many intricately woven ideas that scholars have put forth as theories and which hundreds of years of study have yet to answer absolutely.

vi. The Great Debate: Where Did They Come From?

Madden, in his ground-breaking study of the pieces in 1832, believed that there were three ways in which to tease out the pieces' provenance: through their costumes, their materiality, and through historical passages in ancient writings (243). As previously mentioned, he was a scholar of ancient texts, and was knowledgeable of these works. Through his examination, Madden declared that the pieces were, "executed about the middle of the twelfth century, by the same extraordinary race of people, who at an earlier period of time, under the general name of Northmen, overran the greater part of Europe, and whose language and manners are still preserved among their genuine descendants in Iceland" (1832, 243-44). Starting with his detailed descriptions of each piece, he recorded observations about their dress, weaponry, stances, and accessories. This allowed him to compare other monuments, sculptural items, manuscripts, seals, and works of art he had encountered containing similar stylistic details to the hoard. On the kings' attire, he noted that their style of costume was "the usual and most ancient form of regal dress and is everywhere presented in the MMS [manuscripts] and seals of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, as well as in those of England, Scotland, France, and Germany" (Madden, 1832, 213). He also conducted the same analysis with the other face

pieces, making careful notes of where he had previously seen likenesses of their costumes. On the inclusion of the importance of the bishops in the collection, he commented that this piece, “among the Icelanders and Danes...from the most ancient times, has always been termed *Biskup*, bishop, and this may assist us hereafter in determining the locality of these figures” (Madden, 1832, 228). He believed that the both the warder and berserker were the key pieces to understanding the hoard’s origins. Madden commented that like their warder counterparts, the “children of Odin’s race” exhibited “warlike propensities” (1832, 256). The singular act of the berserkers’ shield-biting, according to Madden, exhibited little doubt that this was a characteristic of the “Scandinavian berserker, who were unarmed warriors subject to fits of madness” and to him, confirmed that they were “of Norwegian or Icelandic workmanship” (1832, 271).

Based on their materiality of walrus ivory, Madden also believed this was proof that the pieces were made in Iceland. He noted that walruses appeared on the coasts of Greenland and Iceland but “rarely appeared in...the seas of Norway” (1832, 245). Through the use of historical manuscripts and texts, he mentioned the fact that walrus ivory was greatly important to those in “the northern nations” as exhibited by the gifting of these items to royalty (Madden, 1832, 246). Madden reiterated his belief in their Icelandic origins as he noted that from various sagas, they were “famous for their skill in carving various figures and implements in bone, and this talent was exerted chiefly in sculpturing chess-men from the tusks of Rosmar,” the Icelandic word for walrus (1832, 28). Through this explanation of the importance of the walrus ivory in the culture of the “Northmen,” Madden deduced that “...the chess-men discovered in the island of Lewis were sculptured by the same people among whom the material, of which they are formed, is found; and who are known, moreover, from an indefinite period of time, to have excelled in the art of cutting out similar figures” (1832, 249).

Madden also declared that ancient writings such as sagas showed that those of “northern nations, and more particularly the Icelanders” had a fondness for chess, reaffirming his belief that the idea of the Lewis hoard originating here was highly likely (1832, 286). He also utilised these manuscripts to show that “the spot on which these figures were found, in all respects favours the hypothesis I have adopted” (Madden, 1832, 289). He examined the historical ties through these texts, including those of trade, between the Hebrides and Scandinavia and surmised that the hoard found in Lewis was:

part of the stock of an Icelandic kaup-mann or merchant, who carried these articles to the Hebrides or Ireland for the sake of traffic; and the ship in which they were conveyed being wrecked, these figures were swept by the waves on shore, and buried beneath the sand-banks, which for the space of near seven centuries continued to accumulate, before the fortunate discovery took place, which restored them to light (Madden, 1832, 290).

Through this we can see the first hypothesis that the hoard was part of a merchant’s stock and how, in Madden’s opinion, they got to be on the island.

Some twenty years later, Daniel Wilson seemingly discounted most of what Madden declared, believing instead that the pieces originated in Scotland. Wilson argued that:

it has been so long the fashion to assign every indication of early art and civilisation found in Scotland to these Scandinavian invaders - though, as I trust has already been shown, in many cases without evidence and upon false premises, - that it becomes the Scottish archaeologist to receive such conclusions with caution (1863, 346).

Wilson went on to point out that too often, “rude Scandinavian rovers brought with them from the Pagan North new elements of civilisation and refinement to replace Christian arts which

they eradicated at the point of a sword” (1863, 346). In arguing his differences, Wilson also utilised Madden’s three-step approach when determining their origins: evidence found through their costumes, materiality, and through ancient texts. Wilson believed that by looking closely at the costumes of the knights and footmen (warders), one could discover their real origins. In particular, the pointed helmets and kite-shaped shields pointed to a “Southern and not Scandinavian origin” as they “are what would usually be styled Norman” as the “Northmen retained their round shield until a later period” (1863, 349). Wilson also looked to wax seals, mainly those of baronial and royal origins to show that “both the peaked helmet and nasal and the kite-shaped shield were the usual defensive armour of the Scottish baron” (1863, 351). He also pointed to the small stature of the ponies the knights rode upon as “so characteristic of the old Scottish breed” (Wilson, 1863, 351). This inclusion may be referring to Shetland ponies, one of Scotland’s native horse breeds and whose statue is known to be short and stocky. Regarding the material of the pieces, Wilson argued that just because they were made of walrus ivory did not “prove their Scandinavian origin” (1863, 347). He also pointed out the ties that Scotland and the Scandinavia shared and hypothesised that these tusks could have been a traded commodity between the two nations. Tusks, he argued, were not a “great rarity in Scotland,” citing examples showing a “distinct evidence of its native use” (Wilson, 1863, 347). It was Wilson’s belief that the Scottish were “much more likely to impart rather than to receive a superior knowledge in the arts of the sculptor and the carver” (1863, 348). He believed that Madden’s hypothesis that the Northern people played a form of chess may have been the “old game of counters” or *hnefatafl* (Wilson, 1863, 359). The game was popular in Iceland and Wilson believed that the “play and laughter” associated with the game from which Madden cited from “Northern” texts hardly fit the “skilful and complicated game” of chess (Wilson, 1863, 359). Wilson also cited several other chess pieces and carvings, being located or found in Scotland, as evidence that it was not unusual for such works to be produced in Scotland.

More modern theories as to the pieces' origins still contradict one another. In one of these newer publications from 1978, Michael Taylor of the British Museum, noted that "there is much uncertainty about the origins of the Chessmen, both about their style and their date" due to "a lack of comparable surviving material" but "comparisons can be found for what might be considered minor or incidental details of the chessmen" (9). These details, according to Taylor, could be found in the decorative panels which surrounded the thrones of the kings, queens, and some bishops. He argued that the carving details were remarkably similar others found in Scandinavia. Taylor admitted that Madden's suggestion that the pieces were Icelandic was "remarkable" since the paper was published so long ago (1978, 11). Taylor went on to give examples of ivory carvings found in Trondheim Norway, wooden stave churches in Norway, and doorways of Ely Cathedral in England as well (1978, 11). Like the carvings he cited, he believed the Chessmen are from the same "Scandinavian artistic milieu" (Taylor, 1978, 13). Although he agreed we cannot know exactly where they came from, in his opinion, the most important issue is "the dominant cultural influence on the artist, not his nationality, nor the place where a work is done" and therefore, Taylor was comfortable calling them Scandinavian in origin (Taylor, 1978, 13).

Influenced by Taylor's work, Neil Stratford released his own publication in 1997 titled, *The Lewis Chessmen and the Enigma of the Hoard*. Also from the British Museum, Stratford also favoured the idea of the Lewis hoards' origins being in Scandinavia. He noted that while the walrus ivory certainly came from the north, it did not necessarily equate to "a positive aid towards localising the Lewis hoard" (Stratford, 1997, 40). Like Taylor, Stratford believed that determining the artistic milieu was more important as "it will probably always remain to some extent a matter of opinion as to where their origins lie" (1997, 41). He also believed this milieu centred around Scandinavia-- more specifically, Norway--and believed the Chessmen to

“belong to a cultural world which was ‘Nordic’” (1997, 44). He discussed Taylor’s previous comparisons to buildings in Norway and hypothesized that “if these comparisons are reviewed against the group of Scandinavian walrus-ivory carvings which show such an intimate connection, they are less convincing” (Stratford, 1997, 44). He believed that discoveries current to the time of his publication showed more legitimate evidence for a Norwegian connection. A fragmentary knight, also made of walrus ivory, was found in the town of Lund in Sweden. When comparing the Lund fragment to a Lewis knight Stratford stated that “no further commentary is required; the piece was clearly a Lewis knight” (1997, 44). Another discovery, which according to Stratford was “even more significant,” was that of a sketch of a fragmentary chess queen which was excavated from St Olav’s parish church in Trondheim in the nineteenth century (Stratford, 1997, 44). However, the piece itself is now lost, and all that remains is the sketch. The side-by-side comparison of the sketch to a Lewis queen shows similar styles of design. Despite the loss of the piece to time, Stratford believed the sketch “proved the existence in Trondheim of a chess piece carved by the ‘Lewis workshop’” (1997, 44). Stratford also went on to explain how Trondheim was the seat of power in the north, using texts from the 1070s which called the city “the capital of the Norsemen” (1997, 46). By relating the known fact that bishops from Trondheim were immensely powerful, showing the established trade between Trondheim and Greenland for walrus ivory, and by demonstrating the historical ties of Trondheim and the Hebrides, Stratford’s scholarly opinion emerged: Scandinavia, and possibly Trondheim, was the strongest candidate for where the pieces were carved.

Yet another modern study of the Lewis hoard also comes from the British Museum. In 2004, James Robinson, former curator of the Medieval Gallery at the British Museum, authored a book in a series titled *British Museum Objects in Focus* which looked closely at specific items

in the museum's holdings. The book he authored was centred solely on the Lewis Chessmen. Robinson noted that his text was "heavily indebted to Stratford's book" and stressed that "their place of origin...will probably never be satisfactorily settled (Robinson, 2004, 14, 64). He also alluded to the cultural and political ties which the Hebrides and Scandinavia shared and, through this, declared that there was a "stylistic association of the chessmen with Scandinavia, and with Norway in particular" (2004, 14). Unlike other authors, Robinson spelled out what was considered "Scandinavian" at the supposed time of the pieces' origins: Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Western Isles of Scotland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland (14). Like authors before him, Robinson also included references to the materiality of the Chessmen but made note to show how Norway, and specifically Trondheim, was one of the main centres of the trade of walrus ivory. Like Stratford, Robinson also believed that Trondheim was the correct area for origin, as the archaeological record provided evidence that walrus ivory workshops existed there. He also reiterated the idea that the pieces were probably brought to Lewis via a Scandinavian merchant "travelling the established route between Scandinavia and Ireland" and that they were probably "buried for safe keeping – and subsequently never recovered" (Robinson, 2004, 58). An additional evidentiary tie to the Irish-route theory was Robinson's mention of a chess queen which was found in a bog in Ireland. This piece very much resembles the queens in the Lewis hoard. He included the Irish queen to show that the "potential market for chess sets" that "were provided by the court of Dublin or the local aristocracy of the Outer Hebrides" was a very plausible notion (Robinson, 2004, 59). Irish poet Lady Jane Wilde was a collector and publisher of traditional Irish folktales. Her 1887 publication, *Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstition of Ireland* conveyed the story of the King of Munster being challenged by one of the legend Tuatha-de-Danann, Mirid, to a game of chess. The King asked the Stranger his stakes, and the Stranger replied that if he won, he wanted to marry the King's famously beautiful wife, Edain. When the Stranger, Mirid as he

was known, makes this demand, the Queen “sent her page in with the chess board, and then came herself to greet the stranger” (Wilde, 1887, 179). The Stranger won the game and reaped his prize of having the Queen for his wife. Even though this is a folk tale containing fanciful notions of legendary figures, there are historical accuracies in it. There was a line of Munster kings who ruled Ireland. The text does not specify which Munster king stars in this tale, but by referring to a historical timeline alone, we know that there was a line of these kings from the Iron Age until the Middle Ages. There were kings under the “Munster” banner until the late twelfth century. When considering Robinson’s hypothesis that the Lewis chess pieces may have been en route to Ireland, we can see that the timeline and theory is a possibility based on the contents of this story. From this story its accurate historical contexts, that it is not outside the realm of thinking that the Lewis hoard could have been intended for such high nobility. Despite the fact the tale is considered one within the realms of folklore, the fact there was this specific mention around the game of chess shows that the game was in the public consciousness enough to warrant inclusion by the originator of the story.

Most modern work on the Chessmen, until relatively recently, had been conducted by the British Museum and its relevant curators and researchers. It was not until 2009 that David H. Caldwell, former Keeper of the Lewis Chessmen at National Museum of Scotland, began conducting research on the pieces himself. With a team of Mark A. Hall and Caroline M Wilkinson, they decided to take a more “interdisciplinary approach (combining elements of art history with archaeology and history)” when examining the hoard (Caldwell et al., 2009, 155). From the start, they made their position known and stated that “we accept the long-established view that the pieces are Scandinavian and see no reason to challenge a growing consensus that the craftsmen who made them may (mostly) have worked in Trondheim, Norway” (165). In

their 2009 paper, they included a more detailed account of the relevance of Lewis in the Kingdom of the Isles and the ties that bound the Hebrides to Scandinavia, as well.

Like their scholarly predecessors, Caldwell et al. also looked closely at the clothing and accessories of the pieces to point the way to a possible origin, and they too came up with Trondheim. They believed that the carvers would have had to be acquainted with the real examples of clothing they carved and therefore, it would make logical sense that the pieces “were made in an important centre like Trondheim where craftsmen of such prestigious items might be supposed to have had access to the court and senior churchmen” (Caldwell et al., 2009, 190). Instead of believing the pieces were automatically made in Scotland because of the similarities to other such carvings and sculptural elements found there, Caldwell et al. proposed that items found dating to the fourteenth century “demonstrated how some traditions and equipment in the West Highlands and Isles changed little over a long time” (2009, 194). They were also able to draw further comparisons to Trondheim through the kite-shaped shields’ decorations, some of which compared to a grave slab found in Trondheim Cathedral (Caldwell et al., 2009, 195). Through their facial analyses, as detailed previously, they believed that the results showed that the pieces were likely made in one workshop but by varying craftspeople.

To coincide with a 2011 special exhibition, *The Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked*, an exhibition book was produced in 2010 by Caldwell and his colleagues. They reiterated the notion that the pieces were made in Scandinavia, having “no serious doubts” as they were “mostly made of walrus ivory and that tends to favour a northern European origin” (Caldwell et al., 2010, 37). The team also included the comparison with the Lund knight and the lost Trondheim queen as further evidence, but also cautioned that “none of this provides proof of a Scandinavian origin” but that the art of the era in which they were assigned was “truly international, extending from Norway and even Greenland and Iceland to Sicily and the

Crusader States in the Holy Land” (Caldwell et al., 2010, 37-38). However, like Madden they also agreed that the shield-biting berserkers made it “difficult to believe [they] could have originated anywhere else but in the Scandinavian world” as this idea was “solely Scandinavian and it is doubtful if warriors elsewhere would have chosen to be represented this way” (Caldwell et al., 2010, 38). Despite such strongly held beliefs that Trondheim was the frontrunner for where the pieces were created, they also do counter that by stating, “none of this makes it certain that Trondheim was the place many or all of the Lewis chessmen were made, but it is at least a strong probability” (Caldwell et al., 2010, 67).

In the same year of Caldwell et al.’s *Unmasked* book, Guðmundur G Þóraminsson (Anglicised as Gudmundur G. Thorarinsson), an Icelandic chess enthusiast:

resurrected Madden’s thesis that the Lewis chessmen were carved in Iceland” [because] “at the cathedral of Shalholt in southern Iceland between 1195 and 1211, he pointed out, a woman was hired to carve luxury items out of walrus ivory for Bishop Pall Jonsson to send to his colleagues in Denmark, Norway, Scotland, and Greenland (Brown, 2015, 8).

The woman in question who Þóraminsson believed to have done this work was named as Margrét the Adroit “who at that time was the most skilled carver in Iceland” (Brown, 2015, 8). His theories did not receive favourable reviews when posted on the internet. In a *New York Times* article Alex Woolf, a medievalist at the University of St. Andrews, noted that “the walrus tusk used to make the chessmen was expensive, and the pieces would have had to have been made where there were wealthy patrons to employ craftsmen and pay for the material” (McLain, 2010). Woolf also scathingly contradicted the Icelandic story noting that “a hell of a lot of walrus ivory went into making those chessmen, and Iceland was a bit of a scrappy place full of farmers,” and added that the pieces are also exquisite works of art so, “you do not get

the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Iowa” (McLain, 2010). According to Nancy Marie Brown, after hearing that there was to be a seminar attached to the *Unmasked* exhibition in Edinburgh, Þóraminnsson attempted to present his theory there, but did not receive an invitation to speak. He attended anyway and according to Caldwell, Þóraminnsson “crashed the seminar” and Caldwell “did not know how to handle it” but in a later press statement that he was “pleased that the research and our extremely popular exhibition...is reigniting debate and discussion” (Brown, 2015, 8-9). Seemingly, Caldwell believed his theories were not totally unreasonable, as an article detailing his theory was penned by Þóraminnsson himself in Caldwell et al.’s 2014 book, *The Lewis Chessmen: New Perspectives*.

In this article contained in Caldwell et al.’s book, Þóraminnsson argued that the hoard contained several clues that point to an Icelandic origin. He noted that the inclusion of the bishop was a key clue, however he also asserted that it “is possible that forms of chess without bishops had been played in Iceland beforehand” but the idea of chess was not a new one in Iceland (2014, 202). As Madden also noted, the use of the word “bishop” was used only in Iceland to describe this piece. Þóraminnsson also reiterates this theory with the revelation that “the use of the term was an Icelandic innovation” (Þóraminnsson, 2014, 202). Also, like Madden and others, he too utilised sagas and other historical texts to argue his point. He argued that if this bishop theory were true “it would have to be assumed that the chessmen were probably carved at the behest of an Icelandic bishop who, having little experience of warfare, thought it appropriate that pieces closest to the king and queen be bishops” (Þóraminnsson, 2014, 204). Þóraminnsson also argued that some Icelandic artists may have trained in Trondheim, bringing back to Iceland, the same stylistic milieu which has been shown to centre there. As previously mentioned, the Icelandic theory revolves around Margrét the Adroit, the ivory carver for Bishop Páll, as a possible candidate for the Lewis hoard’s creator. Þóraminnsson noted that

there is “documentary evidence for the production of fine work in walrus ivory and other materials in medieval Iceland [that] can be backed up by actual surviving artefacts, notably two walrus ivory crozier heads which could be the work of Margrét the Adroit” (Þóraminsson, 2014, 208). No other specifically named carver has been put forth from any other scholarly work. These two crozier heads, Þóraminsson argues, bear similar carving details to the Lewis hoard and that “it is possible that many more artefacts which are believed to originate from Scandinavia are actually Icelandic” (Þóraminsson, 2014, 209). Recent archaeological finds in Iceland, Þóraminsson states, add to this theory. The finds include a gaming cube, the root of a walrus tusk and several skulls with attached tusks, which, according to Þóraminsson, gives “further evidence for the availability of walrus ivory in Iceland in earlier times” (Þóraminsson, 2014, 210). Þóraminsson also believes that there was a strong relationship between Iceland and the Hebrides. He believes this can be seen in a place name of Islivig, meaning “bay of Icelanders,” not far from Uig (Þóraminsson, 2014, 213). DNA research even provides evidence that there The Hebrides and Iceland shared ties. Recent findings show that there are two types of mitochondrial DNA sequences that only occur in people from Iceland and those from the “Southern Isles” (and are found nowhere else in the world), “which points to the women from the Southern Isles being significant among the settlers in Iceland” (Þóraminsson, 2014, 213). This, Þóraminsson relates, “means that the Hebrides are a ‘parent’ country of Iceland” (2014, 213).

Like scholars before him, Þóraminsson also looked to the chessmen themselves for answers. Unlike Wilson, who deemed the horses upon which the knights rode as Scottish, Þóraminsson argued that they “have Icelandic features” (2014, 214). Like Madden, he too made the comparison of the Icelandic use of the rook being represented as a warrior like English chess sets were, rather than the piece’s representation as a castle or tower in other

countries. Þóraminnsson believed that this was “evidence that chess had gone from England to Iceland, rather via other Scandinavian countries where forms meaning ‘tower’ were in use” (Þóraminnsson, 2014, 214). Þóraminnsson also gave evidence that the berserker, one of Madden’s key indicators that the hoard was Icelandic, occurred “in numerous Icelandic writings” (2014, 215). In the end, Þóraminnsson noted that “none of this proves that the Lewis chessmen were made in Iceland, but it makes it very likely that they were” (2014, 216). This statement is remarkably akin to those of other scholars’ when they referenced Norway as the origin source for the Chessmen.

In 2015, Nancy Marie Brown wrote her book, *Ivory Vikings, The Mystery of the Most Famous Chessmen in the World and the Woman Who Made Them*. As the title implies, she too believes the chess pieces were made by Margrét the Adroit in Iceland. Brown, who is no stranger to Icelandic history as evident by some of her other books, gives compelling evidence that Margrét *did* carve the pieces. She notes on her blog that she decided to drop all the maybes or possibilities and just make the stand that a woman had carved the chessmen (2016). In her book, Brown links Margrét to the Chessmen via the sculptor’s ties to Bishop Pall, who resided in Iceland. Pall was the bishop of Skálholt and his life was recorded in an Icelandic saga. Brown claims that within the saga, it is presented that Margrét was a skilled craftswoman, and the possibility that her talents were commissioned to create the Lewis hoard is not out of the realm of conceivability (2015). As will be discussed further along, the pieces would have belonged to, or would have been made for someone of high distinction, given their considerable artistic qualities, the time it took to make them, and the rarity of the walrus ivory as their material. In being a Bishop, Pall most certainly could have been a prime candidate to own this collection. Brown goes on to further note that Pall may have had additional sets created to give as gifts as well, accounting for the large number of pieces (2015). Brown notes that Pall’s saga is the only

text that mentions Margrét as the best ivory carver in Iceland (2015). In her blog, Brown noted that many scholars have not studied *The Saga of Bishop Pall*, which has never been translated into English, because Icelandic sagas are believed to be “fictional” and that Iceland was “poor and backwards,” incapable of creating such masterpieces such as the Lewis Chessmen (18 November, 2015). She also noted that it was not until the Bishop’s tomb was discovered that more scholars began to take his saga more seriously. When his coffin was opened, an intricately carved ivory crozier was found entombed with him. Brown notes that we cannot assign Margrét the Adroit as the definitive artist of both this piece and the Chessmen, but due to her skill as noted in the saga and the Bishop’s high status which would have afforded such luxuries, we cannot discount that she may have been the creator of both (2015). We have very few mentions from historic texts of female artisans from this period. If Margrét was indeed the artist of the Lewis Chessmen, this would add another layer of value to the pieces. As shown, the Icelandic theory is at odds with that of the Nordic contingency, which again leaves us with more unsolved questions rather than definitive answers.

vii. When Were They Made?

Like most every other element relating to the Lewis hoard, yet another highly contested topic of debate is the discussion over the pieces’ creation date. This date is important as it could be intrinsically linked to their provenance, as explained by scholars over the years. If we knew a date, we may be able to know an area of origin, and vice versa. By looking at some of the same researched elements of the Lewis hoard such as clothing style, armour, weaponry, and the like, scholars have not only been able to make informed guesses as to their origins, but they have also linked these details to specific time periods in which the pieces may have been created. Madden had little doubt that the hoard was created “about the middle of the twelfth

century” (1832, 243). Examples he gave to defend his theory included the carvings on the backs of the thrones, the introduction of the queen on the board, the replacement of the elephant with the bishop, the materiality of walrus ivory being a popular commodity at this time period, and the costuming of the knights and warders which were “very curious examples of the military costume of the twelfth century” (Madden, 1832, 256). He also noted that the appearance of nasal appendages on the knights’ helmets being included on some but not all of the pieces, indicated that particular fashion trend, which ended in the twelfth century, was on its way out at the time of the pieces’ creation (Madden, 1832, 262). The inclusion of a kite-shaped, and not a round shield, was also an indication to Madden that these were made in the twelfth century as similar ones could be seen in “the Bayeux Tapestry and other monuments of the eleventh and twelfth century” (Madden, 1832, 269). The fact there were ties between the Hebrides and Scandinavia and the fact the pieces were found in Lewis, to Madden, this correlated to the time period belonging to the Kingdom of the Isles of Man.

While he did not agree with Madden on the provenance of the pieces, Wilson agreed that they were probably made in the twelfth century. He noted that the carved thrones corresponded to the “Romanesque work of the twelfth century” (Wilson, 1863, 343). He believed the costumes of the knights “afforded...the most characteristic examples of the period” (Wilson 344). He rebuked much of Madden’s theories and argued that it was “to the costume of the twelfth century we must therefore look for the only safe guide to the origin of the Lewis chessmen” (Wilson, 1863, 348). He reiterated his argument that it was to the knights that scholars must look to find the real claims on this century as the date of origin. He repudiated Madden’s claim that the kite-shaped shields were of “use in Britain early in the twelfth century, the Northmen retained their round shield till a later period” (Wilson, 1863, 349). This declaration is a complete contradiction of Madden’s claim. Wilson also doubted if

Norse warriors even fought on horseback in the twelfth century and “if they did so at that period, it was a novelty borrowed, like their new faith and arts, from the nations of the south” (1863, 351). We can see that indeed, the idea of the hoard’s origins and the date of creation are most certainly connected, and at times in attempting to prove one, you must include the other.

Modern scholars tend to agree with the idea that the Lewis hoard was created in the twelfth century, but as more research has been done, a narrowing of the predicted time window within the century has begun to occur. In 1960, P.E. Lasko wrote a report on an ivory carving recently acquired by the British Museum. He argued that the Lewis hoard, amongst others, belonged in a grouping of such carvings and although they were not all ivory in materiality, they all contained comparable decoration styles which bound them together. In trying to date the newly acquired piece, he noted that the Chessmen were usually at the “other end” of the time scale “to about the twelfth century” (Lasko, 1960, 15). However, he believed that as several works he studied suggested earlier dates of origin. To him, it seemed “difficult to see why the chessmen should be quite so late” (Lasko, 1960, 15). His reasoning for this puzzle was to be found in the bishop's mitred hat. According to Lasko, because the “bishop’s mitre was not worn with the point in the front until near the end of the twelfth century, and all the bishops among the chessmen do so wear the mitre, the tendency to date later exists” (Lasko, 1960, 15). He countered these claims by providing evidence courtesy of wax seals from 1144 and 1153 where the mitres were worn such as the Lewis bishops display, and for Lasko, this meant that the Chessmen “should not be put later than the third quarter of the twelfth century” (Lasko, 1960, 15). Over ten years later in his own research, Taylor agreed that “as sculptures, the chessmen are brilliant examples of twelfth century design” (1978, 7). He argued that to find a relevant date, we must look to whatever comparable stylistic details such as the carved thrones. He believed that the carving style of the throne backs “was centred in Scandinavia and dates

from the middle years of the twelfth century” (Taylor, 1978, 9). Taylor agreed with Lasko’s earlier estimation date rather than the “date of about 1200 which is usually given to them” (1978, 11). Several sculptural and carved details are traditionally cited as having similar design elements with the Lewis hoard. These include four ivory carvings—including the one Lasko was discussing in the British Museum, stave churches in Norway, and doorways at Ely Cathedral in England. These are all utilised as comparatives with the hoard to give support for the Scandinavian provenance theory. As provenance and date of creation have already been mentioned to be connected, scholars also utilised these elements to approximate date based on similarity of design and origin. So, if we have more definitive dates on some of these elements, such as the carvings at Ely Cathedral of 1135, the Lewis hoard’s date approximation could be placed near such time as well, based solely on design comparison. Taylor noted that the ivory carvings, stave churches, and doorways can all be approximately dated to about 1135-70 and that it “certainly it would seem justifiable to date the ivories (chess pieces) towards the end of this period or at least to the second half of the century” (1978, 14). However, he also theorized that it was possible that “one might even be willing to date the chessmen close to the Ely doorways in the 1130s but that the bishops’ mitres being turned front to back, were current in France in 1144 and England in 1153” (Taylor, 1978, 14). In the end, Taylor believed that due to this mitre detail, they should “date no earlier than about 1150” (1978, 15). As research has continued to progress, the debate over the approximate date of creation has also continued to evolve and change.

In 1997, Stratford also agreed that the bishops’ mitres did seem to put date they were made more to the mid-twelfth century, but he believed that, in reality, “they belong to the second half of the twelfth century” instead because of their “style, their foliage and ornament, their arms and armour, and their costume” (40). He argued that the pieces had been

comparatively dated to the churches and cathedrals as mentioned by Taylor, but that if one looks solely to the ivory carvings of Scandinavian origin “which show such an intimate connection, they are less convincing” (Stratford, 1997 44). In his argument, comparing ivory with ivory seemed a better way of dating the Lewis hoard. Stratford again utilised the two mentioned chess fragments--one of a knight found in Lund, and a queen found in Trondheim--as examples of other very closely related pieces which had later creation dates. Stratford believed that another chess piece, of Scandinavian origin dating to about 1200, showed enough similarity to be a comparable date to the Lewis hoard, or as Stratford put it, to be of the same “sub-Lewis manner” of design (1997, 47). Another researcher, Virginia Glenn, utilised two more elements of carved materials for comparison, one being another stave church and the other a chair which was similar in style to the Lewis thrones. She put the date of estimation nearer the end of the twelfth century (Glenn, 2003, 153). A year later in 2004, Robinson placed their date of origin “no earlier than 1150 and probably before about 1200, a date range which is borne out by the style of carving and by details of their costumes” (14). He also attributed this date as such due to the bishop’s mitres but also commented that the bishop itself “was a twelfth century innovation” (Robinson, 2004, 19). As discussed, Trondheim has come forth as a strong contender for the provenance of the hoard and Robinson argued that this location, along with Bergen, were “the most important points of arrival for the walrus ivory in Norway in the twelfth century,” again intertwining both the provenance and date (2004, 59). He also noted that “the vast majority of surviving objects made from walrus ivory dates from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries” (Robinson, 2004, 59).

In more recent research conducted by David H. Caldwell, he argued that the date his colleagues and he favoured was from the late twelfth century until the early thirteenth century. Thus far, these are the latest sets of dates which have been presented. Caldwell et al. theorised

this timeframe relied on further examination of the clothing style carved on the Lewis hoard. As argued in the section above on provenance, Caldwell et al. stated that for the artists to carve such intricate works of costuming and weaponry, it can be assumed they had access to see such examples in real life (2009, 190). Again, Caldwell et al. also looked to the bishops' mitres to argue this estimation of a later date, noting that if divided into three groups based on style, one group of bishops' mitres showed similarities to mitres found at the end of the twelfth century, one group showed elements nearer to the mid-twelfth century, and the third showed details which correlated with thirteenth century mitres (2009, 193). The team also argued that one of the knights' helmets "was introduced about 1150 and remained popular until the middle of the thirteenth century" (Caldwell et al., 2009, 194). They argued that the lack of nasals on the knights' helmets, which was the style of twelfth and thirteenth century warrior depictions, did not present compelling evidence to contradict this time (Caldwell et al., 194). Here too Caldwell et al. made comparisons to the ever-important kite-shaped shields and noted that in fact, the hoard's shields represented three different kinds with three different eras, including some in the thirteenth century (2009, 195). All these elements, the team argued, gave evidence enough for them to comfortably push the estimated date back to include the possibility of the thirteenth century as well.

viii. Why Lewis?

Many scholars believe that the pieces were brought to Lewis by accident, hence the myriad of arrival stories as presented in the prior chapter. Madden was the first proponent of the idea of the hoard belonging to a Scandinavian merchant whose ship was wrecked off the coast of the island. As mentioned, Lewis was not a bustling centre for industry as other European areas were, allowing researchers to hypothesise that the pieces' arrival on the island

was a completely random accident. Thus far, archaeological evidence has not been uncovered to prove that the pieces were made on the island, but some researchers believe that the hoard being on Lewis was not just happenstance. Wilson, with this nationalistic view of the hoard's Scottish origins, also discounted Madden's theory of how the pieces came to be on Lewis. He first countered the idea of the hoard being found in a sand bank with the other popular theory that they were found in an underground chamber. He believed that the pieces were in fact, made on the island itself near "the vicinity of a considerable ruin" and they were there to "relieve the monotony of cloistral seclusion" because in his opinion the detail of the Ecclesiastical garments would have been better known by such individuals (Wilson, 1863, 353). Wilson's claim supports the nunnery theory mentioned in the previous chapter. In 1978, Taylor also hypothesised how the pieces got to Lewis and declared that he agreed that the merchant theory was the most plausible. In Stratford's 1997, and in Robinson's 2003 books, neither scholar hypothesises as to why the hoard ended up on Lewis. It is not until David Caldwell and his colleagues published a new examination in 2009 that the theory of the hoard originating on or being intentionally brought to Lewis came into being. While they gave evidence that it was possible that the hoard was on a ship by agreeing that "playing pieces were arguably a staple element of a ship's equipment," they countered the previously held "merchant stock" theory as "probably the least plausible" (Caldwell et al., 2009, 167). They theorised that "the most obvious explanation for the hoard should be that it belonged in Lewis to a person, and in a society which valued its contents as gaming pieces" (Caldwell et al., 2009, 168). Other noted chess pieces have been found in the Western Highlands, showing that the game was not foreign to the area. Caldwell et al. noted that because of this, "it is surely more plausible that the Lewis pieces were found in Lewis because that was where they were intended to end up and be enjoyed" (2009, 176).

Caldwell's team also declared that the pieces could have come to Lewis as prestigious objects belonging to important individuals who lived there. First they explained that Lewis was once part of the greater Kingdom of the Isles. From *The Chronicles of the Kings of Man*, we find out that King Godred Olafsson appointed his youngest son, Olaf, as his successor but as he was a young boy when his father died, his elder half-brother Rognvald became king (Caldwell et al., 2010, 47). King Godred had previously been defeated in a battle in 1156 by a local man named Somerlad, who declared himself king, forcing the Godred to divide his kingdom. Lewis remained under the control of the family. Once he became king, Rognvald gave Lewis to younger brother Olaf, who at the time, did not believe the island would sustain his way of life. After his marriage, Olaf and his wife returned to the island. Being a royal, Olaf would most certainly have "maintained a princely lifestyle while based on Lewis" and at this period in history, valuable game pieces may have been amongst his possessions (Caldwell et al., 2010, 51). His uncle, also called Olaf, was known as the Bishop of the Isles. Bishop Olaf would visit Lewis on occasion and may have been in receipt of a gift such as the hoard. Other possible owners put forth by Caldwell et al. include a family called MacSorley. The MacSorley's were descendants of Somerlad, and were known to be "great warriors, holders of extensive lands, and were recognised as kings" (Caldwell et al., 2010, 52). As briefly mentioned before, when the land of the Kingdom of the Isles was divided, Somerlad received a portion of the land because of his victory over King Godred Olafsson. Caldwell et al. also argued that if the pieces were in actually found in an underground chamber when discovered, they may have been put there by one of these important men for., safekeeping whilst they were away from the island (2010, 52). The idea that the pieces were new when they were buried is only a presumption, and if they had belonged to someone on the island, "they may have provided many years of enjoyment before they passed out of use" (Caldwell et al., 2009, 178). As previously discussed, walrus ivory is hardy and to date, no specific signs of wear and tear

due to handling have been found. Of course, this does nothing to either confirm or deny previous usage and handling, and careful stewardship by an owner cannot be discounted. Caldwell et al. aimed to show that there were men of importance on the island in the medieval period and that one of them could have very likely owned the hoard, thereby giving consideration to the theory that the pieces came to be on Lewis on purpose and not by accidental means. If this were the case, the Chessmen would be especially valuable as a direct and intrinsic link to the history of the island.

The presentation in this thesis of the vast research various scholars have undertaken over the hundreds of years since their discovery was systematically done as a novel idea to demonstrate a cohesive contrast and comparison of ideas. As the material presented shows, there have been ongoing debates about the Chessmen for years. These debates and hypotheses continue today. This makes one ponder the question, why do these things matter? In answering this, we find another layer of value. As we have no definitive answers about them, this gives scholars incentive to pursue other avenues of questions surrounding the chessmen. It has become a great mystery that many are trying to solve, yet there are scholars who continue to do so. This chapter has also provided more insight into some of the additional values placed upon the Chessmen: values as artistic pieces, as objects of historical significance, and as we have little else to compare them to, objects of rarity. We have also seen that the pieces are valued as a bridge between the arts and sciences too. A discussion of their materiality also gives greater meaning to their importance, but also remind us that in fact, these are great works of art created by talented craftspeople. This chapter also presented several, ever-changing ideas of provenance and possible dates of origin, through scholarly writing which draws heavily on historic texts and other comparable art examples. As the archaeological record reveals more items, the most recent dating we have for the pieces may change at some point too, showing

the fluidity of the history. Lastly, in this chapter was a discussion over the potential owners of such a hoard and the theories that their resting place on Lewis was not happenstance. The main purpose in the layout and presentation of this chapter was to highlight that so much about the Chessmen is already in the public consciousness, yet precious little about them can be deemed as certain or definitive.

Chapter IV: The Array: Where Do the Chessmen Live?

Almost from the time of their find, the Lewis Chessmen have been separated because different entities purchased parts of the collection. One group in this separation went to the British Museum in London, and after several owners, the eleven remaining pieces ended up at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. Today, this division remains. This chapter's aim is to give a brief introduction to the function of museums, to discuss compare and contrast each museum in which the Chessmen are housed, to explain the contexts in which they are exhibited, and to discuss how each museum adds value onto their portion of the hoard. The idea of separate museums owning pieces of the same collection will also be discussed. This chapter also looks at the recent (as to the time of this publication) return of six pieces to Lews Castle in Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis.

To understand the importance of the relationship between museums and their collections, it is important to have a basic theoretical understanding of these institutions within greater society. According to the *Museums Association*, the UK's governing body over these institutions, "museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society" (n.d.). This definition of what a museum is was formulated 1998 and is a recognised guiding force for institutions around the UK. There are many types of museums that collect a range of materials which are usually in line with their mission statement and scope of collections. This thesis looks primarily at museums which are centred on material culture and historical objects, which, through interpretation and display, create and exhibit meanings. McLean and Cooke note in their 2003 paper that "museums are imbued with institutional power" and that "museums are not neutral" as "the very acts of collecting, selecting, displaying and interpreting objects are political" (113). Objects are

essential for retelling the parts of history that the museum wishes to express, and no matter how impartial curators and others who interpret objects' meanings try to be, it is in end, still told from their perspective and understanding. Because of this, museums can only "offer a partial narrative of a nation's history through the selective readings of the curators" and also, "visitors bring their own interpretive lens to the museum displays and take their own readings" (McLean and Cooke, 2003, 116).

i. The British Museum

The British Museum began in 1753 when Sir Hans Sloane--a physician and collector of antiquities and objects--bequeathed his collection to King George III and the British nation. The collection, numbering some 71,000 objects, also came with a £20,000 price tag as payment to his heirs for the collection. The collection was made up of items Sloan had collected over the years and included 32,000 coins and medals, 50,000 books and manuscripts, a collection of dried plants, and 1,125 "things relating to the customs of ancient times" ("Sir Hans Sloane," n.d.). Sloane's collecting started with his posting as a physician to Jamaica's colonial governor, the Duke of Albemarle, in 1687. In an article reviewing a book titled *Collecting the World: The Life and Curiosity of Sir Hans Sloane*, it is pointed out that Sloane's new wife, a widow of a plantation owner on the island, was "one of the island's leading slave owners" and that "it is an unhappy fact that a considerable portion of the money Sloane used to amass his collection was derived from slavery" (Parker, 2017). It can be said, therefore, that the start of the British Museum was created, maybe only partially, on the institution of slavery, something today that is abhorrent in our modern contexts. At that time in history, Britain was a colonial empire and sometimes, the Crown enslaved its newly gained peoples. Around the time of Sloane's death and subsequent gift to the nation, the idea of an anti-slavery movement began to take hold in

Britain. The act of slave trading was abolished in 1807; however, it was not until 1833 that the Slavery Abolition Act was passed in Parliament, abolishing the practice all together.

The British Museum was first opened to the public on 7 June 1753 in Montagu House, which stood on the site where the current incarnation is located. From the start, the museum was free to “all studious and curious Persons” and has remained open ever since except during the two World Wars (History of the British Museum). The increasing number of acquisitions, including the gift of King George IV’s father’s library (The King’s Library) required larger premises. Construction of what is now the current British Museum took place in 1823 by architect Sir Robert Smirke (“Architecture,” n.d.). Smirke constructed the “Quadrangle Building” which is the core of the museum and has four wings in a quadrangle shape (“Architecture,” n.d.). He fashioned the building in a Greek revival-style, which was in vogue during this era. The South, or Main entrance, with its Greek-inspired columns, relief works, and “its stairs, colonnade and pediment, was intended to reflect the wondrous objects housed inside” (“Architecture,” n.d.). Various halls, wings, and galleries were added as well. For the most part, construction on the form of the building we know today was completed in 1852. To allow for more room for the budding archaeological and ethnographic collections, the natural history specimens were moved to South Kensington in the 1880s to what today is the Natural History Museum (“History of the British Museum,” n.d.). The scope of the collection was broadened during this time to include “not only British and medieval antiquities but also prehistoric, ethnographic and archaeological material from Europe and beyond as well as Oriental art and objects” through expansive excavations abroad (“History of the British Museum,” n.d.). The twentieth century saw a shift in focus from being centred around the act of collecting to concentrating more on the role of providing public services, including publishing visitor guides, creating educational programmes, opening new galleries, and creating public facilities (“History of the British Museum,” n.d.).

Today, the aim and purpose of the British Museum is:

to hold a collection representative of world cultures for the benefit and education of humanity, and to ensure that the collection is housed in safety, conserved, curated, researched, and exhibited. Under the British Museum Act 1963, the Trustees of the British Museum are responsible for the safekeeping and care of the collection for current and future generations, and for making it available to those who wish to see it (“Aim of the British Museum,” n.d.).

It is interesting to note that while the museum is given the title of “British” the aim and purpose does not reflect anything to do with the idea of the British nation but, rather, seemingly situates itself as a repository of worldly collections, as it has been from the start. The Museum is governed by a body of Trustees, the British Museum Act of 1963, and is overseen by a Director. The Museum claims that its collection is “one of the finest in existence, spanning “two million years of human history” (“About Us,” n.d.). From its inception, the museum was “also grounded in the Enlightenment idea that human cultures can, despite their differences, understand one another through mutual engagement. The Museum was to be a place where this kind of humane cross-cultural investigation could happen” (“About Us,” n.d.). The Museum houses a staggering eight million objects in its collection, all of which do not necessarily have a British origin, influence, or link. The British Museum, despite its name, is not a really a national museum. It does not aim to represent the British nation but rather, it aims to represent the story and history of humanity.

The British Museum acquired their portion of the Lewis hoard somewhere between November 1831 and January 1832 through the persistent encouragement of Manuscripts Keeper Frederic Madden. Madden understood the intrinsic and artistic value of the hoard and with his recommendation, the Board of Trustees made the purchase. What was supposed to be

the entire collection, or so Madden and the Trustees believed, turned out to be sixty-seven chessmen, fourteen draughtsmen, and one belt buckle. At this point in time, the British Museum had already been established for seventy-eight years. The Museum's portion of the hoard has undoubtedly been exhibited in different areas to fit in different contexts within the museum through time. In an 1855 section titled "Art" in the monthly publication *Our Corner*, writer Elizabeth Cracknell told of her experience in "one of the rooms in the British Museum left vacant by the removal of the natural history collection to South Kensington" (Cracknell, 306). This room had been "appropriated for the display of works of medieval art and curiosities," including objects that had "been lying in out-of-the-way holes, corners, and drawers" (Cracknell, 1855, 306). Amongst this "host of quaint and beautiful odds and ends," was the "Celtic chessmen from the Isle of Lewis" (Cracknell, 1855, 306). From Cracknell's description, it sounds like the chess pieces were possibly hidden away and that at some point, they were gathered in this room with an array of seemingly disparate items including other ivories, horological instruments, brass works, a dark crystal known as "Dr. Dee's show stone," and the Cellini Cup (Cracknell, 1855, 306). This evokes the idea of a cabinet of curiosities or Wunderkammer (cabinets of wonder). This idea was of an encyclopaedic look at the world in sixteenth century Europe and was used to "summarize the world to the very corners of the Earth" (Brown University, n.d.). It was also a way for the wealthy of society to put forth their collections of the unknown and the exotic which they could have collected on their increasing travels during this time. These items, which were up to the collectors' tastes and preferences, were gathered into one space and displayed together in a seemingly mishmash of items. They usually had no clear order of display and are today considered the precursor to modern museums. Cracknell's description evokes this same idea; however, as the British Museum had been established for over one hundred years at the time of her publication, it seems a bit odd

that this practice was still in use in this institution. This display of a variety of items could have also just been a filler for the vacant room in which Cracknell described.

Today, the British Museum's Lewis hoard is categorised within the department of Britain, Europe, and Prehistory on the Upper Level (Floor 3) of the Museum. Right away, we can see that the British Museum values the pieces on a more regional scale than that of just being a part of a "British" collection by their placement within this continental-specific gallery. The Chessmen are housed in Room 40, otherwise known as "Medieval Europe 1050-1500." In 2009, several galleries on third floor, including Room 40, were renovated to its current state. This renovation occurred to "place this great collection (Medieval European) in its fullest historical context, integrating art with archaeology, covering the period from 1050–1500 AD" ("New Medieval Gallery at the British Museum," 2009). The museum was attempting to look at the medieval period as a specific genre to give an inclusive historic context rather than have collections curated by type of object or another such classification. A press release from the time mentions several "of the Museum's greatest British, European and Byzantine treasures" that would "form the centrepieces for this new permanent space" ("New Medieval Gallery at the British Museum," 2009). As an article from the opening of the gallery notes, "centre stage within this context are the world-famous Lewis Chessmen (around 1150–1200 AD), poignant survivals of a sophisticated courtly culture that existed along the seaboard of northern Europe" ("New Medieval Gallery at the British Museum," 2009).

This newly refurbished gallery was named for Sir Paul and Lady Jill Ruddock. The Museum's press release on this refurbishment does not specify why the room was named for the Ruddocks or even who they are. Further investigation on Sir Paul's own website shows him to be (at the time of this thesis) a former hedge fund investment manager and governmental Chancellor of the Exchequer-turned-philanthropist. While it doesn't say directly so on Sir Paul's website, as with many museums, it is likely that the Ruddocks donated a sizable philanthropic gift to the museum and in turn the Museum gave the honour of naming the gallery after them. In 2014, the refurbished gallery adjoining Room 40, which houses another of the British Museum's great treasures, the Sutton Hoo Helmet, was also named for the Ruddock's. Sir Paul was also appointed to the British Museum's Board of Trustees in 2016 ("Philanthropy," n.d.).

Context plays an important role in how curators exhibit items for display. As previously noted, this is not always necessarily neutral; they categorise items according to their knowledge and how the museum wishes for items to be arranged. Looking at the gallery space as a whole can produce a wealth of information as to how curators want the visitor to see the items on display. The following information was gleaned from in-person viewing and personal photographs taken while at the British Museum. There are three entrances to the gallery which house the Lewis Chessmen: one from a vestibule area--room 36 titled "Europe", one from room 41 or the "Sutton Hoo and Europe" gallery, and one from room 39 which houses watches and clocks. The Europe vestibule and Sutton Hoo rooms are at either end of this gallery space and room 39 enters from a corner of the gallery.

The Lewis Chessmen are housed in a stand-alone, three-dimensional, square glass case in the middle of the room. There are other, two-dimensional exhibit cases against the walls to the left and right of the case. There are also other stand-alone glass cases in the middle of the

gallery, making the Chessmen inconspicuous within the context of the room. Museums generally have some sort of seating in galleries to allow reflection and to aid in visitor comfort. In this gallery, the only seating for visitors is a bench which is directly adjacent to the Chessmen's case, possibly allowing for overflow of visitors to this popular location. Most of the display cases in the space are attached to the outer perimeter of the walls where a visitor may only view the items in a facing forward or side view, at most. In stark contrast, the Chessmen's three-dimensional case allows viewers to see them from all angles, including their backsides, where intricate carvings are located. This set up also allows a better flow for the increased numbers of visitors by allowing them to spread out around the case. These cases emphasise the importance of allowing everyone the opportunity to view them, as the glass surrounding them is vastly more expansive than the case's structural elements. Also, the foundational display risers on which the Chessmen are arranged are incredibly low to the ground. This gives visitors of all heights, including children and those in wheelchairs, better access to view them.

If you entered the gallery from the "Europe" vestibule, you are greeted with an introductory panel describing this gallery and its contents. The panel is purposefully placed here, how curators and designers intend you to enter and view the space. The same thing is not seen from the other two entrance pathways, emphasising the importance of the European context within the space but also giving visitors a guided "start here." The Chessmen are not the feature at the entrances on either end of the gallery but are housed more directly in the middle of the space, requiring the visitor to pass through the room to view them. Since the collection is a highly visited one, curators and exhibitors may have purposely placed them there in order for visitors to physically go through the space and hopefully, view other items in the room—not just see the Chessmen and walk out again. From this "front" view of the

Chessmen's case, you see two different display scenarios. The setup on the left side of the case features a selection of face pieces, pawns, draughtsmen, and the belt buckle displayed on a low, flat surface. Under this display, the text panel is titled "Medieval Chess" and includes



Figure 19: The "front" display of the Lewis Chessmen case within Room 40 of the British Museum. Still taken from Google's virtual tour of the museum. <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@51.5190798,-0.1262626,2a,75y,56.88h,81.83t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sr9SkDzQ044o0QjKH9gQtGg!2e0!7i13312!8i6656?hl=en>. Accessed 27/03/2018

information on how the game of chess was utilised within this historical timeframe. Behind this arrangement of pieces is a large, vertical divider panel which has text titled "Lewis Chessmen." This allowed curators and designers to separate the pieces physically and visually into categories, all within the one case. This division can also be seen through the use of differing display heights as well. On the right side of this case view is a red and white checked chessboard with many of the pieces arranged in a playing position. It is like you have come



Figure 20: British Museum exhibition photograph showing the chessmen in playing position. Personal photograph, 2016.

upon a game in play.

The large dividing panel labelled “Lewis Chessmen” mentions that part of the Chessmen were stained red when they came into the collection. This of course comes from Frederic Madden’s observations and lengthy publication, penned once they came into the possession of the British Museum. In modern uses most checkerboards are black and white or even black and red, but the presented red and white board is unique. Exhibition preparers may have created the unusual board to play on the theme of red versus white to emphasise Madden’s historic observations of formerly red pigmented Chessmen versus the ivory coloured ones we see today. The checkerboard and pieces in play are at a height within the case that allows it to be viewed from all sides. This display contains the only bit of colour within this exhibition case, and coordinates with several other red panels which are scattered throughout the room to

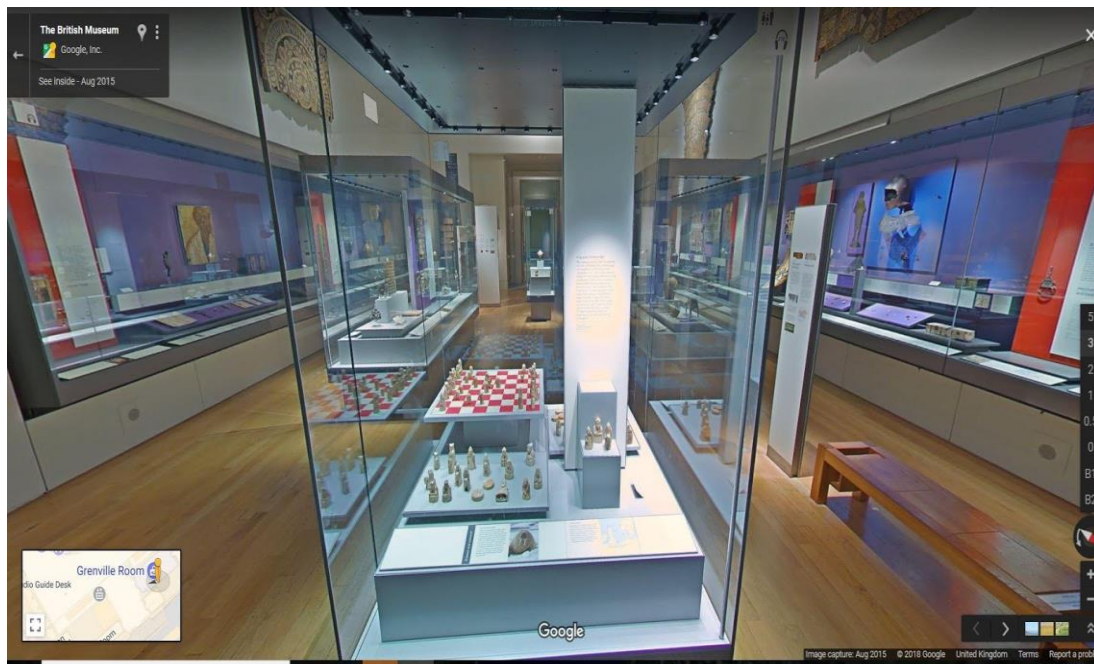


Figure 21: The “back” display of the Lewis Chessmen case within Room 40 of the British Museum. Still taken from Google’s virtual tour of the museum. <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@51.5190798,-0.1262626,2a,75y,56.88h,81.83t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sr9SkDzQ044o0QjKH9gQtGg!2e0!7i13312!8i6656?hl=en>. Accessed 27/03/2018.

give an air of cohesion to the space. When you circle around to the opposite side of the case, passing the chessboard on your left, you will see three separate display sections. On the left



Figure 22: British Museum exhibition photograph showing the dentine of the walrus tusk. Personal photograph, 2016.

portion of this side of display, you see the red and white checkerboard again. Directly below this is another scattering of face pieces and draughtsmen. One of the pieces' underside is visible which allows the dentine of the tusk to be viewed. The label under this section of pieces is titled "How They Were Made" and details the process of carving the walrus ivory. To the right of this display section is a series of three pieces on a riser. The label under this display section is titled "Travel and Trade" and discusses the theory of the hoard belonging to a travelling merchant. The section puts forth the theory that they were "probably made" in Norway too. Behind this riser is the large vertical dividing panel we saw on the opposite side. On this side of the case, the panel is labelled as "King, Queen, Bishop, and Knight" and conveys several ideas including the notion that the chess set reflects Middle Ages society, tries to answer why the queen holds her face, and describes the berserker's relation to Norse sagas. This panel also briefly discusses a small history of the game of chess. The location of this case, and its construction as a three-dimensional exhibition space, allows the large number of museum visitors coming to see the Lewis Chessmen access from all sides. In creating this multi-sided display, the British Museum demonstrates that the Chessmen have value as items which need a larger viewing space for the many visitors which come to the Museum. An interpretation of value can also be surmised merely in the way the pieces themselves are displayed. As they are on displayed on a chess board, exhibition designers are acknowledging that they are valuable as game pieces, but as some of the pieces are also displayed separately, we can deduce that they are they valued as stand-alone objects of artistic worth.

The British Museum does many things to highlight and perpetuate the popularity of the Lewis Chessmen, both on-site and online. All three levels of the Museum contain a gift shop. The largest is on the ground floor and is housed right in the centre of the Great Court. The museum utilises their pieces from the hoard in their merchandise. You will not see the

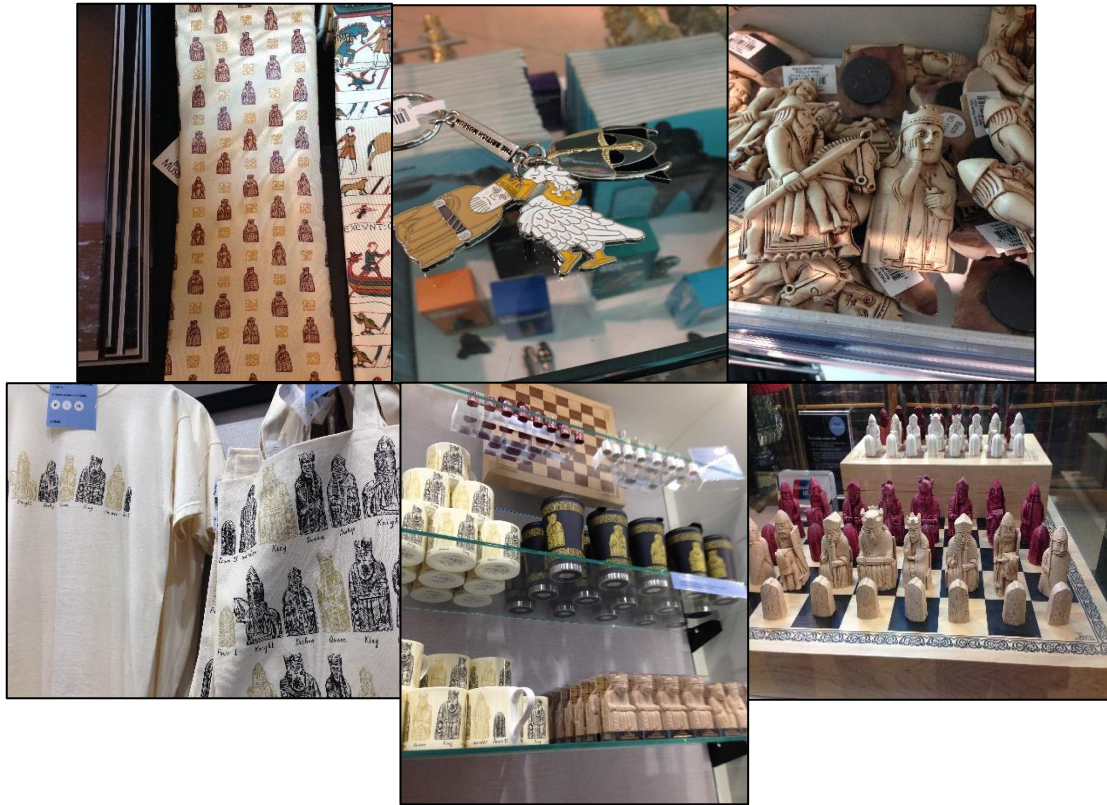


Figure 23: A collection of Lewis Chessmen merchandise available in the British Museum. Personal photographs, 2014.

faces of the National Museum of Scotland's hoard on the British Museum's merchandise and vice versa. And there is a *large* quantity of Lewis Chessmen merchandise available. As noted, they are one of the must-see items in the Museum and because of this, the museum wisely provides a selection of items for visitors to purchase. At an in-person visit to the museum, an array of items bearing the pieces' iconic faces was observed, including a necktie, coffee cups, t-shirts, bags, magnets, wrist watches, keychains, stand-alone replicas, bookmarks, jewellery, playing cards, books, and complete replica chess sets. The sheer quantity of these available thematic items gives credence to the fact that the British Museum sees the value of the Chessmen not only as an art collection but also as a marketable commodity. The museum's online shop is also filled with these Lewis Chessmen items. They even have their own category on the front page of the online shop!

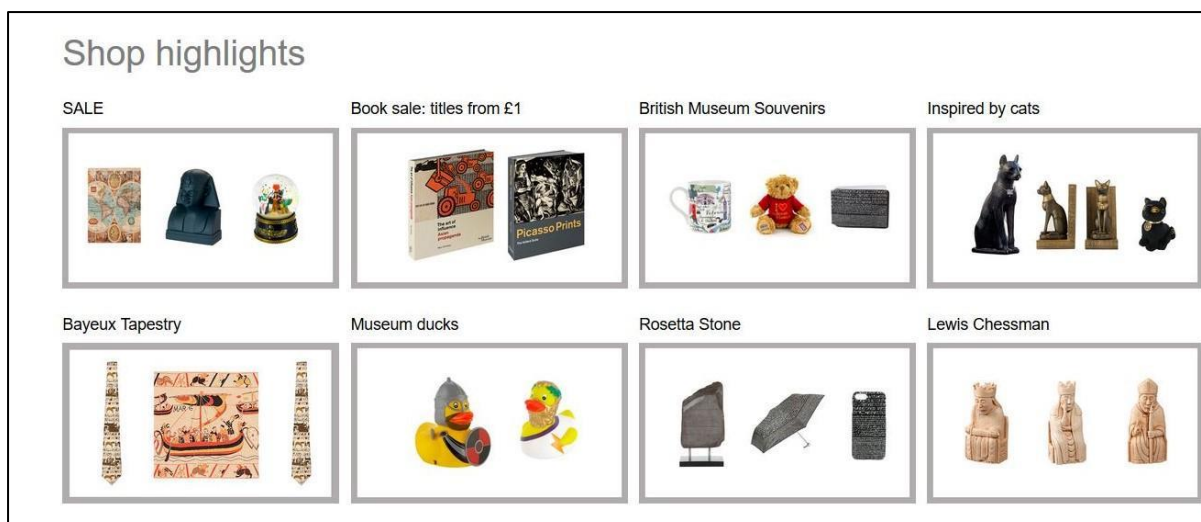


Figure 24: Front page of the British Museum's online shop features the Lewis Chessmen.
http://www.britishmuseumshoponline.org/?_ga=2.163929791.1638040888.1522140277-1458536839.1518607045. Accessed 28/03/2018.

Museum merchandising is big business. In the book *Museum Marketing*, the role of museum gift shops and merchandising is discussed at length. The authors note that there are four ways in which museum merchandising has flourished into the entity that it is today. First, museums have expanded in popularity since the 1970s. Museums have also experienced increases in labour costs due to ever increasing knowledgeable staff. Donations from private organisations or individuals sometimes restrict spending and government support has or is reaching limits on contributions, therefore museums have had to create new streams of revenue (Toepler and Kirchburg, 2007, 163). Toepler and Kirchburg note that with merchandise “visitors have the ability [and by now also the expectation] to obtain manifest mementos of their museum experience while basking in the ‘warm glow’ of having supported the institution through purchase” (2007, 163). Through the act of selecting gift shop items, it allows museum visitors to demonstrate the value they have for what they observed in the galleries. With the replica face pieces available for purchase, visitors get an even more individualised choice in selecting what piece out of several, they most connected to. A veritable win-win for all involved.

The authors also point out that there are three benefits for museum merchandising including: the generation of unrestricted income, developing new revenue sources for the museum, as “merchandising may increase the visibility and profile of the institution” and also to “educate the general public about works in the collection” (Toepler and Kirckburg, 2007, 164). From a personal phone call to a British Museum merchandising manager on 28 March 2018, it was relayed that Lewis Chessmen merchandise average around £500-600 per day, making up approximately 1-2% of the yearly revenue for shop sales. If quick calculation, done during our conversation by the manager is accurate, that would make yearly sales approximately £180,000-220,000, just in Lewis Chessmen themed items. Over £150,000 of income generated from one museum collection is a helpful sum for a museum which charges no admission fees.

In 2016, the British Museum welcomed 6.4 million visitors and for ten years running, has been the UK’s top visitor attraction (Review, 2017). The museum gives extensive information for visitors about its contents, exhibitions, and the like--both in the museum setting, and on its online website and social media pages. When you visit the British Museum’s webpage, you are immediately greeted by the Chessmen in a section titled, “Collections Online,” where you can “find out about over four million objects from the Museum’s collection” (British Museum Homepage, n.d.). Out of four million objects the museum boasts are available to view through their online platforms, they utilise the Lewis Chessmen, along with three other objects, to represent the museum’s entire online collection. This selecting of four objects, including the Lewis Chessmen, to be representative for the whole collection shows that the museum clearly believes the value of the pieces is immeasurable in importance. As the museum sees itself not on a national stage but on a global one, it can even be inferred that they value the Lewis Chessmen as icons of humanity itself.

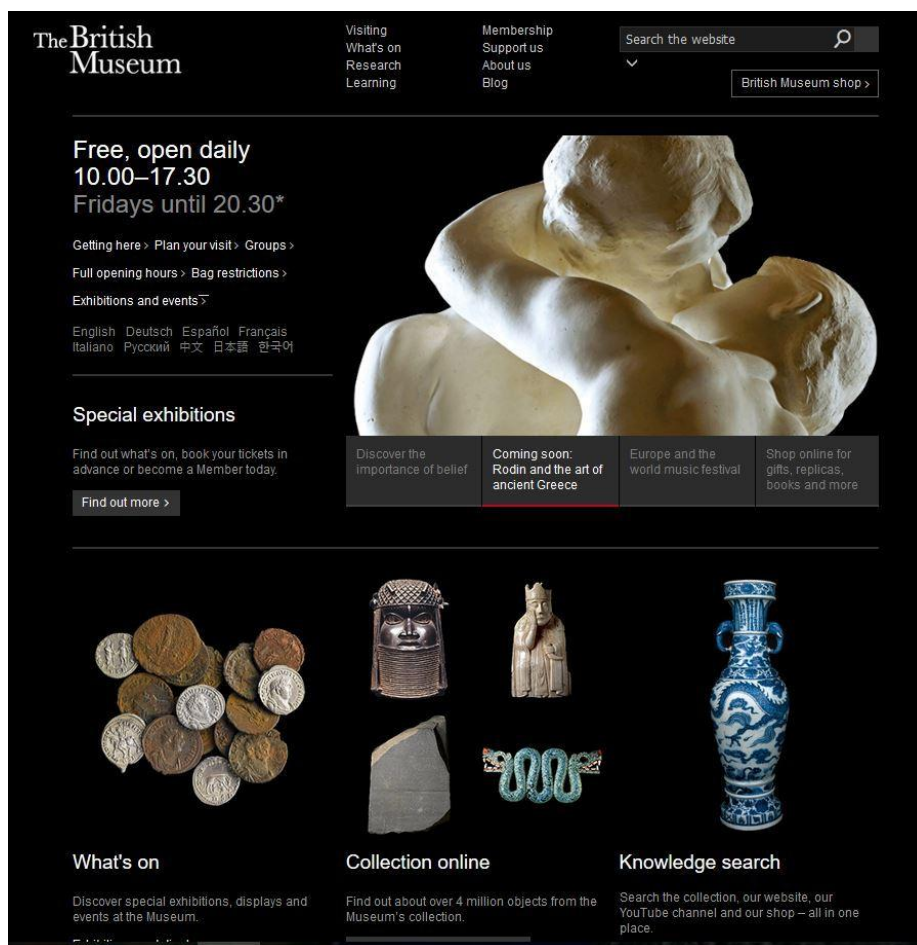


Figure 25: Front page of the British Museum's website featuring the Lewis Chessmen as one of four objects representing the 4 million-object collection, <http://www.britishmuseum.org/>. Accessed 28/03/2018.

As shown on the map on page 125, the chess pieces are marked out as a specific item to look for while you are in the Museum. Despite the other countless pieces within Room 40, they are utilised as the representative of the entire gallery. The Museum hosts tours and special gallery talks throughout the day and online, visitors can plan out what they want to see. One such talk, slotted as a “lunchtime gallery talk,” is titled “Introducing the Lewis Chessmen” and runs for forty-five minutes. This tour is free and allows visitors to drop in throughout the forty-five minutes. Another tour, titled as the “Highlights Tour,” touts the idea of going “around the world in ninety minutes” and views items which are at “the heart of the Museum’s collection” including the chessmen (“Tours and Talks,” n.d.). Unlike the lunchtime tour, this one requires

a pre-booking, a payment of £14 and is for adults only. Another section of the “planning your visit to the museum” page is titled “Object Trails and Highlights.” This shows a variety of scenarios that visitors may face, including limited time in the museum and visiting with children. If you only have an hour in the museum, there are a suggested nine not-to-be missed objects. One of these nine is the Lewis Chessmen. Out of the millions of items on display, they are considered essential enough that if you only have an hour to visit, you should not miss them. They are also listed on the “three hours in the museum” plan. Interestingly, they are not listed on the “12 Objects to See with Children” plan. According to this plan, “the objects have been chosen to make a child-friendly trail” (“12 Objects to See with Children”). It is possible this list was created to give a small overview of a large museum that may otherwise tire young children. However, the recommended items cover all three floors of the museum, so if the list was created to conserve tiny legs, this scenario does not make sense. The oversight of this tour to include the Chessmen, one of the museum's highlighted collections, is unknown and can only be hypothesized. One last list of interest in which the pieces are featured is called *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. This was a one-hundred-part segment of BBC radio broadcasts and subsequent book (which will be discussed in detail later) created by former Director Neil MacGregor. The series which highlighted one hundred objects that explored “two million years through objects in the Museum's collection” (“A History of the World in 100 Objects,” n.d.). The visitor can explore the project online through the museum's links which includes downloadable podcasts of the programme and an interactive look at all one hundred objects through categories such as themes or galleries. The Museum has several social media outlets which promote all things related to the British Museum, and from time to time, posts about the Lewis Chessmen are made. A more in depth look at this will also be explored later.

The online presence of the Lewis Chessmen can be seen in other areas of the British Museum's website. If you search in their collections, you can individually view most of the chess pieces. Clicking on the icon of a piece brings up different angled photos, the piece's dimensions, a bit about their history, and even their exhibition history. Online collections databases are great tools to allow people who cannot come to the physical museum, the ability to view them from anywhere in the world. Museums have made great strides in recent years through the digitalisation of their collections for the purpose of reaching a greater audience. Lynsey Martenstyn of the Imperial War Museum reported in a *Guardian* article that digitation allows "items that were previously only available to those within the museum's walls are now there for anyone with an internet connection to see, hear, watch and interact with" (2013). She also points out that like the benefit of allowing visitors to view items from anywhere in the world, digital collections online are "an educational tool too— teachers and academics can access our collections with ease to enrich lessons or their research" (Martenstyn, 2013).

ii. The National Museum of Scotland

The National Museum of Scotland is a relatively new term for the institution that houses the Scottish portion of the Lewis hoard. The Museum's origins are extremely complex to distinguish, and all its former incarnations could be a chapter on its own. For the sake of this thesis, an in-depth look at the former nomenclatural history will not be covered extensively. The two museums which joined to become the National Museum of Scotland themselves have a long and involved history reaching back to the eighteenth century. In 1780, the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland was formed "to investigate both antiquities and natural and civil history in general, with the intention that the talents of mankind should be cultivated and that

the study of natural and useful sciences should be promoted,” by David Steuart¹ Erskine, the 11th Earl of Buchan (“About Us,” n.d.). Erskine was known as an “eccentric” peer of the realm (McKean, 2008, 6). This idea for antiquarian research and collection came about during what is termed as the “Scottish Enlightenment,” a period known for “its outburst of intellectual activity” (Cheape, 2010, 364). Erskine’s overriding desire to create this collecting institution was to “create a more effective means of safeguarding national heritage and of reinforcing a sense of national identity” (Cheape, 2010, 364). This theme of the nation and identity in association with the National Museum of Scotland and the Lewis Chessmen will be discussed extensively further on. The Society reflected the previously established Society of Antiquaries of London, putting the organisation “in the contemporary circles of inquiry following the exploration of the natural world and collecting specimens in the style of the ‘cabinet of curiosities’ of the Renaissance” (Cheape, 2010, 365). A Royal Charter was granted to the Society in 1783. However, members had already been gathering items for their Museum of Antiquaries, since 1781. Erskine believed in the theory of “objects as evidence” therefore, the collection began right from the start with its first accession of fifty-three items of bronze weaponry and scraps found from dredging Duddingston Loch, Edinburgh (Cheape, 2010, 369). The Society’s scope of collections centred mostly on prehistoric material, but it also allowed contemporary objects and natural history specimens to enter the collection (Cheape, 2010, 369). With the financial support of Erskine, the Society purchased a building to house their growing collection. Over the coming years, the collection moved locations several times as the collection grew and because of “chronic financial difficulties caused by members failing to pay their subscriptions” (Cheape, 2010, 362). At one point, they shared buildings with the Royal Institution and then with the Royal Society of Edinburgh (McKean, 2008, 7). From 1891 until

¹ Correct spelling of Earl Buchan’s name.

1995, the Museum shared accommodation with the National Portrait Gallery at specially built galleries on Queen Street (“History of National Museums Scotland,” n.d.). In 1851, the Society signed a *Deed of Conveyance* with Board of Manufacturers on behalf of Parliament, giving the collection status as “National Property” (“Our History,” n.d.). This enabled the collection to benefit from “fit and proper accommodation at all times” and allowed “for the preservation and exhibition of the collection and for the Society’s meetings, free of all expense to them” (“Our History,” n.d.). This naming of the collection as a national property saw a change in name to the National Museum of Antiquaries in the same year.

After two previous owners, and after missing out on purchasing the collection after their discovery in 1831, the Society was finally able to purchase the eleven “Scottish” pieces of the Lewis Chessmen in 1888. Their previous owner, Lord Londesborough, died in 1866, but his possessions were not sold at auction until July 1888. On 10 December of the same year, the Society published its “Purchases for the Museum” in its Meeting Minutes. Listed as item number sixteen were “eleven chessmen of walrus ivory” and a write-up detailing information such as their proposed find site, how the Chessmen came to be split up, provided specific details about the individual pieces, and pictorial sketches of each (“Purchases for the Museum,” 1888-1889). Throughout the listings, most of the other items the Society had purchased only had small descriptions and very few sketches included. The Society must have deemed the Chessmen important and valuable enough to write a six-page description and included sketches for all eleven pieces.

In 1929, due to its growing collections, the Society stated that it needed separate premises from the National Portrait Gallery to “play the part it ought to play as an educational institution” (McKean, 2008, 8). Locations and monetary donors were sought through the following years. After twenty more years searching and a World War, the Standing

Commission on Museums and Galleries “demanded government action” (McKean, 2008, 8). The Museum’s condition and organisation were appalling, and attendance had fallen dramatically. Basically, the Museum was a mess (McKean, 2008, 8). It was deemed that the Museum should represent and be run by the Scottish nation. The Society retained control over the Museum and its collection until the 1954 National Museum of Scotland Antiquaries Act which transferred hold from the Society to a governing board (“Our History,” n.d.). The National Museum of Antiquaries of Scotland was crowned as the “national repository for Scottish artefacts other than pictures” (McKean, 2010, 8). With this Act, a new building was promised for the Museum as well.

The Royal Scottish Museum began life as a set of natural history collections associated with the University of Edinburgh. The University could no longer house the collections properly, so it combined with a proposed institution titled the Industrial Museum of Scotland (McKean, 2008, 2). An 1854 Act established funding for the creation of this conglomerate, but funds from the 1851 Great Exhibition, which may have prompted the creation of the Industrial Museum, were also utilised (McKean, 2008, 2). The Museum’s premises were selected to be built on the South side of Chambers Street in Edinburgh, the current home of the National Museum of Scotland. This location was chosen as it was close to centres of learning including the University of Edinburgh, the Royal Infirmary, and Surgeon’s Hall. The construction of the site was overseen by Royal Engineer Francis Fowke. According to McKean, Fowke’s design was “Janus-faced” in that “to the street he presented a Venetian Renaissance palazzo representing learning and culture, behind which he concealed the structural gymnastics of the soaring iron, wood, and glass exhibition halls representing the latest in applied industrial technology and prefabrication techniques” (2008, 2). A foundation stone ceremony was planned with much pomp and circumstance, including the printing of six hundred attendee

tickets, a pyrotechnic evening event, and attendance by a member of the Royal Family (Tate, 2011). On 23 October 1861, Edinburgh came alive with a “holiday” like feel, flags and floral decorations, soldiers and a battery of firing guns, and streets were “crowded with fair and eager faces” (Tate, 2011). Prince Albert, the Royal Consort, laid the foundation stone for the building. Prince Albert was a leading force in the Great Exhibition and was keenly interested in industry, so it was appropriate he should be included in the opening. The natural history collections from the University of Edinburgh were moved into this first phase of the new facility (Waterson, 1997, 127). Five years later in 1866, the museum was renamed as the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art and its east wing and part of the main hall were opened to the public by Albert, the Duke of Edinburgh (Waterson, 1997, 127). In 1904, the Museum’s name was yet again changed to another moniker: The Royal Scottish Museum. At this time, the National Museum of Antiquaries (NMA) was also being called the Royal Scottish Museum (RSM), so to distinguish which was which, each institution was secondarily labelled as “Queen Street” or “Chambers Street.” These additions were utilised based on the institutions’ locations. To this day, many people still utilise the “Chambers Street” nickname for the National Museum of Scotland, as it was used right up until it was merged with the “other” Royal Museum in 1985.

The creation of the current manifestation of these institutions came about “from a simple proposal to rename a museum collection, which germinated, developed, and finally bloomed as the competition-winning Museum of Scotland in Chambers Street, Edinburgh” (McKean, 2008, i). As previously mentioned, the NMA had been promised new premises, and with the purchase of the land west of the Chambers Street Museum in 1953, officials assumed that this locale would be their new home. However, the RSM, already occupying space on Chambers Street, wanted the newly purchased land to expand *their* growing

collection. According to McKean, “the government appears to have promised two different museums the same plot of ground” (2008, 9). Both museums did not want to share the site with the other. In fact, the Royal Museum’s director Dr. Douglas Allan believed that RSM’s site needed the space because “the importance to the public of a major expansion of our scientific and technological collections would far outweigh a new deployment of the collection of Scottish antiquity” (McKean, 2008, 10). To surmise, Allan believed that the RSM collection was more valuable than that of the NMA. The “simple” answer, or so some governmental officials believed, was to integrate the two museums into one institution. This proved to be a monstrous oversimplification, and many battles took place between the sparring institutions over what was to occur, as each feared the “loss of their specialist identity” (McKean, 2008, 18). The Secretary of State, George Younger, advised Parliament on 6 December 1983 that “the right course was to have a single board served by one director” (McKean, 2008, 18). On 17 April 1983, another nobleman, the Marquess of Bute, was appointed chairman of the newly created advisory board with the sole task of “achieving a single museum” (McKean, 2008, 18). The Marquess would go on to spearhead many aspects of what today we know as the National Museum of Scotland.

In 1985, the *National Heritage of Scotland Act* officially amalgamated the separate collections from The National Museum of Antiquaries of Scotland and The Royal Scottish Museum to become The Museum of Scotland. It was determined that a “substantial new building be constructed in close proximity to The Royal Museum” but that “no attempt should be made to provide a separate public entrance to it which might tend to detract from the sense of the museum’s unity” (McKean, 2008, 25). An extensive architectural competition was announced to create this new building which had been allocated to showcase “the extensive national collections of objects relating to Scotland,” although it was meant to still be “fully

integrated with The Royal Museum” (McKean, 2008, 33). So essentially, the collections were together but still separated by different buildings. The new museum was to bear a hefty weight, both in symbolism--as the repository for Scotland’s culture--and as a representative of Scottish identity. The new building itself would also need to be a symbol of this culture and identity. This implication was not lost on the winning architects of Benson + Forsyth when designing their ideas for the new space. Their concepts came loaded with symbolism from the use of Scottish-sourced Clashach sandstone from a quarry in Morayshire to the turret-like tower the museum would boast, which came from the influence of Dunstaffnage Castle. Collections for the newly refurbished gallery spaces were selected to contribute to “a coherent display of material illuminating Scottish culture and history” therefore, the idea of displaying items chronologically rather than the traditional thematic display technique, was planned as to tell Scotland’s story more accurately (McKean, 2008, 42). MacMillan noted that “the way its collections are knitted into the building and it into its environment suggests a more dynamic, a more engaged reading of history than you would expect from a conventional museum” (1999, 110). Ideas of nationality, identity and how this is all related to the museum will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

The Museum’s official opening took place on St. Andrew’s Day 1998 and was done so by Queen Elizabeth II. Today, the corporation that is National Museums Scotland also includes three other national museums: The National Museum of Flight, the National War Museum, and the National Museum of Rural Life. Today, the National Museum of Scotland on Chambers Street still has two separate collections in two separate buildings. The “new” building houses all the artefacts which represent Scotland’s cultural and historic past, while what was the RSM houses collections ranging from natural history to world cultures to fashion and design to technology. Today, the National Museum of Scotland’s mission (to “preserve, interpret and

make accessible for all, the past and present of Scotland, other nations and cultures, and the natural world”) reflects this change from a wholly “Scottish-centric” museum as well (“Vision, Aims, and Values,” n.d.).

Unsurprisingly, the Lewis Chessmen are housed within the “Scottish History and Archaeology” galleries in the Scottish-themed building of the National Museum of Scotland. There are currently five chronologic galleries starting from Scottish prehistory up through to modern day. Unlike at the British Museum, the National Museum of Scotland’s “new” galleries (those housed in the Scottish-themed galleries) exhibit values through the emphasis that these are collections of the Nation, and therefore, there is no reason to arrange galleries by areas. The visitor works their way up through the floors in chronological order, just as the original designers of the museum intended. These galleries are called: *Beginnings/Early People*, *Kingdom of the Scots*, *Scotland Transformed*, *Industry and Empire*, and *Scotland: A Changing Nation*.

The Chessmen are housed in the gallery space on Level 1, the *Kingdom of the Scots*. Visitors can enter this space by two ways. Either the visitor has to enter through the basement entrance under the old RSM steps, take the lift or stairs up to Level 1, and then walk through the entire Grand Gallery to reach the “Scottish” portion of the Museum, or they enter through the “new” or “tower” entrance, go through the gift shop and into Hawthorden Court before reaching the gallery. These different ways of entering the space are demonstrated in the depiction below utilising the Museum’s map, which feature the Lewis Chessmen as a highlight. The *Kingdom of the Scots* gallery houses the core collection from what was the NMAS, including the chessmen, which entered the collection in 1888. According to the National Museum of Scotland website, this gallery “follows Scotland from its emergence as a nation

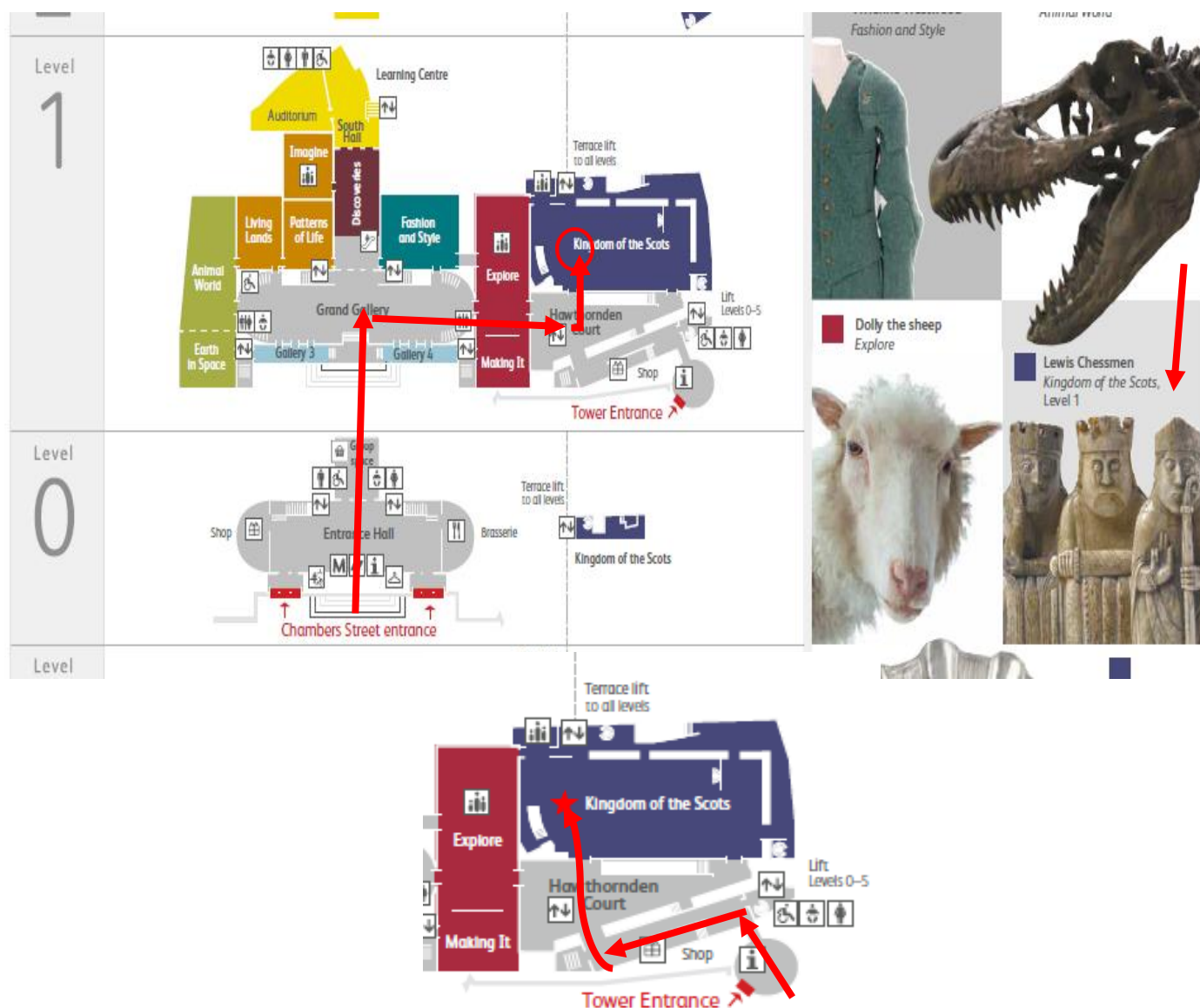


Figure 26: Visitor's map of the National Museum of Scotland. The Lewis Chessmen are housed in the Kingdom of the Scots Gallery on Level 1. These depictions demonstrate the entrances into the gallery space.
https://www.nms.ac.uk/media/1156421/scotlandmap_dec2017_final.pdf.

around 1100 to 1707, when the Union of Scottish and English Parliaments created the United Kingdom of Great Britain” (“Scottish History and Archaeology Galleries,” n.d.). The National Museum of Scotland website also relays that this gallery “showcases some of our most precious objects,” including the Lewis Chessmen, “probably the best-known archaeological find from Scotland” (“Scottish History and Archaeology Galleries,” n.d.). When you approach the gallery, you see that a small icon of a chessmen has been chosen to be displayed with the name of the gallery.

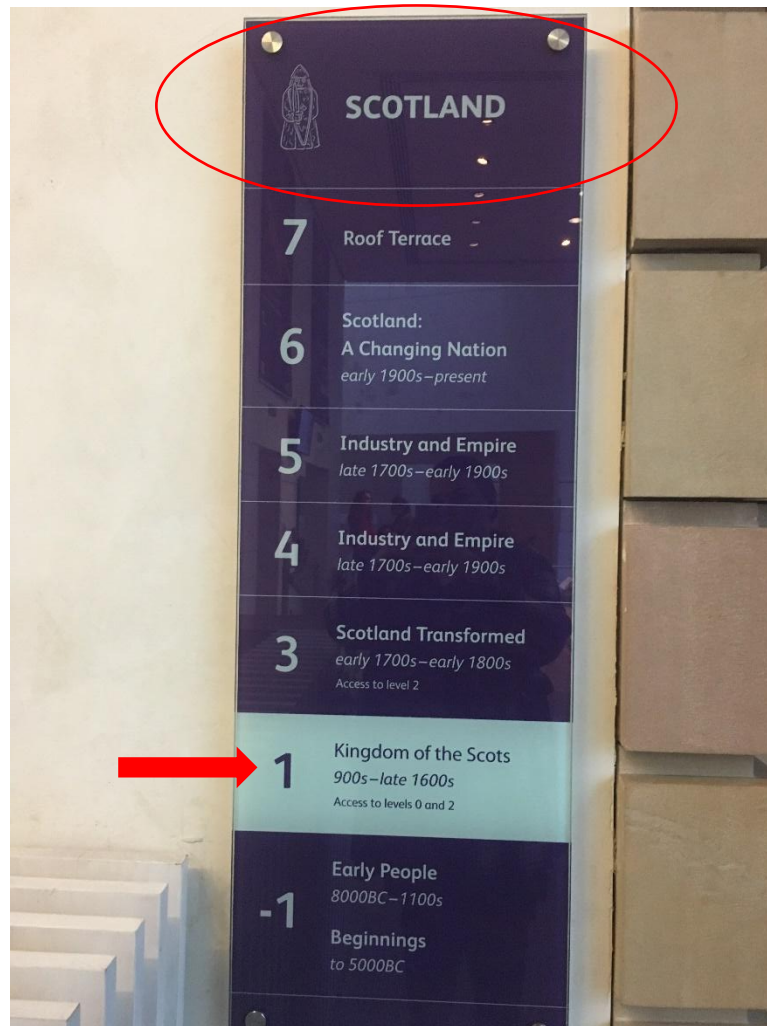


Figure 27: A Lewis piece is used as a representative icon for the “Scotland” part of the National Museum of Scotland. Personal photograph taken February 2018.

As you enter the gallery, which is titled “Scotland Defined,” you are greeted by an imposing Celtic-style stone cross and on either side of the walls, phrases from the Declaration of Arbroath and a list of former Scottish rulers. Jenni Calder notes, that by entering this gallery, “here you are entering Scotland in history, the period where our undertaking of objects from the past is aided by written accounts” (1998, 23). One wall quotes the Declaration with: “for we fight not for glory, nor riches, nor honours, but for Freedom alone, which no good man gives up except with his life” while the other wall states: “as long as one hundred of us remain alive, we will never on any conditions be brought under English rule.” MacMillan comments about this inclusion of the Declaration that, “there can be no doubt that this is a museum with

a powerful emotional charge” (1999, 117). These expressively emotive statements and their inclusion in the Museum known as the representative of the Scottish nation, will be discussed at length in a subsequent chapter. In 2015, five pieces of the Lewis hoard were located directly in this symbolic and emotional entrance way. They were the first thing you saw as you entered



Figure 28: Former placement of five of the Lewis Chessmen at the start of the *Kingdom of the Scots* Gallery. Personal photo, November 2015.

this space flanked by the Declaration of Arbroath. This made for an interesting parallel, showing these items, which have been contested in the British Parliament to be returned to Scotland, within a space that proclaimed independence from England through passages from the Declaration of Arbroath etched on the walls of the gallery. The descriptive panel under the pieces when they were in this section was noticeably different than what is displayed today.

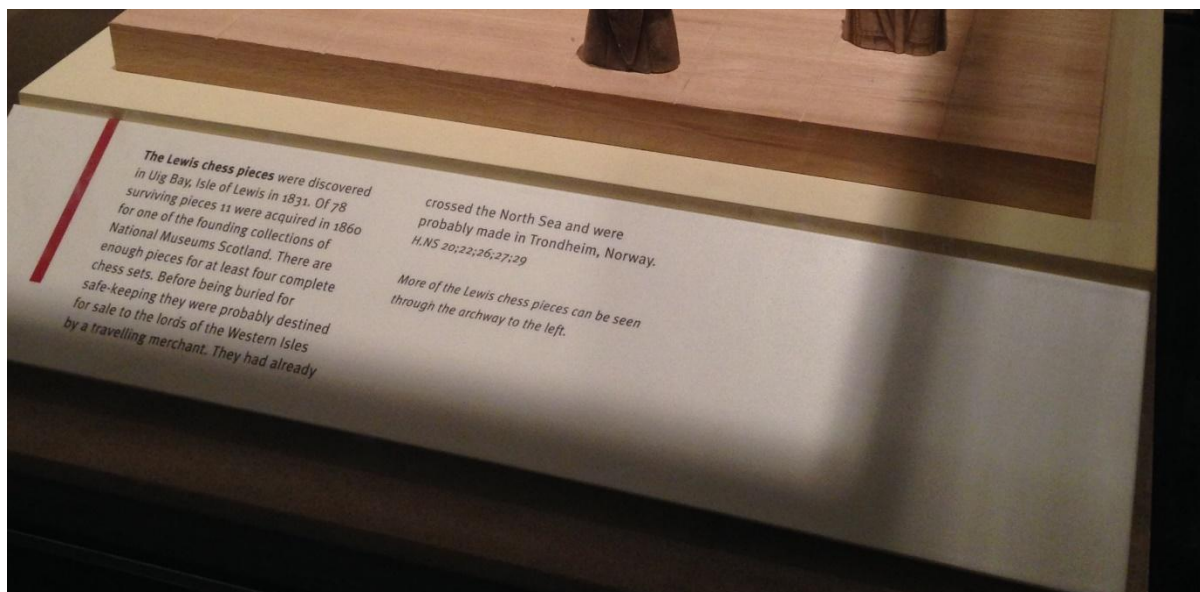


Figure 29: Former descriptive panel of 5 Lewis Chessmen at the entrance of the Kingdom of the Scots Gallery. Personal photo, November 2015.

This panel read:

The Lewis Chess pieces were discovered in Uig Bay, Isle of Lewis in 1831. Of 78 surviving pieces 11 were acquired in 1860 for the founding collections of the National Museum of Scotland. While some are missing in the count, there are enough pieces for at least four chess sets. Before being buried for safe keeping they were probably destined for sale to the lords of the Western Isles by a travelling merchant. They had already crossed the North Sea and were probably made in Trondheim, Norway. More of the Lewis chess pieces can be seen through the archway to the left.

Today, this lone case of Chessmen introducing you to the gallery is no longer in this place in the museum.

As you carry on ahead through the introductory space, you enter an expansive gallery that stretches horizontally in both directions with radiating arms of other exhibit spaces. A large statue of St. Andrew greets you as you enter the sub-categorised gallery known as “People.” The map below from Jenni Calder shows the classifications within this gallery; however, the

“People” section, which contains the Chessmen, is not labelled. According to Calder, this section demonstrates how people influenced society, language, and culture (1998, 23). As you can see from Calder’s map below, the Chessmen (as indicated by the red star) are backed up onto the section titled Na Gaidheil, or The Gael, an appropriate location for them due to their connections with the Gaelic speaking world of Lewis. This gallery is labyrinth-like in its layout

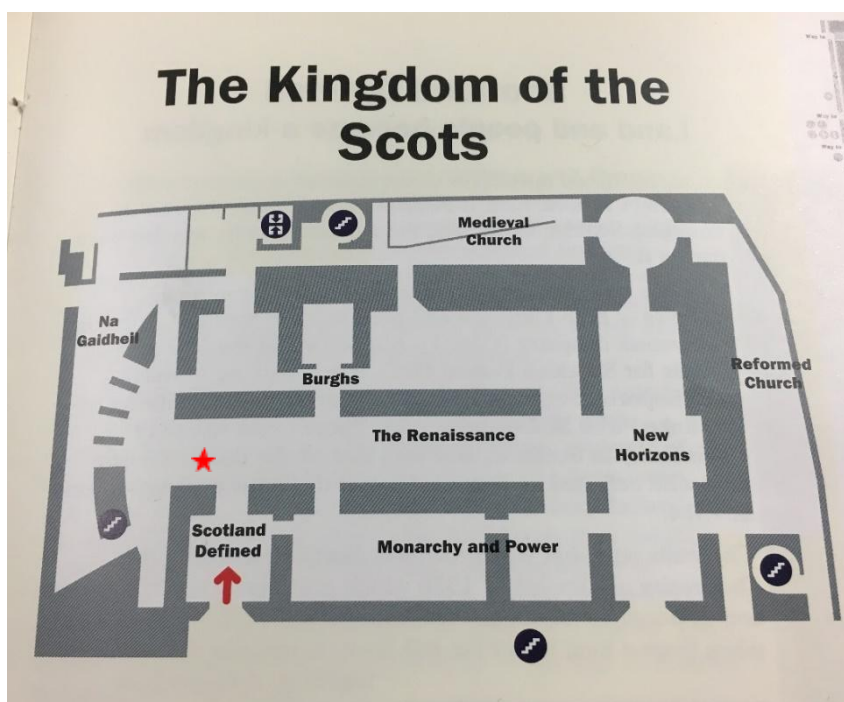


Figure 30: Gallery layout from Jenni Calder’s book, *The Museum of Scotland*, page 23. The star indicates where the Lewis Chessmen are located within the subcategory “People” in the gallery, *The Kingdom of the Scots*.

with subdivided topics, and unless the visitor knows specifically where the Chessmen are located, they must wander and look around the spaces. As of 2018, ten out of the eleven Chessmen are located through an archway out of “Scotland Defined” and then to the left of a wooden statue of St. Andrew. The pieces are located behind another important museum piece:



Figure 31: The Lewis Chessmen in their case on the right from Google Maps. <https://www.google.com/maps/@55.9468952,-3.190057,2a,90y,62.28h,67.24t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sGu8uUCqFxlN7Zv-xXLpiQ!2e0!7i13312!8i6656>. Accessed 11/05/2018.

the Queen Mary (of Scots) clarsach or harp. The Chessmen are inconspicuous in their space; there are no special whistles or bells to indicate that they are one of Scotland's greatest archaeological finds, as the museum declares. Unlike the display area at the British Museum, there is no seating near them for visitors to rest and or contemplate. In fact, seating in the gallery is very scarce. Perhaps museum curators purposefully have the Chessmen housed identically like other items surrounding them to create a cohesive gallery space. By excluding their precise locale within the gallery, curators are forcing visitors to view other items as they search for the Chessmen. Allan notes that the configuration of the building "allows alternative wayfinding and a consequent sense of having made your own personal journey through the narrative" (2011, 122).

The gallery space is open and spacious. Objects and cases are not crowded in but the space also appears to be a bit empty. The intended purpose of this expanse of space is unknown but perhaps, architects and exhibition creators did this for effect but also, it is plausible the

space was intentionally created on a large scale to give the museum's collection room to grow in the future. The space is dim as there is no natural lighting coming into this space however, objects in their exhibit cases are illuminated by spotlights in the ceiling. These lights still fail

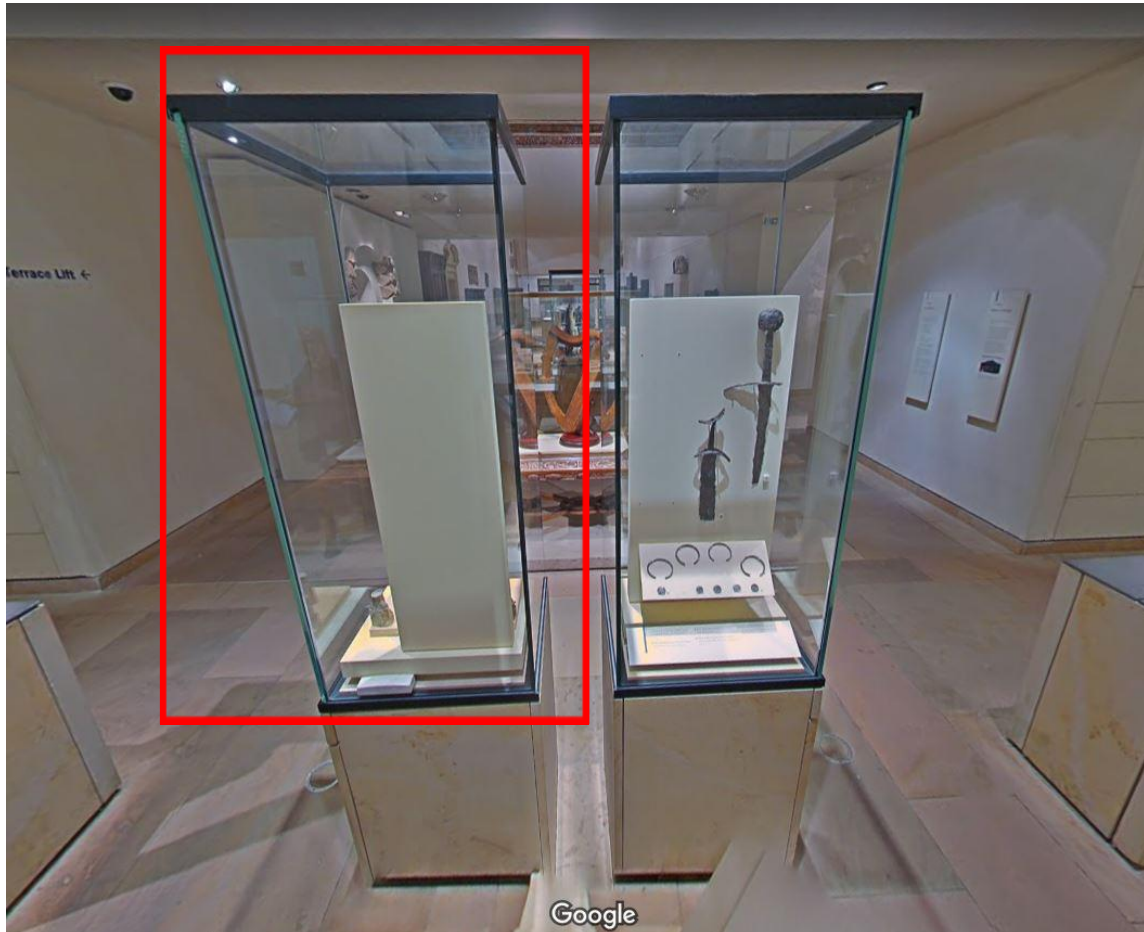


Figure 32: Backside of the Lewis Chessmen case showing the information panel which obstructs the view of most of the carvings on the backsides of the pieces. From Google Maps, https://www.google.com/maps/@55.946904,-3.1900228,0a,89.9y,245.44h,70.58t/data=!3m4!1e1!3m2!1s422gCkR_9wvzbzSuWNnIUlw!2e0?source=apiv3. Accessed 07/05/2018

to provide enough illumination to view the pieces in detail. Dim lighting has no doubt been purposefully utilised in the space to protect other objects from exposure damage. However, the fact you can hardly see them the pieces, especially on a dreary Scottish day, is a disappointing display of “Scotland’s most important archaeological find.” The Chessmen are currently housed in a small, half glass, half sandstone square case. The stone looks to be the same stone utilised from the quarry in Morayshire, physically and symbolically tying the architecture of

the building to how the objects are displayed. While the case is glass on four sides, only the fronts of the Chessmen, except one piece, can be viewed. A panel located inside the case, which although giving descriptive information, obstructs visitors from viewing the backs of the pieces. Its positioning is mostly situated on the left side of the case, with one space open on the right side. This placement is a detriment to the chessmen as it is not just the fronts of the pieces which are ornately carved and does not allow the visitors to view the entire pieces. Just from this simple placement, one could wonder if the museum did not value the pieces' decorative



Figure 33: Display set up of the Lewis Chessmen in the National Museum of Scotland. Personal photograph, February 2018.

qualities as much as say, the British Museum does. From the front, the Chessmen are laid out on a natural-coloured wooden plank which has crosshatch marks to mimic lines on a chessboard. However, there are no differentiating colours as in the British Museum's display, and these marks are where the similarities to traditional chess boards end. The wooden display mimics the colours of the chess pieces and the surrounding exhibition case and text box are of

similar shades of colouring. Unlike the British Museum display, there is no addition of any contrasting colours, props, or other design elements for enhancement or to allow the pieces to stand out. Possibly, this was the prescribed plan - to eliminate all unnecessary distractions from the focus: the pieces. However, one could also view the pieces' modest display in the space as just part of the rest of the Museum and not something special at all. The Chessmen are all facing forward and are seemingly arranged in the display by size as the larger pieces are at the back of the display. As the National Museum of Scotland has substantially fewer pieces than

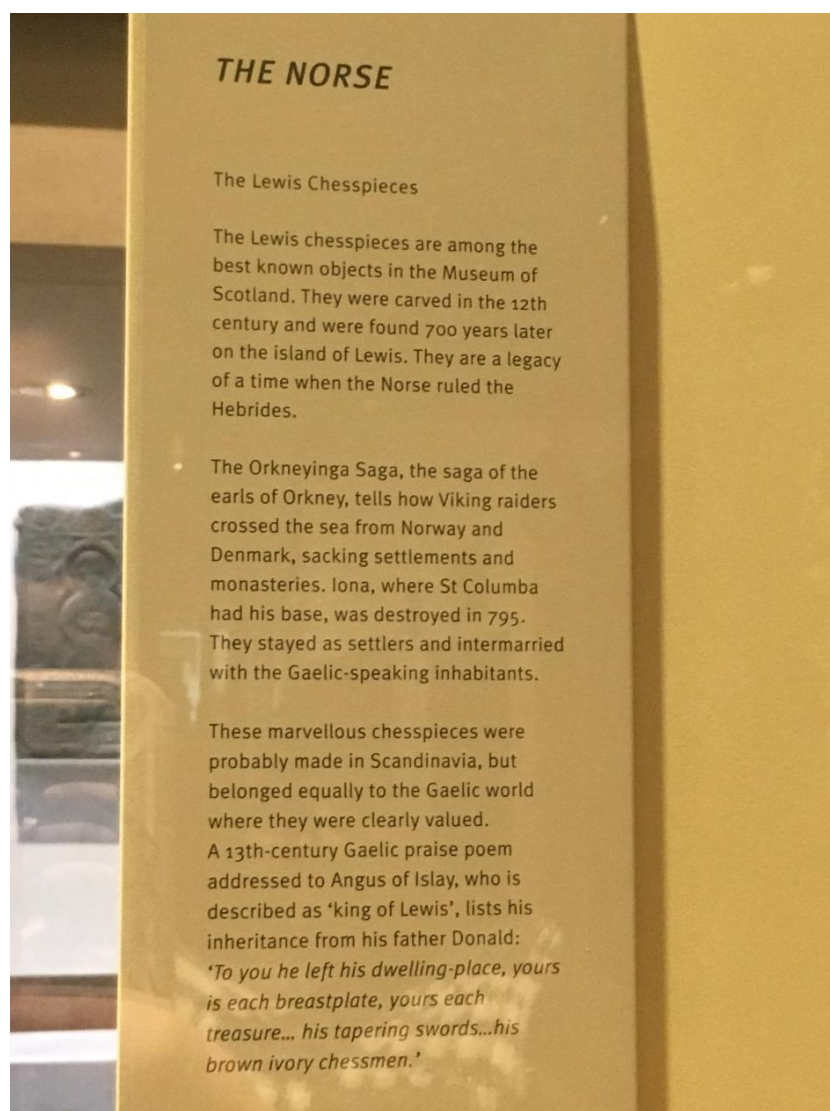


Figure 34: Lewis Chessmen panel at National Museum of Scotland. Personal photograph. February 2018.

the British Museum, it was probably deemed futile to try to display them in positions of play but rather, in a way that allows the visitor to focus on the pieces themselves. The large descriptive panel at the back of the display case is titled “The Norse.” This panel gives descriptive information about the possible origins of the pieces, as well as tying them into the unique aspects of Scottish culture, mainly Orcadian, Gaelic, and Viking histories in which they are assumed to have originated. Exhibitors and content creators may have included this information to tie the pieces to Scotland’s varied and complex cultural past. Beside the Chessmen’s case is another display in which the descriptive panel is also labelled “The Norse.” While the pieces have never been unquestionably identified as Norse in origin, content writers, as in the British Museum, chose to tie the pieces to this area of the world since as to date, research has suggested this is their probable origin. Objects that have also been identified as Norse in origin are displayed at both the front and back of this neighbouring case. Another, smaller description panel is located just in front of the chess pieces. Unlike the multiple descriptive panels surrounding the case at the British Museum, this is the sole source of information about the Chessmen. The most current descriptive panel reads:

Ten chess pieces of walrus ivory found near the shore in Uig, Lewis, in 1831. In addition to the kings, queens, bishops, knight, and warders displayed here, one bishop is on display in the Medieval Church, Case 6. The other pieces found belong to the British Museum.

This description is very succinct, differing drastically from its predecessor in 2015. The panel leaves out information that may be analysed as conjecture, such as how many chess sets they may make and for whom they were likely destined. As a previous chapter has shown, the very idea that the pieces were used for the game of chess and who they may have been intended for is still up for debate today. The 2015 panel states that the pieces were found “in Uig Bay”

whilst this updated panel re-words their likely find site to “near the shore in Uig.” Again, recent scholarly work has shown that there is also a debate over the exact find site even on Lewis itself. Nothing in this updated panel relays the historic information as to the fact that they were one of the foundation collections to the Museum’s core collection and there is no indication as to how many pieces in total were found. Verbiage on museum panels is not undertaken by writers lightly. These miniscule slices of data hold such weight and because space is so limited, every single word is carefully considered. While the change in wording seems unimportant, the subtle deletion of a plethora of descriptive information may have been purposefully done. The National Museum of Scotland may have rewritten this panel to keep the facts as accurate as possible, to dispel any possible speculation, and/or designers may have felt the excessive wording was taking the focus away from the pieces. National Museum of Scotland’s first Director Robert Anderson, believed that “the object should tell the story, not that we should present a story illustrated by objects...the objects should speak for themselves and should occupy the primary role in all displays” so it is possible the Museum’s labels were (re)structured in order for the focus to be on the objects (McKean, 2008, 103).

Unlike the at British Museum, where the Lewis hoard is kept together in one display, the National Museum of Scotland chose to tell the story of the rise in Christianity in Scotland during the Medieval period through the utilisation of one of the bishops in a separate case. This separation occurs in a subsection of *The Kingdom of the Scots*, which is quite a distance from the rest of the hoard. Again, if the visitor did not know where they were going, the gallery’s maze-like design has them journeying into many rooms with no sense of direction or flow. The Museum demonstrates the value of the pieces’ ability to tell stories about other areas of Scotland and therefore, warranted the separation of such a small collection even further. A photo of the Lewis bishop is utilised on the introductory panel of the “Medieval Church”



Figure 35: Lewis bishop on a panel discussing the Medieval Church in Scotland. Personal photograph, 2015.

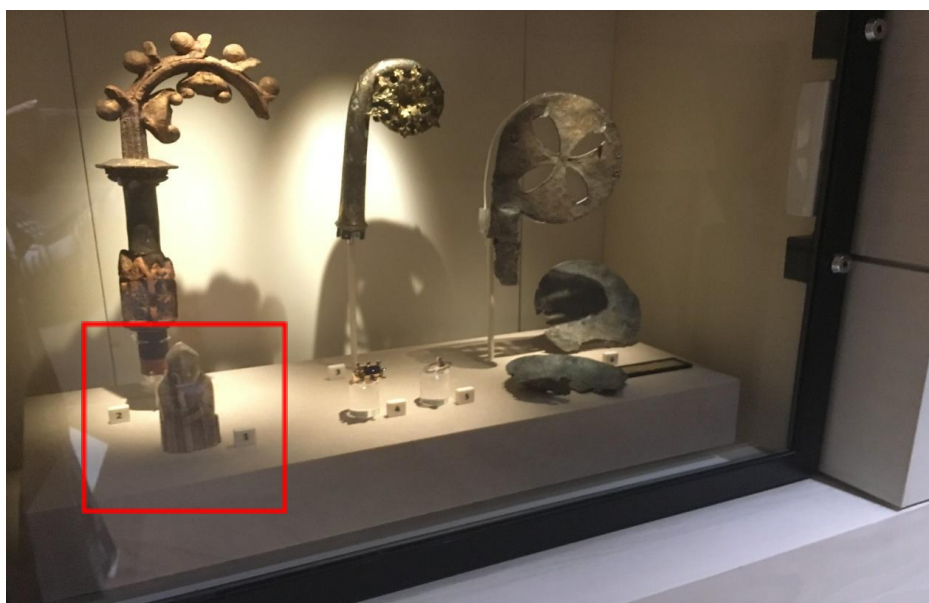


Figure 36: Lewis bishop in the Medieval Church exhibition. Personal photographs, February 2018.

gallery, which describes the Scottish church during the Medieval period. As mentioned previously on the history of the game of chess, the rise of Christianity in Europe could be seen through the introduction of the bishop as a gaming piece, replacing the elephants of the Indian and Persian sets. The bishop, who holds a crozier to his cheek, is included in a case with several crozier fragments which were unearthed around Scotland.

Like the British Museum, the National Museum of Scotland utilises their portion of the Lewis hoard both in the Museum and online. The National Museum of Scotland, like the British Museum, highlights the pieces on their visitor's map. The Chessmen are representative as *the* object of interest for the entire *Kingdom of the Scots* Gallery. The National Museum of Scotland also gives a variety of tours including many on specific themes. Other than group tours, all the Museum's guided talks are free and cover a range of topics. Daily, there are three tours including a Discover the National Museum, Scotland Highlights Tour, and a Thematic Tour ("Tours," n.d.). No doubt the Chessmen may make an appearance on the first two of these tours, as the museum considers them an important representative to both the National Museum as a whole and as a feature of the Scottish Galleries. Out of the thirty-six thematic tours, only one described on the National Museum of Scotland's website specifically states that it features the Lewis Chessmen. This tour is titled the *Vikings in Scotland* and includes that "one of the highlights is the Lewis Chessmen that were found on the Scottish Isle of Lewis in 1831" ("Scottish History and Archaeology Themed Tours," n.d.). However, through descriptions of some of the other tours, it is probably that they feature in more of them, including those titled "Chess, Chintz and Curry," "The Church in Scotland," "Picts and Vikings," and "Symbols of Power."

On the tours page, the Chessmen are utilised as a divider within the page as well. The National Museum of Scotland also gives suggestions of "10 things to see and do" whilst you

- [The Ordinary People of Scotland](#)
- [The Scot Abroad](#)
- [The Stuarts](#)
- [The Vikings in Scotland](#)
- [Victorian Scotland](#)
- [We, The People](#)
- [Weights, Measures and Counters](#)
- [A Working Life](#)

Times: 15:00 (1 hr)

Cost: Free

Join us for our exciting programme of tours with a different theme each day. Meet at the Tour Meeting Point, Entrance Hall, Level 0. Find out more about themed tours in April.



Found on Lewis in 1831, the Lewis Chessmen are probably the most well-known archaeological find from Scotland.

The Auld Alliance

This tour investigates the alliance between France and Scotland that transpired from 1295-1560. It will introduce you to key figures from this period, which include Cardinal Beaton, Marie de Guise, [Mary, Queen of Scots](#).

Figure 37: From the NMS Scottish History and Archaeology tours page. <https://www.nms.ac.uk/national-museum-of-scotland/whats-on/tours/tour-themes/scottish-history-and-archaeology/>. Accessed 10/05/2018.

3. Travel back in time through Scottish history



Above: The famous Lewis chessmen.

Our Scottish galleries guide you from prehistoric times to the present day. Discover a treasure trove of Celtic, Roman and Viking artefacts, including the famous [Lewis Chessmen](#) – as seen in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*!

Figure 38: Lewis Chessmen featured as number three on a list of ten things to do at NMS. <https://www.nms.ac.uk/national-museum-of-scotland/things-to-see-and-do/10-things-to-see-and-do/>. Accessed 10/05/2018.

are visiting. Number three on the list of ten suggests you “travel back in time through Scottish history” and features the Lewis Chessmen as the representative of this action.

As mentioned previously, merchandising in museums is generally a big profit-making scheme. The National Museum of Scotland, like the British Museum, utilises *their* portion of the hoard in their Lewis Chessmen merchandising, much of which, greatly differs in style and products available. The National Museum of Scotland has two large gift shops, one at each of the main entrances into the Museum, and one smaller shop that is directly across from the special exhibition gallery. Each of the two main shops feature a large array of Lewis Chessmen themed memorabilia, including replica chess sets, both large and small (made from 3D scanning), bookends, the Viking game of hnefatafl, a cork stopper, books tea towels, a watch, holiday tree ornaments, stationary, keychains, magnets, individual replica pieces, mugs, bookmarks, tote bags, t-shirts, art prints, jewellery, postcards, pens, a crystal tumbler, and drinks coasters, to name a few. Here again we can see the idea of monetary value placed onto the pieces as shown by the plethora of items one can purchase with their faces emblazoned on them.

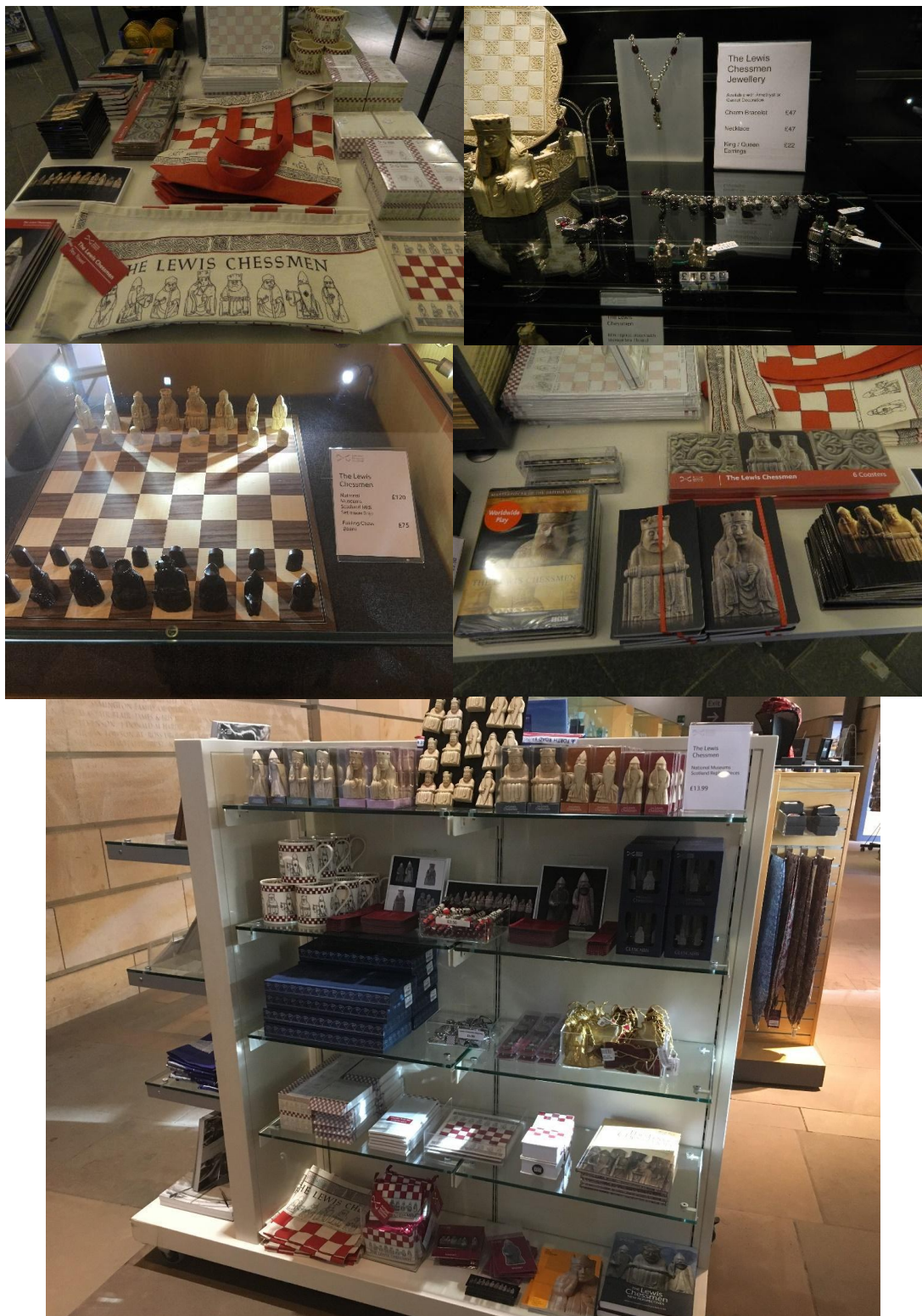


Figure 39: A selection of Lewis Chessmen merchandise at NMS. Personal photographs taken 2013 and 2018.

According to their annual review for year 2016/17, the National Museum of Scotland welcomed 2.7 million visitors to their four museums, and 1.84 million of these were to the

National Museum of Scotland itself (“Review 2017,” 2017). This makes it the most popular museum outside of London and the most visited attraction in Scotland (“Review 2017,” 2017). Included in this review is a count of over 2 million visitors to their webpage as well (“Review 2017,” 2017). The National Museum of Scotland has an extensive web presence, both on their main site and through their social media outlets. Unlike the British Museum, the National Museum of Scotland does not feature the Lewis Chessmen on their homepage, but instead the page contains current exhibition features and links to each of the four museums in their conglomerate.

However, upon doing a bit of detective work and using the search feature, one can find a dedicated webpage that provides information about the Chessmen. The Museum includes a “fact file” of standard information such as where are they found in the Museum, when they were found, and what they are made of. As the visitor to the page scrolls down, they are greeted with a more in-depth look at debated and or contested topics such as where they were found, what the hoard consisted of, where they came from, and includes some of the “colourful” theories as to how they came to be in Uig (“Lewis Chessmen,” n.d.). Included in this “colourful” section are traditional oral histories from Lewis, as well as current scholarly theories including those of former chessmen keeper, David H. Caldwell. The section relating to the hoard’s contents presents some interesting phrasing. The webpage states that “eleven of the chessmen are owned by National Museums Scotland and the remaining eighty-two reside at the British Museum” (“Lewis Chessmen,” n.d.). The verbiage employed creates pause for thought. The National Museum states that it *owns* its portion while the rest *reside* at the British Museum. As mentioned previously, information provided in museums--such as on exhibition labels, webpages, and the like--is carefully considered before being published for public

consumption. Could this subconsciously demonstrate a subtle thought that hoard belongs to Scotland, or is it simply how the author decided to compose the entry?

Some of the information provided on the webpage about the pieces used to be readily available on the descriptive panel in the gallery space, but it seems that the visitor now needs to visit the website to glean a more comprehensive understanding of the pieces. On this page, the visitor can also utilise a tool to zoom in to an extreme degree to see very intricate details. This allows the public to get an up close and more personalised view of the pieces from the comfort and convenience of their homes. At the bottom of the page is a list of further links related to the chess pieces, including blog posts, something titled Vikings training school, Lewis Chessmen merchandise, and an older, defunct link to a former exhibition called *The Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked*. Some of the blog entries, which have been tagged as Lewis Chessmen related for easier user findability, include topics such as 3-D printing, museum items in films, and then accounts of staff interactions with the pieces in their daily lines of work. These links also lead you further to find items such as Lewis Chessmen colouring sheets. The National Museum of Scotland's website also has an online shop where you can purchase items related to content in the Museum. The Chessmen have their own feature link on the online shop, leading you to a collection of merchandise relating entirely to them. The Museum also has an area on the site where visitors can search their collections database to find out additional information about specific objects of interest. Unlike the British Museum's collections page, which places so much value on the Lewis Chessmen that a photograph of them was used as one of four items to represent the entire collection, it was difficult to even do a search for the pieces on the National Museum of Scotland site. A search conducted with the keywords "Lewis Chessmen" came back with a "no results found." A more generalised search of "chessmen"

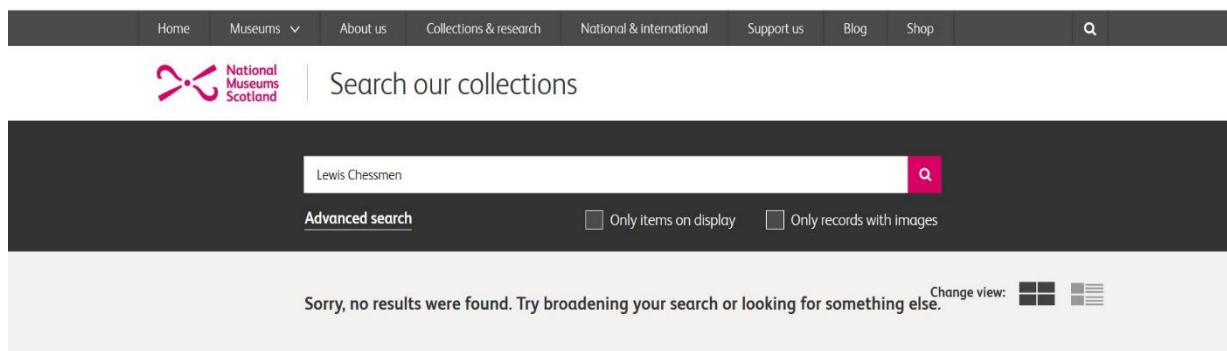


Figure 40: A search of the collections with the phrase “Lewis Chessmen” from the NMS website. <https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/search-our-collections/>. Accessed 11/05/2018.

also came back with no results of the collection. One final search with the term “chess” finally resulted in the location of the Lewis pieces in the database with variable descriptive information about each one. Information also included details of events such as the pieces’ exhibition history, where they are on display, reference materials, and contained several photos of each piece. This very unsuccessful search method is not user friendly and is a real disadvantage to visitors who may want to access the Chessmen online.

iii. Museum nan Eilean

Until very recently, the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland alone shared the role of housing and telling the story of the Lewis Chessmen. However, a recent development now has a small portion of the hoard residing back on the island where they were found. Six pieces from the British Museum’s collection of the hoard are now displayed in the refurbished Lews Castle in the island’s capital of Stornoway. The castle was built in the 1850s by opium-magnet-turned-island-owner James Matheson (“History of the Lews Castle,” 2009). After his death, descendants sold the island, including the castle, to William Hesketh Lever, Lord Leverhulme in 1918. Leverhulme is best known today as the manufacturing tycoon who built the Lever Bros/Unilever corporation (“History of the Lews Castle”). After some initial upgrades, Leverhulme granted the castle and 64,000 acres of land to the “people of the

Stornoway parish” (“History of the Lews Castle”). The castle saw a variety of inhabitants over the years but was abandoned in 1988 due to disrepair. The refurbishment of Lews Castle which began in 2011, was to be the new home of Museum nan Eilean, the local museum on Lewis. In total, £19.5 million was spent over five years to see the refurbishment happen. Official partners in the project included Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles Council) with external funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic Environment Scotland, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Government, the European Regional Development Fund and Bòrd na Gàidhlig” (Scott, 2017). In addition to the museum, the grant also provided for the creation of the first archive on the Outer Hebrides. Uniquely, the museum is “the first in the UK to use Gaelic as its first language” (Atkinson, 2012).

The 2012 announcement of the loan of the Chessmen from the British Museum came as a bit of an amazing surprise to Museum nan Eilean staff. At a personal interview in 2014, staff relayed that this news of the addition of the Chessmen from the British Museum came as a welcomed shock. On their website, the British Museum has a dedicated page to discuss their views of items of contention within their vast holdings. The Chessmen are one of ten items deemed controversial enough to warrant a spot on this list. On the link leading to the Chessmen’s portion of this area, there are several titled sections which discuss information the British Museum wishes to relay. After a short introduction about the Chessmen, the first item listed for discussion on this stance taken by the British Museum is titled “Lews Castle.” The crux of this piece of data demonstrates how they are cooperating with Scotland in the return of some of the pieces to the Isle of Lewis for the Lews Castle display. They also reiterate how they have partnered with museums in Scotland such as the National Museum of Scotland and Museum nan Eilean to loan the Chessmen out for exhibitions. It is probable that the British Museum saw a need to provide this statement due to previous demands from the SNP (Scottish National Party) for the pieces to be returned to Scotland, which will be discussed at length later.

The creation of these partnerships and the loan of the pieces to Museum nan Eilean for their new museum has an air of appeasement for those who have demanded their permanent return. It is significant to note that this partial return of items was done prior to the 2014 Scottish referendum. In 2011, the SNP published its manifesto which included its pledge for the independence referendum (“Scottish Election: SNP Manifesto”). This was near the same time that Lews Castle was granted funding for its refurbishment and a year later, the British Museum surprisingly promised a portion of the Chessmen to return to Lewis. This could have been complete coincidence, but it also may have been done to staunch the flow of possible SNP demands again for repatriation should the referendum have passed. As it did not, we may never know for sure either way. Interestingly, the exact length of the loan is unknown; the Heritage Lottery website notes that it is “long term” (“Lews Castle and Museum Opens to the Public,” 2016). Simply stated, the Chessmen are at Museum nan Eilean at the will of the British Museum.

The Museum’s soft opening was held on 14 July 2016. In the official press release from The Heritage Lottery Fund, statements from local and museum officials alike praised the opening of the castle with phrases like “major milestone” and many reiterated the fact that this new endeavour would increase both visitor numbers and boost the economy of the Outer Hebrides (“Lews Castle and Museum Opens to the Public,” 2016). Angus Campbell, the leader of the Comhairle, said, “the presence of the Lewis Chessmen on the islands where they were found is highly appropriate and significant for the Outer Hebrides, and will support the substantial investment committed to the Lews Castle Museum and Archive project,” (Atkinson, 2012). Archie Campbell, chairman of the Comhairle's sustainable development committee, noted that “heritage is one of our most important assets and will make an increasing contribution to the economy of the islands” (“Historic Lewis Chessmen Returning to Western

Isles,” 2012). In this regard, the whole island, not just the Museum, was placing value on the pieces as a gateway for more visitor traffic and in turn, more monetary gain. From this soft opening until the official one in 2017, The Highlands and Islands Enterprise noted that the new site had seen 34,000 visitors (“Official Opening of Lews Castle, Museum and Archive,” 2017). This count is not an insubstantial number for a small, relatively isolated island venue. The official opening of the Castle/Museum/Archive took place on 6 March 2017 with Scotland’s First Minister Nicola Sturgeon officiating. Interestingly, 2017 also was deemed the year of “History, Heritage, and Archaeology” in Scotland by VisitScotland, the country’s leading tourism organisation. According to the VisitScotland webpage, “our themed years celebrate the very best of Scotland and its people. You will find a packed programme of events taking place throughout the year, as well as lots of opportunities to discover sides of Scotland you never knew existed” (“Scotland’s Themed Years,” n.d.). First Minister Sturgeon said that this themed year designation coincided with the completion of the refurbishment and the opening of the museum was “fitting,” and that

the opening of the Lews Castle development is a historic occasion for Stornoway and the whole of the Outer Hebrides, and I am delighted I could be part of the event. I am pleased the Scottish Government and its agencies could provide funding to help restore this iconic castle to its former glory as well as providing a key cultural and heritage hub for the area. The Comhairle and its partners must be congratulated on developing what is now a beautiful venue for both residents and visitors to the island to enjoy, telling the unique story of the islands in an amazing setting. It will also be a fantastic boost for the local economy, increasing tourism, creating jobs and bringing additional revenue to the islands (“Official Opening of Lews Castle, Museum and Archive,” 2017).



Figure 41: First Minister Sturgeon examines the Lewis Chessmen at the Official Opening of Lews Castle, 6 March 2017. *BBC*, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-39178431>. Accessed 16 January 2018.

The Museum as an entity itself creates an important context in which to house the Chessmen. It tells the story of the Outer Hebrides as a whole, not just of Lewis where the Museum is located. Within these confines we can see the value of the Chessmen as symbols of the Outer Hebrides. In fact, the term Museum nan Eilean translates into the “Museum of the Islands.” The galleries “examine the long human occupation of the Outer Hebrides with themed displays focusing on the relationship between the people the land and the sea, working life, community life and contemporary issues” (“Official Opening of Lews Castle, Museum and Archive,” 2017). The Museum’s mission statement is as follows:

We are a gateway to the collective heritage of the Outer Hebrides- a dispersed resource comprising local museums and heritage groups, collections, and archives. We collect, record, and preserve the culture and heritage of the Outer Hebrides and hold the collections in trust for the people, for their understanding and enjoyment (Personal Email, 22 May 2018).

Much of the following information came from an in-person visit in May 2017. At the time, road and walking path signage directing visitors to the museum was not yet in place, as museum officials were waiting for VisitScotland to install it (personal conversation with museum staff, May 2017). Lews Castle is a large site, and signage indicating the location of the Museum once



Figure 42: Outside Museum nan Eilean. Personal photograph taken May 2017.

the visitor is on the premise is difficult to find. The Museum is located on the back side of Lews Castle and is tucked away from the main hub of activity. Its locale could be a bit confusing for first time visitors to the site. No doubt, more signage is now in place to assist with directional information. One of the first things you encounter upon entering the Museum is a text panel explaining that they “use Gaelic for telling stories,” as it is their “everyday language” (from personal photos taken of the display). English translations are always provided side-by-side, to allow for greater access to visitors whilst also keeping this everyday familiar language of the

area. There was no indication, either inside or out, through signage or other display panels that the Lewis Chessmen are displayed in the Museum. There are three main gallery spaces which are broken up thematically by certain resonating phrases such as: “Sense of Place,” “The Islanders,” and “On the Threshold.” The first gallery is titled “Dùthchas” or a “Sense of Place.” This gallery is entirely made up of panoramic viewing screens and according to signage the film “explores the landscape of the islands from Barra to Lewis” and invites visitors to “come in and discover what it feels like during every season and all kinds of weather” (from personal photos taken of the display).

The second and largest gallery is titled, “Eileanaich,” or “The Islanders.” Signage indicates that “these islands and our people are as one. We have a strong and lasting bond. Wherever we may be in the world, the islands remain our home” (from personal photos taken of the display). Within this open-spaced gallery lies three main sub-categories that describe life, both historic and present-day, on the islands such as: “The Sea,” “Working Life,” and “Community Life.” Within these three topics, other local items of interest are discussed including Gaelic, music, traditions, beliefs, and crofting, to name just a few. The third gallery, “Air an Stairsich,” or “On the Threshold,” is a look at the islands and its people as they face the future. Over a third of the items on display in the entire Museum are on loan from the National Museum of Scotland “including archaeological finds from across the Outer Hebrides, a spectacular Viking hack-silver coin hoard and a three-wheeled Morgan car from the 1920’s which was the first private motor vehicle on the Island of Berneray” (“Formal Opening of Lewis Castle, Museum and Archive,” 2017).

The Chessmen are located centrally within the “Eileanaich” (Islanders) gallery. The pieces present a visual focal point with a slight dividing wall featuring an expansive panoramic



Figure 43: Lewis Chessmen in Museum nan Eilean, Lews Castle. Personal photograph, May 2017.

photograph depicting Uig Bay surrounding the small glass case in which they are housed. The wall and included photograph also give the viewer the sense that the space is special as the sheer physicality of it differentiates it from the rest of the gallery space. On the wall are six circular texts in both Gaelic and English. These aim at answering several questions about the Chessmen including, “where they were found,” “who found them,” “who made them,” “how many chessmen are there,” “what they were made of,” and “why were the chessmen in Lewis?” (from personal photos taken of the display). As we’ve seen thus far, these are frequently asked questions surrounding the Chessmen, and the Museum thought they were important enough to include and answer them within the space. The answers to the questions coincide with current



Figure 44: Some of the signage on the panoramic wall relaying possibly frequently asked questions about the Lewis Chessmen. Personal photographs, May 2017.

popular theories about the Chessmen. However, as explained, these can be subjective depending what source is consulted. The case where the Chessman are housed is unique in the space, square and has glass on all four sides with a wooden base which coordinates to other pieces in the gallery. The signage in the case is purple, which ties it to the rest of the spaces'

text panels. The case sits alone as to stand out, yet the similarities to other the other displays in the gallery allow the Museum to both feature the Chessmen in this unique way while simultaneously creating a sense of cohesion with the rest of the displayed items. The square shape of the case harkens to those in the British Museum. This one-of-a-kind case relays the value the Museum has in allowing the visitor to view the pieces on all four sides, including their intricately carved backs. While there are other glass cases in the gallery, the one housing the Chessmen is unique and is set in a very prominent place within the space. In the case, there is signage on all four sides, giving visitors specific information about each piece. Three of the



Figure 45: Two descriptive panels surrounding the Lewis Chessmen case at Museum nan Eilean. Personal photographs, May 2017.

sides talk about the specific pieces on display and include lengthy descriptions, such as those in the British Museum do. The fourth sign piece simply asks the viewer to “look closely at each finely carved piece and find out something about the Vikings” (from personal photos taken of the display). A widely agreed on popular theory has the Chessmen being created just after the Viking era although often, they are generally lumped in with that period. This could be due to their proximity in age and from the inclusion of the berserker as one of the pieces. Vikings are well-known in the public conscious as well. Through tying the Chessmen to that era perhaps, even though slightly historically inaccurate, it allows for more audience-capturing displays and events. Through this link with the Vikings, a well-known former presence in the Hebrides, the Museum is showing the visitor that they value these pieces as part of the islands’ heritage and culture. Museum nan Eilean is not the only place this association with the Vikings takes place, as we’ll see in the next chapter.

The six pieces included in the exhibition are one king, one queen, one bishop, one knight, one warder (not a berserker) and one pawn. The pieces are displayed on small, clear, square risers of varying heights and are sitting on a clear and opaque chessboard simulation.



Figure 46: Six Lewis Chessmen on display at Museum nan Eilean. Personal photograph May 2017.

The utilisation of the clear display with its simple set up may have been chosen to encourage visitors to examine the Chessmen rather than being distracted by the exhibition itself. Unlike at the National Museum of Scotland, the Chessmen do not simply blend into the display. Bright lighting also allows the visitor to see the pieces' details more clearly. Like at the British Museum, next to the case is a bench, allowing visitors to sit and contemplate the pieces, rest, and to watch the integrated film provided. Overall, the display, while completely different from the one at the British Museum, is also very similar in smaller details such as the case set up, the lengthily worded panels, and the idea of including a bench near them for comfort and viewing purposes. The Museum clearly conveys a message for visitors to stay, learn, and contemplate in the space.

Built into the panoramic photo and text panel of Uig Bay is a small video screen where visitors can watch a film titled *The King's Gift*. The film contains two sets of anthropomorphised chess pieces--one side red, one white--in a battle against one another on

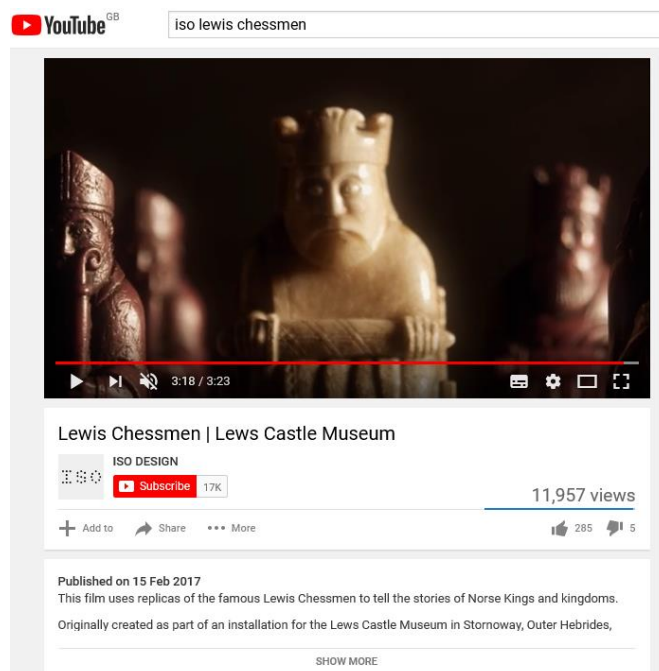


Figure 47: Still shot of the Lewis Chessmen film *The King's Gift* as featured in Museum nan Eilean.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiOKTjk6vYE>. Accessed 12/5/2018.

the chessboard. The film utilises the common association with Vikings and gives the pieces historic names of ancient kings and notable figures of the Western Isles while it was historically under Norse rule. Themes of battle, losing and winning, death, exploration, and the idea that the game was for kings and gods alike run throughout the 3' 24" minute film. The film relies heavily on the idea Viking influences through usage of local historic figures such as Kings Ragnavald, Olaf, Magnus Barelegs, and depicted Hebridean adventurer Audur as the Queen. The film also relies on terminology infamously associated Viking descriptive words such as "plundering," "revelling," and "slaughter" (ISO Design, 2017). The film was narrated by a local man, Derek Mackay and was in English with English subtitles (Personal Email, 04 January 2019). Museum nan Eilean staff member Ashely Ferrier believes the subtitles were added as the speaker has a strong local accent, possibly making it difficult to be understood by all (Personal Email, 04 January 2019).

The Castle, not the Museum, had a small gift shop at the time of this visit. Items for sale were all from the British Museum's line of Lewis Chessmen merchandise and does not include any newly created items especially for Museum nan Eilean. Unlike the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland websites, the Museum nan Eilean online presence is far inferior. The museum (and archive) does not have its own website site but, rather, has an

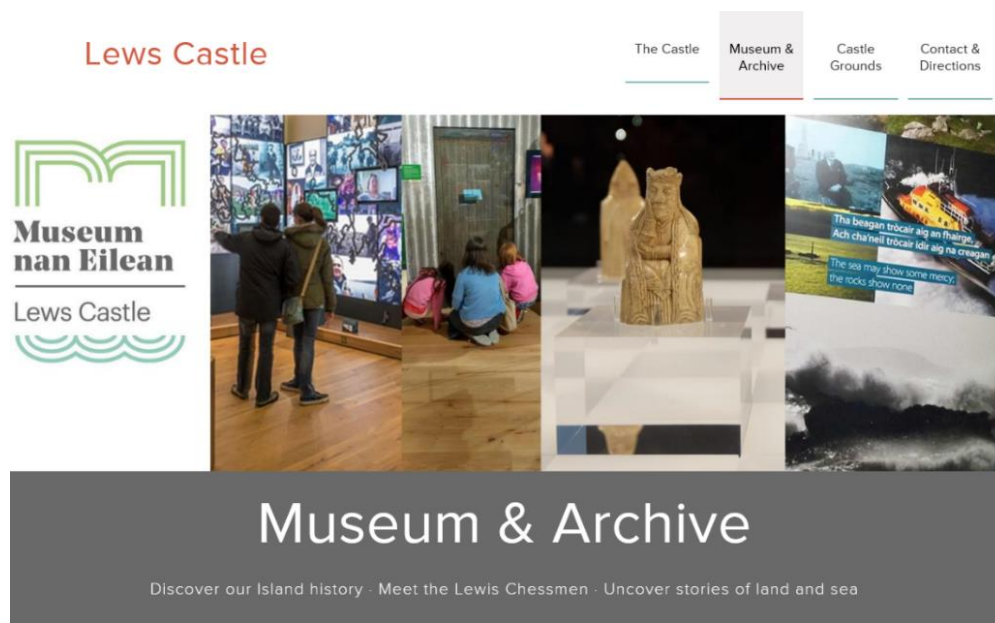


Figure 48: Front page, Museum nan Eilean website featuring the Lewis Chessmen. http://www.lewis-castle.co.uk/?page_id=12. Accessed 12/05/2018.

offshoot page on the Lews Castle site. When a visitor clicks on the link for the museum, they are greeted with a set of photos, including one Lewis Queen, as the first thing they see. Under the title of the page, *Museum and Archive*, three small phrases are included to demonstrate the purpose of the Museum. They are “discover our island history, meet the Lewis Chessmen, and uncover stories of land and sea.” The Chessmen are the only specifically mentioned and pictured objects on the site, reiterating their value to the Museum as pieces of local culture and as representations for the collections. There is little other information on the site other than basic elements, such as opening times and a calendar of events. Today, there are no photos of the Chessmen on the website at all. In fact, there has been a deletion of *all* the photographs as shown above, and now the site’s Museum portion only includes a timeline, brief text, and information on the current exhibitions.

This lack of photographs could put the Museum at a disadvantage. As we have seen, both the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland utilise the popularity of the Chessmen through imagery as features on their website, in merchandise, maps, and in many

other ways. As we will see later, the pieces are in the public consciousness based on their visual recognition, and not having this representation on the website could impact draws to the Museum. Many visitors rely on websites to plan their visits, including researching and previewing pieces of interest. However, website developers/content creators may have had a purpose in taking down the photos. They may have wanted to display content which represents the Museum as a cohesive whole and not just the keeper of some of the Chessmen.

Museum nan Eilean also utilises social media outlets such as Facebook to promote events and relay other museum information. A 21 March 2017 post on their page showed the Chessmen having a “rare trip out of their case” while getting a yearly examination by British



Figure 49: Museum nan Eilean Facebook post from 21 March 2017 describing the chessmen receiving a check-up. Accessed 21 March 2017.

Museum staff. Museums have their own strict policies and guidelines when loaning out materials including standards of exhibition, environmental controls, security, and other issues

faced within the gallery space. Undoubtedly, taking the Chessmen back to Lewis was an undertaking as the British Museum, one of the largest institutions in the world, have robust policies on how items on loan--especially those of immeasurable value like the Chessmen-- are displayed. Staff at Museum nan Eilean relayed in a personal interview in 2017 that the pieces were never to be handled by their staff; instead, selected individuals and conservators from the British Museum go to Lewis control item placement in the exhibitions and to perform frequent health checks on them as well.

iv. Other Split Collections

Specific sets of items which are split between different institutions is a rare occurrence, but it does happen. In the case of the Lewis Chessmen, not only are they split between three museums, but they are split between different countries, too. Many times, colonization can play a key role in the separation of collections. Sometimes, collections are split for the sake of financial profit, much like the Lewis pieces were. Another example of a collection being split is a pair of paintings by Dutch artist Rembrandt van Rijn. Many of Rembrandt's paintings are scattered in museums and galleries across the world, but two, which most likely would have been intended to be displayed together, are separated between two American museums. One, called *Portrait of a Young Woman with a Fan*, and is in the Metropolitan Museum of New



Figure 50: From Left: *Portrait of a Man Rising from His Chair*, Taft Museum of Art and *Portrait of a Lady with a Fan*, Metropolitan Museum of Art. https://taftmuseum.org/art/permanent-collection/collection_highlights/1931-409/ and <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437391>, Accessed 23/12/2018.

York. According to the biography of the painting on the Museum's website, the two were painted in 1633 and "may be considered key works within Rembrandt's development as a portraitist during his first few years in Amsterdam" ("Portrait of a Young Woman with a Fan," n.d.). The entry on the Met's website also relays that the pair were separated "before 1793, when this work appeared alone in the Paris estate sale of Vincent Donjeux ("Portrait of a Young Woman with a Fan," n.d.). The Met states that the two paintings are a pair in that "when seen together, husband and wife seem to respond to each other" ("Portrait of a Young Woman with a Fan," n.d.). Although there is no documentary evidence that the paintings were painted together, the Met's biographical entry states that it

can hardly be doubted. The canvases are the same size and were probably cut from the same bolt of cloth; they are also entirely consistent in style and complementary in composition, and in the pictorial effect of such motifs as lace collars and cuffs, and conspicuous ribbons" ("Portrait of a Young Woman With a Fan," n.d.).

Unlike the Met, the Taft Museum of Art, which holds the *Portrait of a Man Rising from His Chair*, there is no mention at all on their website that this painting is possibly from a pair. Other biographical information on their website is limited and gave little data on the origins of the pieces. It may be that an in-person visit would reveal more information about the painting in the Taft's collection.

Another collection, known as the Nimrud Dogs, were separated more recently in the 1950s. Archaeologist Max Mallowan, husband of famed mystery author Agatha Christie, led a dig in Nimrud, Mesopotamia, or modern-day Iraq. The dig was sponsored by several entities, including the British School of Archaeology. The six bronze dog sculptures were found in a well in the Northwest Palace of Assurbanipal II, according to Mallowan. The well was full of sludge and had to be manually removed. The sludge contained a wealth of artefacts which had been remarkably preserved by the conditions in which they were left. In his 1953 article describing the finds of the 1952 season, he noted that the figures were “buried under the thresholds of Assyrian palace doorways” for the “purpose of scaring away demons from the precincts of Assyrian buildings” (Mallowan, 24). After the dig was completed, all the artefacts found were examined by Iraqi authorities and in what is deemed a “division of finds,” four of the bronze dogs were given to the British School of Archaeology whilst two remained in Iraq (“The Model Dog that Became a Cat,” 2015). The four were then divided up as a result of “financial contributions to the excavation” and included: The Met, The British Museum, The Museum of Archaeology at Cambridge, and the Australia Institute for Archaeology (“Dog,” n.d.).

Despite the two examples of other split collections, the Lewis Chessmen remain unique in their situation. The Nimrud Dogs were split according to the wishes of the country they were found in. The Lewis Chessmen were split and sold as the governing antiquities' body at the time, the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, could not afford to buy them outright. Neither of

the two examples mentioned have been in repatriation demands like the Chessmen have. Despite the recent war and civil unrest in Iraq, the dog statues in the country's national museum collection were not harmed. The National Museum of Iraq has never asked for the rest of the dog collection to be repatriated either. The Dutch have not called for all of Rembrandt's paintings to be returned to them, and the pair mentioned as an example are happily housed in separate institutions, without one sparring with the other for ownership.

With the unveiling of the newly discovered Lewis warder in 2019, and from the subsequently unprecedented auction of the piece held on 2 July 2019, questions arose of where it might end up. Would one of the three museums where pieces are already displayed bid for this precious commodity? Would another museum or an individual collector purchase the pieces, dividing the collection yet again? To date, the definitive answer is still unknown. There was no press after the sale of the piece other than to relay how much it sold for. The new owner has not been released to the public. If one of the three mentioned institutions had purchased the piece, no doubt a release of this information would have occurred. With no additional information on who the buyer was, it can only be hypothesised that the piece was purchased by a private collector and may be rarely, if ever, seen again.

This chapter has tried to demonstrate how the three museums which house the Lewis Chessmen all value their portion of the hoard in different ways. While some similarities are seen across the three locales, this chapter has also shown how each museum utilises changes of display, wording techniques, props, and placement within gallery spaces to integrate them into the museum's overarching story. The British Museum sees itself as a museum of the world, and they value the Chessmen within that remit. This value as a collection of human history is best demonstrated in the project *The History of the World in 100 Objects*, which will be discussed in further detail later. The National Museum of Scotland is, first and foremost, a museum of the people of Scotland and then a museum of the greater world. They utilise their

hoard portion to show the history of Scotland during the time the pieces were created, but also to show how this fits into the world at large. They value the pieces as part of the make-up of the rest of the collection that represents the Scottish Nation. In contrast, Museum nan Eilean is a local museum, a museum of the Outer Hebridean islands. They value their loaned pieces to create a sense of pride in the local history of their communities. All three museums also value the collection for its money-making ability. Each have extensive retail collections which feature the pieces on a variety of items visitors can take home. Research shows that just the Chessmen items alone create substantial revenue in the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland where there are many other items that visitors can purchase. The institutions also make use of an ever-growing popularity of an online access through websites, social media, and online retail shops. This online presence aids in assisting with marketing, creates more interest in and discussion around the pieces, and allows visitors from afar to access the collection from their home country. The Chessmen are iconic figures, which creates unimaginable value, and each museum takes full advantage of this fact.

Chapter V: The Positional: How the Hoard is Utilised in Special Displays

Thus far, we have seen how each of the museums which hold the Lewis Chessmen value the collection through their use in telling the museum's story. Generally, permanent displays are just that...permanent. They are static and rarely incur changes unless the gallery is refurbished or, for instance, text is updated to include new research. Over the years however, the Lewis Chessmen have been deemed valuable enough to be included in special or travelling exhibitions to tell other stories to greater audiences. These exhibitions are temporary and only last a short, prescribed time. They are extremely important in the museum field because they “widen the reach of their brand, increase access to collections, and assist in sharing major works with cultural organisations that would not otherwise showcase major works or large-scale exhibitions” (“Temporary and Touring Exhibitors: Reaching Out to New Audiences,” 2015). These special exhibitions can generate new streams of revenue as many of these museums charge for these events. New, thematic merchandise may be created in tandem as well. This chapter will look at a series of three recent major projects which featured the Lewis Chessmen and aim to demonstrate how this inclusiveness has added to their intrinsic value.

i. A History of the World in 100 Objects

Throughout 2010, former British Museum Director Neil MacGregor hosted a series of radio programmes through a collaboration with BBC Radio 4. The idea came to fruition after MacGregor previously narrated other radio programmes where other British Museum objects were analysed and discussed. MacGregor and British Museum curators decided to try “to find a way for visitors to make sense of the museum's vast holdings by taking a single object and putting it into a larger context, one that told a story that everyone could relate to” (Vogel, 2011).

An article in *The New York Times* noted that the programme was “so audacious it took one hundred curators, four years to complete it” (Vogel, 2011). These fifteen-minute radio programmes chronicled *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. The series was told chronologically utilizing certain objects in the collection to tell the story not of Britain, but of the world. The objects ranged from the well-known and popular to those that have remained more obscure. The programme was broken down into twenty categories with titles that described an era or theme being discussed. These programmes aired during three sets of months throughout 2010. In these aired discussions, MacGregor touched on topics such as what makes us human, war, literacy, faith, economy, and many other themes of the shared human condition. Relevant scholars also contributed thoughts and discussion on these broadcasts. Likewise, there was coordinating information on both the BBC and British Museum websites. Visitors to these sites could download the podcasts, view each object discussed in detail, follow a blog, and connect to social media outlets for more discussion. On the BBC webpage dedicated to the Lewis hoard within the *100 Objects* series, James Robinson, who was quoted extensively in the origins chapter of this thesis, added commentary on the website through a section titled “Playing it for Laughs” (“A History of the World in 100 Objects: The Lewis Chessmen,” n.d.). He noted that “few objects compete with the Lewis Chessmen in terms of their popular appeal. These endearing little figures have attracted audiences to the British Museum since the moment of their acquisition in 1831” (“A History of the World in 100 Objects: The Lewis Chessmen,” n.d.). In this section of the *100 Objects* webpage, Robinson also discussed this popularity in relation to their expressions and how they gained new fame in the popular *Harry Potter* film. Later in 2010, a book and CD collection with the same title were published as companions to the radio series. Even today (at the time of this thesis) these episodes and related content are available for web visitors to use and listen to.

In the first episode, MacGregor discussed his reasoning behind the creation of this series. He explained that the purpose is “to see how we humans, over two million years, have shaped our world, and been shaped by it” (“Episode One Transcript,” n.d.). He also pointed out that this journey was to be told “exclusively through the ‘things’ that humans have made,” and that “telling history through things...is what museums are for” (“Episode One Transcript,” n.d.). MacGregor noted that this series was “*a* history of the world” and not “*the* history” but that as people visit the museum “they choose their own objects and make their own journey around the world and through time” (“Episode One Transcript,” n.d.). As seen in the last chapter through the British Museum’s mission statement, it sees itself as a museum of the world, despite its British moniker. MacGregor reinforces this ideology through this series with the belief that we “no longer have a history of a particular people of nation, but a story of endless connections” (“Episode One Transcript,” n.d.).

The Lewis Chessmen were featured as one of the 100 objects to represent the world’s shared history. As the series was told semi-chronologically and by category, their programme aired midway through the series on 28 June 2010. Number sixty-one on the list, the Lewis hoard was categorised under the title of “Status Symbols (AD1200-1400).” They were the first named item of five in this category. This categorisation by era starting in 1200 shows a leaning towards a later creation date as discussed in earlier chapters. The other four museum objects featured in this grouping were: a Hebrew astrolabe, a bronze head from Ife, the David Vases from China, and a Taino ritual seat from the Caribbean. A seemingly disparate collection, these five items were selected to show how objects could be “great status symbols of taste and power, as owned by the wealthy and well-informed” (“Status Symbols (AD 1100-1500),” n.d.). According to MacGregor, the rich have always owned things which held status, but he noted that “such objects could not be created without skilled and knowledgeable crafts workers” and

that “technological advances during this period fuelled the creation of magnificent objects across the world” (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.).

The episode on the Chessmen starts out with a discussion of the Cold War. The episode noted how in 1972, while the world was “gripped by one of the greatest battles” so too was another battle being waged, but this one was on a chess board (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.). MacGregor, as the narrator, likened the battle of the Cold War with the battle between similar enemies of opposing countries: American Bobby Fischer and Russian Boris Spassky, who were going to fight out their battle on the chess board. The episode goes on to discuss how chess itself was, according to Fischer, “war on a board” (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.). MacGregor delved into some of the origins of the game of chess and relayed that how the pieces are shaped “tells us a great deal about how that society functions” and that if we look at European society “around the year 1200, we could hardly do better than to look at how they played chess” (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.). MacGregor went on to discuss some details of the hoard and notes that they are “much-loved.” (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.). He then went into the history of humanity’s fascination with board games but noted that chess “is a relative newcomer” (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.). Again, he told of chess’ beginnings and how they came to be in Europe during this time. He explained that Middle Eastern chess pieces were abstract while their European counterparts, in contrast were “intensely human” in their design (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.). He went on to discuss that the Lewis hoard demonstrates a wonderful example of this humanity as they “show us particular types of characters” (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.). MacGregor then discussed, in depth, the hoard’s size, materiality, colouring, and each of the individual categories of pieces noting that the main ‘face’ pieces “are full of personality” (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.). He then communicated to the audience that he had a berserker in his

hand and noted that “they are pretty terrifying” while discussing the relation to Norse history and its ties to Scotland (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.). Middle Ages Historian Miri Rubin also discussed her ideas of where they came from and how, in her opinion, they came to be in the west of Scotland due to the “commonwealth,” which was formed through the North Seas as a “connector” of regions (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.). MacGregor also said the pieces were found in Uig Bay in a stone chamber, and that they were most likely “hidden for safety by a merchant” (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.). These points he mentioned, as we have seen, are contested between scholarly writing and local legends. He also attempted to discuss the emotions some of the pieces may show on their faces. Using the queen as an example, he noted that in his opinion, she looks “comically glum” but that her “modern sister...is the most powerful person on the board” (“Episode Sixty-One Transcript,” n.d.). MacGregor ended the episode with discussing the appearance of the bishop in the Lewis hoard and how yet another battle, the one fought over religion, could be seen through the game of chess.

After the live series was over, visitors could still interact with the programme. During the time of airing, and for some time after, the British Museum highlighted each object that was part of the show within the galleries. The “stars” of the show received special panels at their site within the Museum. The panels relayed further information as to why they were included in the programme and gave insightful comparisons to objects around the world which were created and used in the same timeframe. It also gave a link to the website so visitors could access the series online. Maev Kennedy noted in her article commenting on the end of the series that visitors were setting “out to explore the British Museum galleries equipped with the leaflet mapping the objects” (2010). No doubt the museum saw a huge upswing in numbers of people visiting through this series. They marketed this series well and created displays in the Museum

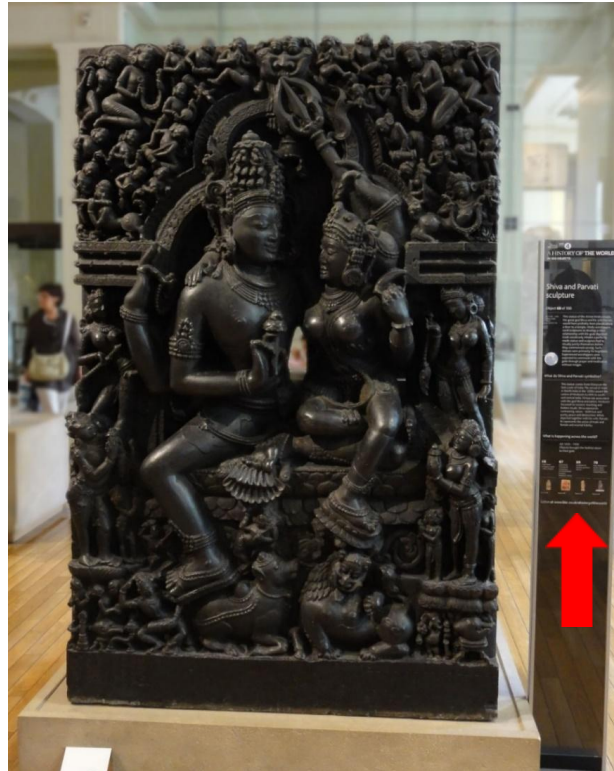


Figure 51: An example of an *A History of the World in 100 Objects* panel from the British Museum. From https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cc/Shiva_and_Parvati_sculpture_display.jpg. Accessed 13/05/2018.

gift shops to sell the books. This creating more streams of revenue and placing the value of monetary gain on the Lewis Chessmen and other item in the series.



Figure 52: A display of books and audio series of *100 Objects*, British Museum. Personal Photograph July 2011.

In 2014 and as recently as 2016/2017, the British Museum offered a touring exhibition of some the *100 Objects* collection. The curated objects have travelled to Abu Dhabi, Japan, Taiwan, Perth and Canberra, Australia, and were shown in Beijing and Shanghai in China. According to an article from *The Guardian*, “around 50% of the objects in the original collection were too fragile to travel” so they were “replaced by companion pieces that tell the same stories and are often from the same archaeological site” (Delaney, 2016). However, the Lewis hoard was deemed hardy enough to go on tour, and delighted visitors along the way. By allowing the pieces to go on display around the world, the Museum was placing a value of authenticity on them by allowing visitors to see “the real thing.” Whilst in China, the Lewis Chessmen were voted “the cutest” object on display and visitors were calling them “the ancient version of the Internet meme” for their expressions (“A History of the World in 100 Objects Exhibition Wows Museum-Goers in Shanghai,” 2017). The exhibition also proved popular as noted in an August 2016 article that within six weeks of opening the display at the Museum of Australia, over fifty thousand people had attended. In addition, there was hope that while in Canberra, the one-millionth visitor, based on the calculation of visitors to the travelling exhibition world-wide, would be counted there (Pryor, 2016). On the British Museum’s website, the *History of the World in 100 Objects* is one of the Museum’s list of ten possible travelling exhibitions they allow to “travel to museums and galleries outside the UK for temporary exhibition so that visitors can experience a British Museum exhibition at an international partner venue” (“International Touring Exhibitions,” 2018).

On the website, the associated podcasts were downloaded a staggering ten million times, half of which were from the UK alone (Kennedy, 2010). People from all walks of life were tuning in to listen via a multitude of streaming and interactive sources. Tim Davie, the head of music and audio at BBC and an avid runner, commented that for running, “you do not

need heavy beats, you need Neil MacGregor” (Kennedy, 2010). There were also over four million people who tuned into the radio portion of the series (Kennedy, 2010). The *100 Objects* collaboration garnered critical acclaim from a myriad of sources. One writer for *The Telegraph* praised the series as “a triumph” and believed it was “unashamedly highbrow;” however, it still reached “an extraordinarily large audience” (Sandbrook, 2010). The writer went on to celebrate the BBC’s “courage to make something as cerebral as it is entertaining” (Sandbrook, 2010). Philip Hensher from *The Independent* described the show as “exciting” and “unfailing interesting” with a sense of beautiful simplicity in its idea (Hensher, 2010). He also described the series as going against “conventional thinking about how culture should be represented by the mass media” while simultaneously opening “the most daunting of museums” to the greater public (Hensher, 2010). The series proved to be so successful that the British Museum was awarded the most lucrative of art recognitions: the £100,000 Art Fund Prize. Judges were awed with the “truly global scope of the British Museum’s project, which combined intellectual rigour and open heartedness, and went far beyond the boundaries of the museum’s walls” but more so, the judges were impressed with how the museum utilised the technology of the online community sphere to “to interact with their audiences in new and different ways” (Brown, 2011).

Several other projects were created as a direct result of the *100 Objects* series. One such project saw over three-hundred and fifty museums from around the UK adding their own collections onto an online platform to add to the history of not only the world, but of their localities too. The *100 Objects* blog asked people to “show us your objects, to upload them to the website and tell us the personal, local and global stories that connect you to the rest of the world or show your place in that world” (“Welcome to a History of the World,” 2010). The public did just that. There are hundreds of pages of objects that people contributed to this

project, and even today, they can be seen on the BBC's website about the programme. Maev Kennedy noted in an article at the end of the series that "members of the public have uploaded 3,240 objects which encapsulate some point of personal history to the website, and other museums a further 1,610, and 531 museums and heritage sites across the UK have been mounting linked events – an unprecedented partnership" (Kennedy, 2010). In fact, the National Museum of Scotland also added their portion of the Lewis hoard into this online curated collection, symbolically reuniting the set in cyberspace. The National Museum of Scotland only added twelve objects in total to this platform. They deemed their portion of the hoard valuable enough, despite their representation already being there from the British Museum, to count amongst their small numbers of contributions. The idea of sharing the world's history through objects was a phenomena and created a buzzing interaction with people from all walks of life and from around the globe. According to Andrew Caspari, head of speech radio interactive at that time for the BBC, the project was "huge" and the point of it was to be participatory to create "a debate on two levels. We want a meta-discussion on the blog about what objects work, and what the nation has and how people engage with the object. And we want a discussion about each object on the object's site" (Bunz, 2010).

Various areas of the country created their own *100 Objects* lists, and Scotland was no different. A *Scotsman* article from the time outlined historian Michael Fry's one-hundred picks which, not surprisingly, included the Lewis Chessmen as representation of the Scottish Nation ("Scotland's Story in 100 Objects," 2010). In 2017, VisitScotland, the leading heritage and tourism organisation in Scotland, also created a list of twenty-five objects which tell the nation's heritage and history. Some of the objects they included are not found in a museum but are part of the landscape. A collaborative e-book was written by VisitScotland, Historic Environment Scotland, the National Museum of Scotland, and the Society of Antiquaries of

Scotland as a commemoration of the 2017 Year of History, Heritage, and Archaeology (Pease, 2017). The Lewis Chessmen are listed as one of the twenty-five objects that “best represent Scotland's rich and colourful history” (Pease, 2017). The objects were chosen because they “were not only important to the history of the country but also had an interesting narrative behind them and would inspire people to find out more” (Pease, 2017). As we can see, there are many instances where the Lewis Chessmen have been valued as their ability to represent the nation and are items of national pride.

ii. *The Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked*

From the *100 Objects* project on a global scale, we turn to the use of the Lewis hoard in an exhibit that reflects a more localised focus. Interestingly, a newly created exhibition called *The Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked*, was being revealed in Edinburgh at the National Museum of Scotland just one month after their feature on the *100 Objects* radio segment on BBC Radio 4. This exhibition was not going to be based solely in Edinburgh, but it was intended to tour around Scotland where it would, for the first time in ten years, physically reunite pieces of the Lewis hoard from the institutions in which they were held. A Project Review of the exhibition explains that “partnership lay at the heart of this initiative, with key players of the National Museums Scotland, the British Museum, the Scottish Government, and the three partner venues, the Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum, the Shetland Museum and Archives, and Museum nan Eilean in Stornoway” (“Introduction: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report,” 2012). The other key reason for this exhibition was to present a fresh “interpretation of the Chessmen and associated material” (“Introduction: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report,” 2012). Some person or entity decided that combined with the above information, the Lewis Chessmen were valuable enough to stand alone in their own

exhibition. The exhibition saw the reuniting of twenty-three pieces from the British Museum along with six from the National Museum of Scotland. Materials were presented in Gaelic alongside English, symbolically reuniting the pieces with their Hebridean past. This inclusion also “served as an important initiative to promote awareness of Gaelic culture and language” (“Introduction: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report,” 2012). The collaborative exhibition also wanted to relay the “facts and fiction” surrounding the pieces’ origins, explore the Norse connections and ties, look at Trondheim craftsmanship as a possible source of origin, show how the utilisation of forensic techniques helped to identify facial markers, provide discussion on the possible owners, explore the history of gaming in the associated era, and aimed to “invite visitors to draw their own conclusions from the different theories” (“Project Delivery: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report,” 2012). The concept, design, and development of the project took twenty months to complete. The exhibition itself lasted over a year and saw the pieces on display at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh from 21 May - 19 September 2010, from 7 October - 8 January 2011 in Aberdeen, from 21 January - 21 March in Shetland, from 14 April - 12 September in Stornoway, and for one day on 13 September, they went on display in Uig, the place of their discovery. All source information for this section was collected from exhibition maps and other *Unmasked* reports and data given by members of the National Museum of Scotland staff.

The exhibition itself contained large, stand-alone glass cases where curators placed some of the chess pieces mixed in with other relevant objects to reflect the story being told. These stand-alone cases allowed for emphasis on the themes and items being discussed within them, but also allowed for a breakup of the collection for the large crowds to view more freely. The cases were completed with large purple text panels which made a stark contrast to the light colour of the pieces. On the backs of these panels were the Gaelic translations of the

front text. Topics discussed came from new research, and consequently, a new publication by former National Museum of Scotland Chessmen Keeper Dr. David H. Caldwell, curator Mark A. Hall, and forensic anthropologist Caroline Wilkinson. This exhibition was not intended to be on the global scale that the *100 Objects* project was, but rather, it was more a study of the Chessmen and how they were valued as part of Scotland's history.

As visitors entered the space, panels showed “atmospheric images of Lewis and maps of the area” which were juxtaposed alongside verbiage that described Lewis as centre of the Kingdom of the Isles of Man (“National Museum of Scotland Walkthrough Material,” n.d., 1). Case One of the exhibition introduced the Chessmen with “typical” pieces and touted them to be “instantly recognisable as chessmen” while also giving a bit of background information

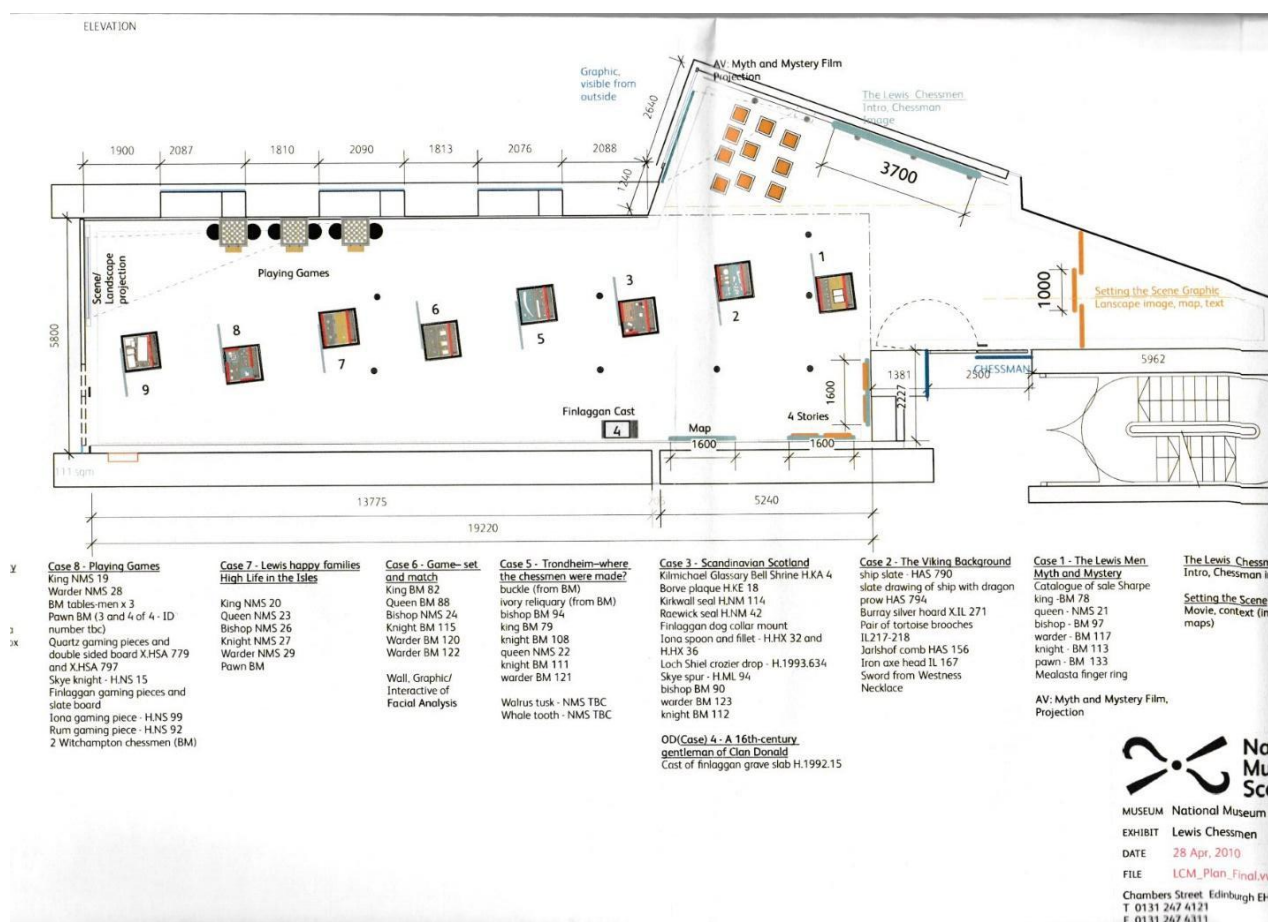


Figure 53: Scanned image of *Unmasked* exhibition layout at NMS. Copyright NMS. 2010

about how the pieces came to be in the National Museum of Scotland's collection ("National Museum of Scotland Walkthrough Material," n.d., 2). This case also showed the sale catalogue of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe's eleven pieces, which would eventually become the National Museum of Scotland's portion of the hoard. Content writers took the time here to reiterate the theory that the pieces were made in Scandinavia, as well as to show "contradictory stories about their discovery," including the possible find at Uig Bay or at Mèalasta ("National Museum of Scotland Walkthrough Material," n.d., 2). This case also included a twelfth century ring recovered from Mèalasta, giving credence to Caldwell's theory that the site, popularly thought in oral traditions to be the sight of a nunnery, was a likely site for their discovery due to this evidence of occupation. Wall panels near Case One presented common theories surrounding the pieces' history including how Sharpe gave scholars much of the information we know today; the story of the possible nunnery at Mèalasta, the story of Malcolm MacLeod's cow and the possible discovery of the hoard, the tale of Gillie Ruadh, the legendary murderer and thief of the pieces from a shipwrecked sailor. Case Two was collectively known as *The Viking Background* and covered an array of topics related to the Viking influences in Lewis. The case also included looted items and adornments such as brooches and jewellery gained through Viking raids. This inclusion of the Vikings in the exhibit perpetuated the idea that the Chessmen were made and associated with the same era in which they lived.

Positioned near Cases One and Two was a sitting area where visitors could view a film to learn more about the pieces. The following information was gleaned from a personal conversation in 2012 with National Museum of Scotland employees about the content of the film. The film was spoken in Gaelic and had English subtitles, reiterating the cultural ties of the objects to the land where they were found. Content of the film included local Lewis residents recalling their childhood memories of hearing how the Chessmen came to be there,

including the familiar story of the Gillie Ruadh. The film also gave insight into the man likely responsible for the Chessman's discovery, Malcolm MacLeod, and the associated "folklore" surrounding his story. It also showed clips of Irving Finkel's more comical, childlike take on the hoard's origins and unearthing. The visitor was then given information on the area of Uig and how it was a bustling place in Viking times. The filmmakers included the little-known fact that to this day, no other research or archaeological digs have been performed in the area where the Chessman were supposedly found. The film also told of Madden's major paper on the pieces and relayed the idea of Trondheim being the possible creation site for the Chessman. After viewing the film, visitors were left with more questions than answers, just as many scholars are when researching the Chessmen.



Figure 54: Photo showing gallery set up for *Unmasked*. From TESS Demountable, <http://www.tessdemountable.co.uk/projects/lewis-chessmen-touring-exhibition/#>. Accessed 14/05/2018.

Case Three was titled *Scandinavian Scotland* and dealt with the idea of Scotland being part of a larger Scandinavian world, which was “interconnected by shipping routes regularly used by merchants, visiting dignitaries, churchmen, and militia” (“National Museum of

Scotland Walkthrough Material,” n.d., 6). The case also introduced the island’s transition to Scottish rule and the introduction of Christianity. The case utilised one of the bishops, a warder, a knight, a seal showing a knight, and a variety of early Scandinavian/Scottish Christian iconography. This case also included the idea of chess as a “noble pastime” and showcased “a lady’s treasure” along with a knight’s spur from the era (“National Museum of Scotland Walkthrough Material,” n.d., 7). Area Four was not in a case as it was a large casting of a grave slab from Islay showing the continued Hebridean-Scandinavian connections which remained strong until even the 1700s.

Case Five presented the Trondheim origin theories. This case also tackled the materiality of the pieces and displayed actual walrus tusks next to the Chessmen for visitors to compare. Other walrus ivory objects with a Trondheim connection were included to demonstrate similarities in design and craftsmanship. The belt buckle, which was found with the hoard, was also included to show both its decorative parallels to the Chessman, and to introduce the idea that the buckle may have been the fixture used for closing a long-gone bag which could have held the collection. A sperm whale’s tooth and a warder made from the same material were included to show how the piece may have been a replacement, due to its difference in materiality and that because the figure showed a newer style of headgear. This case also contained both an example of a “good” carving technique and one of inferior quality.

Case Six showed off the new research conducted by Dr. David H. Caldwell and colleagues including the utilisation of technological advances such as forensic anthropological techniques to determine that more than one person was likely responsible for the creation of the hoard. Text panels asked the visitors to look closely to see if they could notice the differences in the five carving styles found through this new research. A wall graphic nearby

also included additional technical information on the process of facial analysis that was undertaken in the research.

Case Seven discussed the vast array of possible owners including: King Rognvald, a bishop, Rognvald's brother Olaf, Godred, the King's son, or other high-ranking chiefs of Lewis. Each of these possible owners was represented by a corresponding chess piece and detailed information.

Case Eight concentrated on chess as a game and shared how important games were in Scandinavian and Gaelic societies in this era. This case also discussed hnefatafl as the possible precursor to chess in Scandinavia. Pieces included in the case were tables-men from the British Museum collection, other Scandinavian playing discs, the Scandinavian rook from Lord MacDonald of Skye, other playing pieces from Scotland, and an example of an abstract chess piece which would have been used prior to the era of the Chessmen. Near this case were three



Figure 55: Photo demonstrating gallery setup with gaming boards. From TESS Demountable, <http://www.tessdemountable.co.uk/projects/lewis-chessmen-touring-exhibition/#>. Accessed 14/05/2018.

tables of games including chess, backgammon, and hnefatafl. Visitors were encouraged to learn about these games through hands-on play. The last case in the exhibition contained information on the legacy of the Chessmen. It gave museum staff the opportunity to select and comment on their favourite pieces and asked the visitor to ponder their favourites too. Discussion of the pieces' utilisation in popular culture was introduced and included their cameo appearance in the popular film *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. The case held a replica "Wizard's Chess" set which came out as merchandise following the film's release. The case also touched on the use of the Chessmen in books, including *Chess Dream in a Garden* and in the popular BBC television/book series *Noggin the Nog*.

Like the *100 Objects* exhibition, the National Museum of Scotland utilised the technological platform of their website to create more interaction with the Chessmen and the exhibition. Several blog posts were generated in association with the exhibition and were written by staff members of both the National Museum of Scotland and Museum nan Eilean. Part of the learning programme associated with the project was to link in Scottish schools' curriculum with the exhibition. Museum educators did this through the creation of an exhibit-specific page within the National Museum of Scotland's website. It was "designed as a stand-alone resource for continued use after the exhibition ended" ("Digital Media, Website, and Learning & Programmes: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report," 2012). At the time of the project report overview in 2012, the site had clocked over seventeen thousand visits with users "spending an average of 4 minutes on the resource" ("Digital Media, Website, and Learning & Programmes: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report," 2012). The online resource provided topics close to those discussed in the exhibition itself, whilst adding a younger-audience friendly feel to the space. Teacher response was generally positive and some of the museum's partners added that the online resource was "fundamental to

success” for both the exhibition and the students who accessed it (“Digital Media, Website, and Learning & Programmes: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report,” 2012).

Other events were planned for both children and adults alike. Some of these included:

- Radio plays produced by students at the Aberdeen Art Gallery
- An academic seminar with sixty attendees
- Creative activities ranging from sculpting chessmen from soap and clay to making giant chessmen
- Medieval games weekend
- Gaelic tours
- A Fringe Festival Show centred around the chessmen
- Chess tournaments
- Talks by curators
- And the special one-day exhibition on the Uig find site (“Digital Media, Website, and Learning & Programmes: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report,” 2012).

Events varied by location, as it was up to the local institutions to create tailored events for their areas. These engaging events drew 8,181 visitors across the venue locales (“Executive Summary: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report,” 2012). Visitor numbers to the exhibition itself, at all sites, numbered 122,084, which was double the estimations predicted at the National Museum of Scotland and Museum nan Eilean (“Executive Summary: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report,” 2012). The National Museum of Scotland deemed this exhibition the “most popular ever in the space” with an estimated 64% of visitors surveyed at all the venues coming in specifically to see the Chessmen. (“Success Factors: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report, 2012”). According to the 2012 wrap-up report, the key to the project was “the combination of the iconic objects, new curatorial research, commitment by the partners and the delivery of a tailored package of a touring exhibition with associated learning programmes and marketing” (“Executive Summary: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report,” 2012). That marketing programme was extremely extensive and coverage of the new research and exhibition included three-hundred and eight published articles, the creation of posters, leaflets, bus advertising, and

banners which, as they predicted, allowed over 149 million people to have the chance to see, hear, or read about the Chessmen (“Raising Profile: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report,” 2012). Sales of the book written by Caldwell et al. and merchandise featuring the Chessmen was totalled at £91,569 and was directly attributed to “the iconic nature of the chessmen” (“Added Value Project: The Lewis Chessmen Unmasked Project Review Report,” 2012).

The exhibition received acclaim from various media outlets and sources. One unknown writer for *The Scotsman* praised the exhibition for disposing of the myth that Scots were “wild men of the woods” and proving instead, that “the Scots, Lowland and Highland were as sophisticated as anybody else in Northern Europe” (“Art Review: Lewis Chessmen Unmasked,” n.d.). The author of the piece also waxed rhapsodic about the pieces noting:

the figures of the chessmen are so alive; they seem like witnesses to all this [history]. The face pieces, the kings and queens, the bishops, knights and warders (later rooks), are superb. Solemn and intense, they gaze straight out at us.” [It is their] “pervasive sense of inner life that gives such presence to the group as a whole,” [and that they are] “not just inert gaming pieces, they seem like little people and have an extraordinary presence. It is this that has earned them a place in the popular imagination not matched by any other work of medieval art” (“Art Review: Lewis Chessmen Unmasked,” n.d.).

Neil MacGregor, who had just presented the pieces on his *100 Objects* radio programme one month after the exhibition’s opening, commented that the:

tour provides a wonderful opportunity for these extraordinary objects, which are of European and worldwide significance, to be seen by audiences across Scotland. The British Museum has a long-standing relationship with National Museums Scotland and

is very pleased to continue this partnership, and we are grateful to the Scottish government for their support which has enabled the tour to become a reality (Legate, 2011).

In Scotland, and especially in Lewis, the sentiment was much more on how the exhibition would affect local interests. Alex MacDonald of the Western Isles Council said that the return of the pieces to Lewis for display would “give our own community and visitors the opportunity to come face-to-face with faces which are over eight hundred years old” (“Lewis Chessmen Exhibition Opens in Stornoway Museum,” 2011). Naturally, those who supported the SNP party’s campaign to have the pieces returned to Scotland were also pleased that the pieces were coming back. The Western Isles representative, MSP Alasdair Allan, shared his pleasure in their return “if only temporarily” and commented that the Scottish Government was “maintaining negotiations with the British Museum with the aim of ensuring that the chessmen return to Scotland permanently” (“Politicians Welcome the Start of the Lewis Chessmen Tour,” n.d.). Allan also believed “such a deal should include an exhibition of some of the pieces in Lewis” on a more permanent basis (“Politicians Welcome the Start of the Lewis Chessmen Tour,” n.d.). Here we can see that the Chessmen were valuable to individuals for their use as political symbols, a theme which will be explored further in this thesis. He also went on to note that “historic artefacts always mean a hundred times more in context, and the Lewis Chessmen have always been a symbol for the island” (“Politicians Welcome the Start of the Lewis Chessmen Tour,” n.d.). Western Isles MP Angus MacNeil, who had gone earlier in the same year to petition Parliament to return the collection, commented that “if the Lewis Chess pieces had been found over the past few years, there is no doubt that they would have remained in Lewis, and one can only surmise what the economic worth of this would be to the Island of Lewis” (“Politicians Welcome the Start of the Lewis Chessmen Tour”). Little did the

politicians know that at the time of this publication in 2011, discussions may already have been in place for the permanent loan of a portion of the pieces to be returned to Lewis.

A small sample of personal interviews was conducted in 2013 and 2014 to ask people who had seen the *Unmasked* exhibition in Lewis and Shetland about their experiences. The five people interviewed in Shetland in 2013 had varying responses to a survey which asked questions such as their nationality, why they went to see the Chessmen, how they felt about their experience, and why they thought the Chessmen were important. One family told of their experience of seeing the Chessmen on a school trip and that after they viewed them in person they realised “how precious and intricate the carvings were” (Personal Interview Shetland, 2013). This family also noted that to them the Chessmen were important “to understand and interpret the past” (Personal Interview Shetland, 2013). The family commented that so much was done locally in tandem with the exhibition including the creation of a local school chess club in which “everyone was playing” (Personal Interview Shetland, 2013). Another respondent thought the pieces were of “beautiful craftsmanship and held a fascinating story” while their importance was seen as a “reminder of our Viking ancestry” (Personal Interview Shetland, 2013). Interestingly, this last respondent was born and raised in London, yet saw the Viking ancestry as their own. None of the other interviewees made that link between the Chessmen and the local Shetland heritage. Respondents were also asked where they thought the pieces should be housed. Four out of the five people responded that they believe the pieces belonged in Lewis, with the fifth not caring “as long as they are kept together” (Personal Interview Shetland, 2013). A similar interview with Shetland Museum and Archives curator and local, Dr. Ian Tait, revealed information about the local population and the interaction with the exhibition. According to Tait, many locals define themselves to be “not of Scotland” noting that part of being a local is to “repel the idea of being Scottish” (Personal Interview,

Shetland Museum 2013). Some Shetlanders feel closer ties to their Scandinavian and Nordic roots than the political ties the island has with Scotland. For many, the moniker of Lewis (being of Scotland) may be a barrier in connecting the locals to the Scandinavian heritage of the pieces and suggested a name such as “Norwegian,” “Trondheim,” or even “Norse” may have proved more popular in creating the bond between the objects and heritage (Personal Interview, Shetland Museum 2013). Despite this Tait noted that Lewis’s bid for the return of the Chessmen did strike empathy in the hearts of Shetlanders. Shetland has petitioned the National Museum of Scotland to return a locally found treasure trove, the St. Ninian’s Treasure, to them (Personal Interview, Shetland Museum 2013).

Six people in Lewis were interviewed, with five of those coming from the Uig area where the Chessmen were found. The five from Uig saw themselves as islanders first, similarly to the prevailing belief felt by the Shetlanders who were interviewed. Without prompting, one member presented a four-page, hand-written and detailed historical account of the “Uig Chessmen,” as they are known in this area of the world. This information had been passed down in their family through oral tradition. In these interviews, opinion was strongly supported that the pieces be returned, not to Lewis but to Uig, where their placed localisation would create a sense of identity and increase confidence in their own local history (Personal Interview, Uig, 2014). Interviewees believed that tourism would increase despite their relatively rural location and that a secure, purpose-built site could be created to house the pieces should they be returned (Personal Interview, Uig, 2014). Some of the group mentioned the idea of locals having a “staunch ethnicity” and were “one people” where family, tradition, and history are deemed important parts of their culture (Personal Interview, Uig, 2014). For many of the eleven people interviewed in total, they were recounting, from memory, their experiences of seeing the Chessmen some two to three years previously, and most believed strongly that the pieces

should be in Lewis. Whether seeing the pieces in situ, as it occurred on Lewis, created this idea of the importance of place is unknown, but it will be discussed in further detail later.

iii. *26 Treasures* at the National Museum of Scotland

Just a few months after the *Unmasked* exhibition wrapped up its tour of Scotland, the National Museum of Scotland utilised the Lewis Chessmen in another special display. Titled *26 Treasures*, the concept was to take twenty-six objects from the collection and have writers, who were paired randomly with the objects, create stories around them using only sixty-two words (“26 Treasures at the National Museum of Scotland,” 2011). Authors were allowed “to capture something about the object in whatever style they wished” and the literacy styles were as varied as the authors creating them (“26 Treasures at the National Museum of Scotland,” 2011). The inspiration for this project came from an idea at the Victoria and Albert (V&A) Museum in 2010. The V&A saw an issue of visitors failing to engage with “extraordinary objects” and noted that in a museum, more times than not, “we simply nod and move on” (Simmons, 2012). So, the idea was to explore “how to create emotional connections between objects and individuals” (Simmons, 2012). After the success of the project, which turned out “beautiful, surprising, lyrical, sometimes comical” work, the V&A decided to take the concept to other institutions around the UK” (Simmons, 2012). In addition to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, other institutions included were the National Library of Wales, the Ulster Museum, and the National Museum of Scotland.

The “treasures” were all items from the National Museum of Scotland’s Scottish collection and spanned the length and breadth of the nation’s history. The list of items to be included were selected by curators of the Scottish galleries. According to NMS Learning Manager Claire Allan, the curators compiled a long list with consideration to “the star objects

featured on our website, the objects feted by our volunteer guides as touching a chord with our visitors, and objects that might appeal to the writers in terms of their hidden stories, their wider connections, as well as having enough visual appeal to attract the visitor to look again” (Allan, 2011). In making the final selection, the curators had to create a sense of balance of the “big names,” including the Lewis Chessmen, with “real people’s stories” and “a smattering of science and archaeology” to produce a “strong spread of treasure” (Allan, 2011). The museum valued the chess pieces for their importance as a “treasure” to be listed amongst the twenty-six contenders.

The Lewis Chessmen were numbered treasure seven, as the items were listed chronologically. V. Campbell, the author chosen to write about the pieces, asked the National Museum of Scotland if she could select them as she had experience writing about Vikings. In a personal email from January 2013, she noted that the matching may have been serendipity, her request, or a bit of both (Personal Email, January 2013). Campbell wrote a novel for teens called *Viking Gold*, which is a “historical action adventure about Redknee, a 16-year-old Viking boy in search of America” (“Author Details, V. Campbell,” n.d.).

The following is her 62-word entry for the project:

Berserker: “I am bored – what are we waiting for?”

King: “Till the time is right.”

Queen: “Do not listen to him- he can never make up his mind.”

Berserker: “But we have been waiting so long...”

King: “You lead the charge, then.”

Berserker: “Will you follow?”

Queen: “Ha- I’ve never seen him get off his bum!”

King: “I will come...when the time is right...”



Figure 56: Scanned image of V Campbell's 62-word entry for the 26 *Treasures* project at NMS. From a booklet from the project, copyright National Museums Scotland.

Her story was included in a publicised booklet with photographs of the three pieces mentioned. Campbell communicated that she researched the Chessmen and discovered that they had lain undiscovered in a Lewis beach for many years, and she found it "dreadfully sad" that they may have never been able to fulfil their purpose as chess pieces (Personal Email, January 2013). She also noted that as she writes for young people, she is:

hideously attracted to the idea that writing should contain some sort of moral, or at least something to get people thinking. Therefore, it seemed a natural fit to write about waiting, lost opportunity and procrastination - the time, of course, is never right. On one view, you make your own opportunities (an outlook that fits with the Viking mindset, I think). And of course, it is a bit of a gift that the pieces are mostly political

or martial characters; the idea of a sleeping army being prevalent in northern European folklore (Personal Email, January 2013).

She thought many of the writers in the project would take a more “solemn approach to their pieces” and she wanted to be “a counterpoint to that sort of serious writing” (Personal Email, January 2013). It was also her opinion that “a light, irreverent tone suits the pieces as she thought “they look a bit naughty and full of mischief” (Personal Email, January 2013).

The project was not a full exhibit where items were brought into a specific space together. The National Museum of Scotland created a trail map of the works, which allowed visitors to “to track down the objects across the galleries’ six floors” (“26 Treasures at the National Museum of Scotland,” 2011). At each item’s display, a QR code was utilised, and visitors were encouraged to scan it with their smartphone to be able to hear the authors read the pieces aloud (“26 Treasures at the National Museum of Scotland”). According to the National Museum of Scotland’s Head of Digital Media, Hugh Wallace, the QR code was an important addition for the ability of visitors to utilise “technology in a flexible way” because there is an “increasing importance of mobile phones as part of the digital museum, and – as ever – good content needing to be at the heart of meaningful online experiences” (Wallace, 2012). Wallace also noted that the whole idea of the project was to give objects a voice, so the museum decided that, quite literally, the voice of the author should be heard once the code was scanned (2012). This project took place during period of time where in museums, utilisation of technologies in gallery spaces, such as QR codes, was a novel idea. Wallace was quick to point out that the “QR code is merely the trigger, and what follows allows people to listen to that audio on an as wide an array of mobile devices as possible,” thereby making sure the focus is always on the quality of content that enhances the museum experience (Wallace, 2012).



Figure 57: Photo of the chessmen with the *26 Treasures* QR code so that visitors could scan and listen to V Campbell read aloud, her 62-word creation about the pieces. From the “26 Treasures Mobile Experience” blog, <https://blog.nms.ac.uk/2012/01/04/26-treasures-the-mobile-experience/>. Accessed 15/05/2018.

iv. *The Game of Kings: Medieval Ivory Chessmen from the Isle of Lewis*

At nearly the same time as the *26 Treasures* feature of the Chessmen, the British Museum’s portion of the hoard was on display in another part of the world. The pieces travelled to New York to be part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Cloisters exhibition titled *The Game of Kings: Medieval Ivory Chessmen from the Isle of Lewis*. The exhibition, which took place from 15 November 2011- 22 April 2012 was centred entirely around thirty-four pieces from the British Museum’s collection. The Cloisters “is the branch of the Museum dedicated to the art, architecture, and gardens of medieval Europe” so it is fitting that the Chessmen went on display at that locale (“The Met Cloisters,” n.d.). It was the first time such a large collection of the pieces had ever travelled outside the UK, a monumental feat in logistics alone (Evans, 2012). The name *The Game of Kings*, may have been intentionally used, as at the time of the

exhibit, the wildly popular television show, *Game of Thrones* was just beginning its run. The correlation between the title for the exhibition and the television show may be tenuous, or it could have been a clever way exhibition designers and curators triggered the public's consciousness of popular culture in order to bring forth a wider audience to the exhibition. Of course, this could also be complete conjecture and the title could have had no connective meaning at all.

The exhibition was set in the Cloisters' Romanesque Hall with a design layout described as though it is the "final position of a famous modern chess match. The fallen pieces, organized by type, and displayed in auxiliary cases along the edges of the room. For example, all fallen pawns will be shown together in one case" (Evans, 2012). The mere fact the hall is titled "Romanesque" correlated beautifully as many scholars believe the pieces fall into this artistic classification. Met curators utilised some of the Museum's own ivory chess pieces in the exhibit to present a comparison and contrast with the Lewis collection. The pieces were housed in glass cases, with some of the Chessmen being displayed on black and white chess

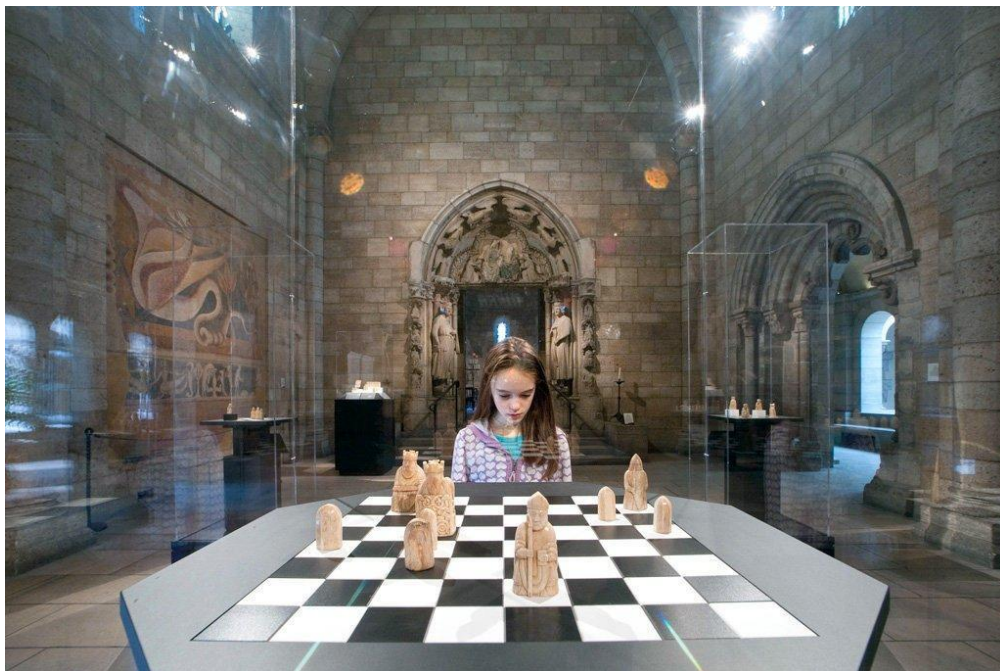


Figure 58: Photo depicting the *Game of Kings* exhibition at the Cloisters in NYC. From *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/18/arts/design/the-game-of-kings-medieval-ivory-chessmen-from-the-isle-of-lewis-at-the-cloisters.html>. Accessed 15/05/2018.

boards. The photo above shows the layout of the exhibition while also showing the unfailingly fitting context the Cloisters' space provided. According to writer and exhibition reviewer Sara Evans, "with its imposing carved stone doorways from twelfth and thirteenth century France, its walls painted with Spanish frescoes and interior with French ecclesiastical stone carvings, it [the Cloisters Romanesque Hall] is the most ideal venue imaginable for the visiting chessmen" (2012). The cases used were completely made of glass and provided amazing visibility on all four sides, no doubt, to allow visitors to have a three hundred, sixty-five-degree access to the pieces. There was a distinct lack of colour (other than the black and white chess board and black plinth displays) in the exhibition space. The completely clear cases may have been intentionally chosen for the Chessmen to coincide with and mimic the Hall's similarly coloured stone walls.

Like the *100 Objects* and *Unmasked* projects, the *Game of Kings* exhibition also utilised an online presence to create further interaction with visitors. The Met has an active blog, and during the time of *The Game of Kings*, museum staff posted twenty-two entries dedicated to elements surrounding the Lewis hoard. Some of these topics included an introduction to Lewis, discussions about walrus ivory subsequent carving styles, the history of the game of chess itself and its comparison to war, a detailed account of the hoard including details such as their armoury and weapons, a comparison to the Museum's own chess pieces, gave information about chess tournaments for children, a biographical look at Frederick Madden, and included writings on ideas of popular culture ("Game of Kings Exhibition Blog," 2011-2012).

The Met also created special activities and events in tandem with the exhibition. As noted in the above paragraph, the museum held chess tournaments for children. These tournaments were held for children whose schools already had chess teams, and top scoring



Figure 59: Children playing with replica Lewis Chessmen sets in tournaments held at the Cloisters, NYC, as part of the *Game of Kings* exhibition. Photo from their blog, <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2011/the-game-of-kings-medieval-ivory-chessmen-from-the-isle-of-lewis/exhibition-blog#!?page=3>. Accessed 51/05/2018.

youngsters were able to compete in the finals with replica Lewis Chessmen sets whilst museum visitors could look on (Wegner, 2012). Educators provided photos of the pieces beforehand, so the children wouldn't see the back of the kings with their long, braided hair and assume it was a queen (Wegner, 2012). After the tournament, lessons were also given to museum visitors if they wished to try their hand at the game (Wegner, 2012). A special lecture was given at the Museum to relate more detailed information to interested visitors. The Met already has a standing series called "Sunday at the Met" where certain relevant topics are discussed. The Met museum curators Barbara Drake Boehm and Charles T. Little and *New York Times* chess columnist Dylan Loeb McClain were joined by the British Museum's Medieval Curator and Lewis Chessmen author James Robinson for a two-hour long discussion covering a variety of topics at one such Sunday session. The discussion can still be viewed on YouTube today ("The Game of Kings: Medieval Ivory Chessmen from the Isle of Lewis," 2012).

v. *The Forgotten Kingdom? The Kingdom of the Man and the Isles*

Another exhibition which utilised the Lewis Chessmen occurred not in Scotland nor London but on the Isle of Man at the Manx Museum. The exhibition was titled *The Forgotten Kingdom? The Kingdom of the Man and the Isles (1000-1300 AD)* and focused on the history of the area as seen through the *Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles*. It was the first time the Chessmen were displayed on the island, and they were exhibited alongside the original *Chronicles* manuscript. Not unlike the temporary return of the Chessmen to Lewis during the *Unmasked* exhibition, the *Chronicles* returning to Man was also seen as a sort of “coming home.” The title of the exhibition with its questioning tone, suggests the museum was looking to relay to visitors that while this part of the island’s history may be forgotten, it was nonetheless still there and needed to be retold. The exhibition took place from 10 November 2012 until 9 March 2013. The highlight of the exhibition was the display of the *Chronicles*, on loan from the British Library, as well as six Lewis Chessmen from the British Museum’s collection. From a personal interview in February 2012 with then-curator Allison Fox about the background of the exhibition, Fox relayed that the purpose of the exhibit was inspired from *Unmasked*, and that they wanted to tell their own history, as the Scots had, using the borrowed *Chronicles* and chessmen (Personal Interview, February 2013). The Manx Museum deemed the chess pieces valuable to be physical representations of their history on the island. A press release for the exhibition written by the museum noted the exhibition would take:

visitors on a journey that began over a thousand years ago when a powerful sea kingdom was formed encompassing the Outer Hebrides, Skye, the Inner Hebrides, Argyll and the Irish Sea. The seat of power was the Isle of Man and from this small island, the Kings of Man and the Isles ruled both the lands and the vital sea route that ran through the heart of what we now know as the British Isles. This trade route brought riches to

and from the kingdom. On display are the precious symbols of wealth and religious power left behind after the Kingdom ended including the exquisitely carved rare chess pieces found on the Isle of Lewis, Viking swords and silver coins with images of kings. There are also Manx artefacts from the time of the Kingdom that are on display for the first time (“Official Opening for the Forgotten Kingdom?,” 2012).

Fox even declared that it may not be outside the realm of thinking that the Chessmen could have been going to the Isle of Man, as it was the seat of power for the Kingdom of the Isles of Man during the time period when the Chessmen were probably made (Personal Interview February 2013).

The exhibition was centred on the tales contained in the *Chronicle*. Display panels described these stories, not as folktales, but as the “true account of the Kingdom of Man and the Isles” (personal notes, *Forgotten Kingdom* exhibition). As you walked into the exhibition space, you were immediately struck with the extremely low lighting of the area. No doubt this was purposefully done to shield the delicate and incredibly old *Chronicles* manuscript from light exposure damage. The *Chronicles* manuscript and relevant information panels were some of the first things seen as you entered the space, creating the context needed to introduce the exhibit. Some of the text panels were lit up from behind, again probably done with a conservation mindset to reduce the need of the blaring sources from overhead. The gallery space also utilised a touch screen feature where visitors could flip through the digitised *Chronicles*, page by page.

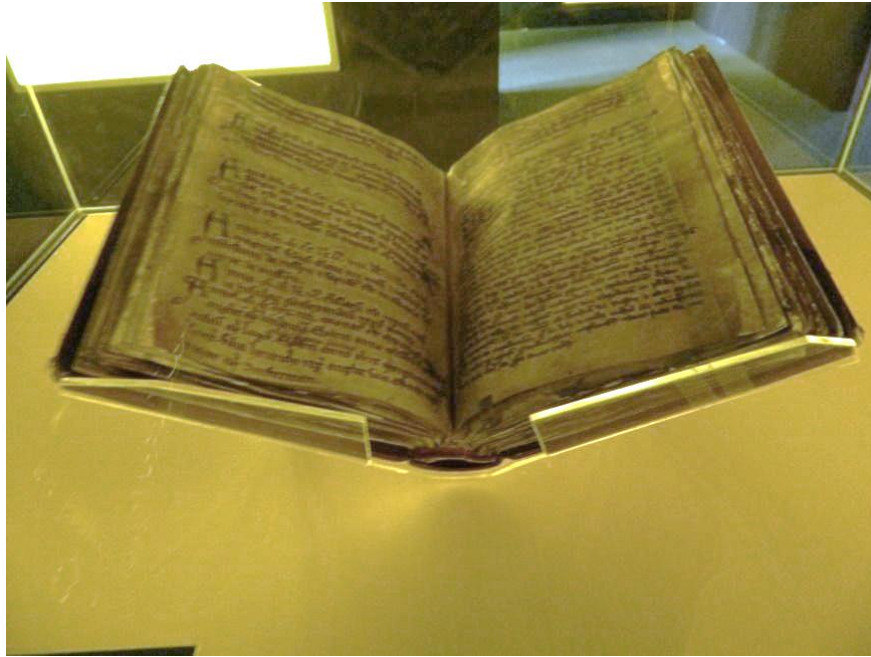


Figure 60: The *Chronicles* manuscript on display in the *Forgotten Kingdom* Exhibition. Personal photograph, February 2013.

The text panels scattered around the space covered thematic categories titled *The Chronicles*, *Wars and Battles*, *The Church*, *The Kings*, *The Queens*, and *Games*. Each of these categories had an associated colour so visitors could follow the storyline of each theme. For instance, *The Kings* sections were all purple because, historically, purple has been associated with royalty.



Figure 61: Gallery space of the *Forgotten Kingdom* exhibition showing coordinating chessmen and colouring used to define sections. Personal Photograph, February 2013.



Figure 62: Lewis Chessmen on display at the *Forgotten Kingdom* exhibition. Personal photograph, February 2013.

Each of the six loaned Lewis pieces also represented these thematic categories. For example, the bishop was utilised to represent *The Church* in the *Chronicles*. The text panels were lined against the walls with interspersed glass cases showing objects related to those categories. The Lewis Chessmen were in the centre of the space in their own glass case. They were displayed



Figure 63: Lewis Chessmen on display at the *Forgotten Kingdom* exhibition. Personal photographs, February 2013.

in a circular shape on a clear riser with no other props.

An online interactive presence for the *Forgotten Kingdom* was not utilised as much as in other exhibitions listed in this chapter. Instead, within the gallery space, there was a small area dedicated to the younger audience. The space featured a large mural by a local Manx artist and depicted the Chessmen in scenes from the *Chronicles*. Also, in this space was a child-size cut out of a berserker to allow for photograph souvenirs. There were also several colouring pages, *Noggin the Nog* books, and dress up clothes from a local costume designer, allowing both children and adults to interact within the gallery space.



Figure 64: Children's area in the *Forgotten Kingdom* exhibition. Personal photograph February 2013.

As noted earlier, there were interactive elements in the space in the form of touch screens, but also, there was an audio element which added recordings of Manx songs to the atmosphere. This was piped into the entire space, so there was no control if visitors wanted to

listen or not. In the activity space, there was also a competition hosted by the banking firm, Lloyds TSB, who were patrons of the exhibition. The winner of the competition would receive



Figure 65: A competition to win a set of replica Lewis Chessmen in the *Forgotten Kingdom* exhibition. Personal photograph, February 2013.

a replica set of Lewis Chessmen and a gift pack.

There were only a few special events planned around the exhibition. The opening evening activities saw attendance by local dignitaries and relevant donors, there was music from a local musician, and the catering consisted of items inspired “by the Isle of Man and its links with Scotland” (“Official Opening for the Forgotten Kingdom?,” 2012). Dr. David H.

Caldwell also attended to give a talk on the significance of the links between the Isle of Man and Scotland. The British Museum film, *Masterpieces of the British Museum: The Lewis Chessmen*, was also played on a continuous loop in a viewing space outwith the gallery. Some educational themed activities occurred too including a “make your own chessmen” event, which--according to Fox--was “well attended” (Personal Email, 15 May 2018). During the exhibition, the local post office decided to issue a special collection which featured the Lewis Chessmen and the *Chronicles*. The Isle of Man is a self-governing entity with its own Parliament but is considered a dependant of the British Crown. This self-governing quality allowed the local post office to produce the series of six stamps which featured one of each of



Figure 66: Scan of set of six Lewis Chessmen stamps from the Isle of Man Stamps and Coins. Personal collection.



Figure 67: Scan of inside stamps packaging which gives information on the Lewis pieces. From the Isle of Man Stamps and Coins. Personal collection.

the Lewis pieces. Special packaging, which contained the stamps, described the exhibition and a quick history of both the *Chronicles* and Lewis Chessmen. Curator Fox, who wrote the contents, reiterated the ideas that the Chessmen may have been going to the Isle of Man with the following inclusion in the included brochure:

Was the Isle of Lewis the place where they would be used? Were four chess sets on their way from Trondheim to be split up and traded within the kingdom? Were they on their way to the power base of the kingdom...were the Lewis Chessmen on their way to the Isle of Man? (2013)

Like Scotland with the Lewis Chessmen, the Isle of Man has encountered controversy over their national treasure: The *Chronicles* manuscript. According to a British Library publication (now unavailable) which approved the loan of the *Chronicles* for the *Forgotten Kingdom* exhibition, a restitution “campaign” had taken place in previous years (“Recommendation for the Loan...,” 2007). Apparently in 1997, the then Director of Manx National Heritage asked that the manuscript, which was on loan to the island at the time, be allowed to stay for three years, which was refused by the British Library (“Recommendation for the Loan...,” 2007). This document cited another organisation, the Celtic League, as the instigators of a restitution campaign. Known as a political organisation with strong ties to the repatriation of objects with national ties such as the Lewis Chessmen, the Celtic League continues to campaign for the return of the *Chronicles* to the Isle of Man. A 2007 loan of the manuscript was granted however, the British Library ensured a stricter loan agreement was in place which ensured the item would be returned after the exhibition was over. According to this document, at the time of this newer loan, there was “an online campaign and petition organised by the Isle of Man newspapers for the *Chronicles* to be transferred to the island for permanent display” (“Recommendation for the Loan...,” 2007). In 2008, the Chief Secretary

of the Isle of Man Government sent a formal request that the manuscript be sent back to the Island on a permanent loan basis or, failing that, a long-term loan (“Recommendation for the Loan...,” 2007). The request was denied by the British Library Board, but they stated they would be happy to “consider any reasonable request in the future” such as previous loans of “6 months’ duration every 10 years” (“Recommendation for the Loan...,” 2007).

The success of the exhibition is hard to know, as according to Fox, they do not keep visitor figures for special exhibitions (Personal Email, 15 May 2018). Fox also stated that merchandise was sold in the gift shop courtesy of the National Museum of Scotland, which is interesting as the pieces utilised in the exhibit came from the British Museum (Personal Email, 15 May 2018). As previously mentioned, the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland utilise the face pieces in their portions of the hoard for merchandising. In this case, visitors to the Manx Museum who took purchased replica pieces would not have been taking home Chessmen they saw in the exhibition.

vi. *Vikings: Life and Legend*

As we have seen in this chapter, the British Museum organises large exhibitions with major collaborations. The most recent special exhibition (to date of this thesis) which included the Lewis Chessmen on display was called *Vikings: Life and Legend*. This blockbuster show was the first major exhibition related to Vikings that the Museum held in over thirty years. The exhibition took place from 6 March - 22 June 2014 and was a collaborative effort involving the National Museum of Denmark, the British Museum, and the National Museum in Berlin. Prior to the exhibition’s arrival at the British Museum, it was in Copenhagen at the end of 2013. After the time allotted in London, the exhibit then went to Berlin for display from late 2014 until early 2015. The British Museum’s press release noted that the exhibition featured “many

new archaeological discoveries and objects never seen before in the UK alongside important Viking Age artefacts from the British Museum’s own collection and elsewhere in Britain and Ireland” (Hunter-Tilney, 2014). Included in this display was an authentic Viking warship, various weapons, looted treasures, skeletons, and jewellery (Hunter-Tilney, 2014). Not notated in any British Museum press release was the inclusion of the Lewis Chessmen, a seemingly important collection, as distinguished by their addition to the *100 Objects* list just a few years prior. Other news outlets, which advertised the display, included the Chessmen as one of the features of the exhibition. The British Museum did not. *The Financial Times* noted that the exhibition ended with “the most sophisticated works on display, a magnificent 12th-century set of chess pieces from the Isle of Lewis” which, with the inclusion of the bishop, were a “symbol of the spread of Christianity throughout Scandinavia” (Hunter-Tilney, 2014). *The Guardian’s*



Figure 68: *The Guardian’s* piece on the Viking exhibition featured the Lewis berserkers as the headlining photograph.
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/mar/09/vikings-life-legend-review-british-museum-tim-adams>. Accessed 15/05/2018.

Tim Adams' article showed various object highlights from the exhibition with the Lewis Chessmen berserkers being the first visual at the beginning of his piece. However, he does not mention the pieces in his article at all. An additional *Guardian* article also contained images of

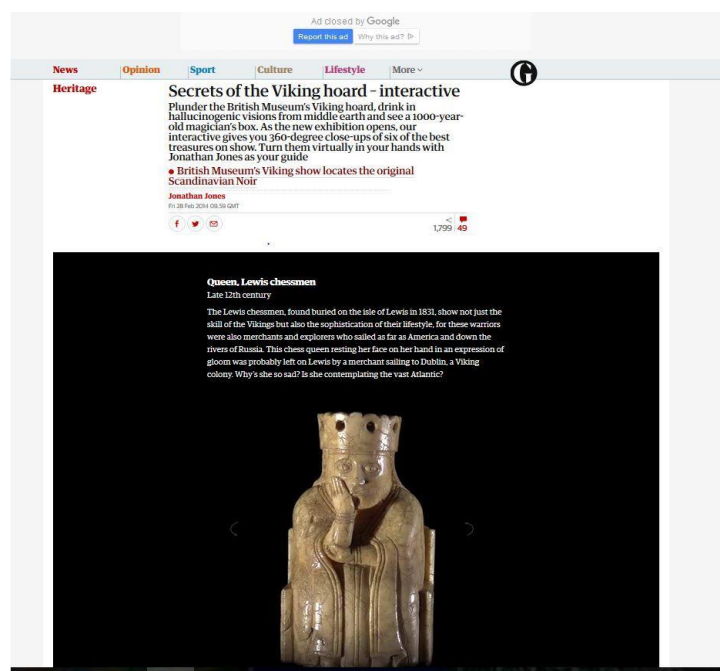


Figure 69: *The Guardian's* Secrets of the Viking hoard interactive as a compliment to the British Museum *Vikings* exhibition featured two Lewis chess pieces. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/ng-interactive/2014/feb/28/vikings-360-degree-interactive-gallery>. Accessed 15/05/2018.

the Lewis Chessmen. A king and a queen were featured on an interactive site where visitors could turn the items in different directions to see more details. The article also gave information on the ties between the pieces and the Scandinavian world, including placing them within the Viking era time period. The author of the piece noted:

the Lewis Chessmen, found buried on the Isle of Lewis in 1831, show not just the skill of the Vikings but also the sophistication of their lifestyle, for these warriors were also merchants and explorers who sailed as far as America and down the rivers of Russia. This chess queen resting her face on her hand in an expression of gloom was probably

left on Lewis by a merchant sailing to Dublin, a Viking colony. Why's she so sad? Is she contemplating the vast Atlantic? (Jones, 2014)

An in-person, and unrelated visit to the exhibition revealed the Chessmen as a surprising addition to the overall display as no indication they would be included was found prior to the visit. Berserkers were utilised extensively because of their connection to the Viking era, but other face pieces were used as well. Unfortunately, no photos could be taken in the gallery space, but memory recalls that the pieces featured at the very end of the exhibition. They were included in a portion of the exhibit where the rise of Christianity could be seen through the inclusion of the bishop alongside the berserker in the set of pieces. It seems slightly strange that the Chessmen, one of *the* most iconic items of the British Museum's collections, would not be included in press information from the Museum itself. From a marketing sense, one would think that their inclusion in the *100 Objects* project would have raised their profile. By including information about their involvement in the blockbuster *Vikings* exhibition may have brought visitors into the Museum to see them both. However, as the exhibition was a one that charged and entrance fee and the fact that members of the public could see the Chessmen on display for free, Museum PR may have concentrated more on the Viking elements of the display, such as the long ship.

As this chapter has shown, special or limited exhibitions play vital roles in museums. The objects included in them can bring in new audiences, create new and or additional streams of revenue, allow for more research to be conducted, let a wider range of audiences to gain access to collections, and generate new relationships between museums through collaborations.

The Lewis Chessmen are valuable to institutions for their exhibition qualities. The pieces' unique characteristics and background provide great content for a variety of topics. When they are included in exhibits, the displays can range from the simple to enhance their

unique features, but the pieces also fit alongside hardier and more powerful designs and themes. Their humanised faces and emotive expressions are universally recognisable to us all, which allows for an instant connection with visitors from all backgrounds. The British Museum values their portion of Lewis hoard to tell a story on a global scale but also, curators and exhibition designers explain and demonstrate how this can then all tie back to the British Nation. The National Museum of Scotland uses and values their Lewis Chessmen collection to tell Scotland's story, its history, and its place within an ever-changing world. And on Lewis, they value the pieces being in situ at "home" to tell the Outer Hebrides' history, but also are items to reflect over for the future ahead.

This chapter has shown that their value stretches outside their traditional homes of London, Edinburgh, and Lewis. The Isle of Mann has, through exhibition, presented the idea that the pieces may have been coming to their shores. This paired with so many mysteriously unanswered questions surrounding the Chessmen have allowed space for conjectures of "what if" and "maybe" to be added to their story. The Manx Museum was able to also tell their island's history through the Lewis hoard in conjunction with their own national treasure, the *Chronicles of the Kings of Mann and the Isles*. The Chessmen's intrinsic value as art pieces has also seen the hoard travel to other countries around the world, where visitors can appreciate the pieces--not for the added value to their countries, but simply as works of art.

Chapter VI: The Exhibition: The Use of the Hoard in Popular Culture

The Lewis Chessmen are undisputed icons of archaeology, culture, and history. In recent years, their popularity has left the realms of the museum space and permeated various facets of everyday life. They have become iconic to a host of media outlets which have created more access to them than they could ever gain only within museum walls. The Chessmen have been featured in a variety of films, books, television shows, video games, merchandise and make frequent appearances on a host of social media sites. This chapter aims to look at their value within popular culture, how they are used, where they are used, and for what reasons. Thus far we have seen their values to scholars and museums, but now we can look at how everyday people utilise and value the Lewis Chessmen through the realm of popular culture.

Popular culture, as defined by Dictionary.com is a grouping of “cultural activities or commercial products reflecting, suited to, or aimed at the tastes of the general masses of people” (“Popular Culture,” n.d.). Academic writers have noted that the term is “infinitely elastic” and “as soon as you try to put your hand on it, it evaporates” (Russell, 1989-1990, 5). This definition makes more sense if one looks at the individual words themselves. Through this breakdown of terms, it is revealed that both individual words are by their very nature, subjective and hard to define. How something is perceived as being popular is based solely on the tastes of the individual or group who is consuming it. What is defined as popular by one person may not be the same to another. Culture is also a notoriously complex term to define. As Williams noted “culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language” (Williams, 1998, 87). Someone’s definition of culture is completely subjective based on a myriad of their backgrounds and experiences. In addition, trying to define what popular culture means has become even more difficult due to the exploration and research of the term through

academia and theoretical perspectives (Moore, 1997, 2). Moore also warned that we must remember that popular culture “is defined not so much by what it is, but by what it is not (1997, 2). Some academics have argued that the idea of popular culture stems from either “a mass culture imposed by an industry to maintain the power of a ruling elite, or alternatively, as a genuine creative cultural expression” (Moore, 1997, 2). In many cases, popular culture can be closely intertwined with material culture, the artefacts and objects a group produces and utilises. In the case of the Lewis Chessmen, there is a unique connection between these tangible and intangible parts of culture.

According to Moore, ideas surrounding popular culture have traditionally been ignored in the museum sector as some institutions believed themselves to be of a higher cultural status. Their entire existence, according to Moore, was simply to portray and communicate this elitist view to the masses (1997, 2). By definition, highbrow culture is “of the nature of or characterised by high culture; rarefied; intellectually demanding” (“Highbrow,” n.d.). The Oxford English dictionary also notes that this term is “somewhat depreciative” in nature as well (“Highbrow,” n.d.). In complete opposition is lowbrow culture or that which is “not highly intellectual or cultured; having a taste for popular culture rather than rarefied artistic or intellectual matters” (“Lowbrow,” n.d.). In an article discussing cultural elitism, Bobby Conselatore noted that through history, there has been “a standoff between ‘highbrow’ and ‘lowbrow’ art” which has “raged for centuries” (2018). Conselatore wrote that “over the last one hundred years of so, this division has begun to disappear” (2018). As times are rapidly changing so too must museums. They now, according to Moore, “exist for the whole of society and therefore...should reflect the history and culture of all” (1997, 4).

The previous chapter discussed museum exhibitions, the traditional “highbrow” side of the Chessmen’s story. This chapter aims to look at how the pieces are utilised and treasured as

important elements of popular culture. The Lewis Chessmen, through their use both in museums and popular culture are bridging the gaps between the high and low and are extremely important examples that reflect our changing society.

i. Books

As previous chapters have identified, the Lewis Chessmen have been utilised for many academic-type books. According to Moore, Conselatore, and the Oxford English Dictionary's definitions, these publications would represent use of the Chessman in the more "highbrow" side of culture. We have seen how Chessmen scholars like Dr. David H. Caldwell, James Robinson, Neil MacGregor, and Neil Stratford have researched and authored professional publications about the Chessmen within the realms of the museum space. Authors in the more mainstream realm of literature and printed materials have also begun to employ the Chessmen to add certain qualities or themes to their own more popularly consumed works. The distinction between these two different kinds of works here is by no means meant to be disparaging against anyone who chooses to read or does not read their works. Although the items presented will not be an exhaustive list, these inclusions have been carefully constructed to demonstrate that the Chessmen are being used at an ever-growing rate as more and more authors in popular culture value various attributes which they wish to reflect in their books.

1) *The Big Four*

Agatha Christie's *Poirot* is the quintessential mystery novel and Christie's legacy as a mystery writer has permeated popular culture in many forms. Though most of her works were written in the early half of the twentieth century, they are still extremely popular today. Poirot as a character, was developed in the 1920s and saw a long use in Christie's novels. A Belgian investigator, Poirot appeared in thirty-three of her novels, numerous short stories, and also

appeared as a character on television, radio, and in films. His reign was so popular that when Christie killed him off in her novel *Curtain* in 1975, he received his own obituary in the New York Times (“Poirot,” n.d.). To this day, he is the only fictional character to receive such an honour. Without doubt, Christie and her character were very pervasive in popular culture. It is within these contexts that the Lewis Chessmen were placed.

The Big Four was first published in 1927 and unlike many of her novels, contained a series of short stories. The context relevant to the Chessmen revolves around a game of chess between two masters of the game. One of the players, Gilmour Wilson, collapses and dies during the game and at first, it is wondered if he was poisoned on accident as his opponent, Russian-born Doctor Savaronoff, a former Revolutionary, could have been the intended victim in the scene. As the story continues through the investigations it is told that Wilson was “quite as usual and was actually moving one of the pieces when he suddenly fell forward - dead!” (Christie, 1927, 81). Poirot and best friend Hastings decide to inspect Wilson’s body at the morgue and find in his pocket, a chessman. Apparently, “a white bishop” was clasped in his hands at the time of death, and we are told it was part of a “very beautiful set of carved ivory chessmen” (Christie, 1927, 83). At Savaronoff’s residence, Poirot examines the chess set and notes they are “exquisite” and proceeds to interview Savaronoff himself (Christie, 1927, 86). Poirot later compares a bishop he took from Savaronoff’s residence with the one found in Wilson’s hand. He finds that the piece found on Wilson had, in fact, contained a metal rod in the centre which electrocuted him through his placement of the piece on the ornately carved silver chess board. Of course, through history, there have been other ivory chessmen but as we have seen, the Lewis hoard is the oldest surviving example. Through the inclusion of the bishop in this fictional story, we may hypothesise that the reference was made to acknowledge the most important example of a chess set containing a bishop, the Lewis hoard. Christie lived in

the UK and through her marriage to archaeologist Max Mallowan, she was able to travel with him and explore finds. She herself became interested in the subject of archaeology and utilised some of her experiences from field work in her novels. While Christie is no longer alive to ask if the Lewis collection was *the* collection of ivory chessmen used in *The Big Four*, knowing her background in archaeology and that she lived in England, it is possible to speculate that



Figure 70: Cover art showing a Lewis bishop. Agatha Christie's 1965 reprint of *The Big Four* from Fontana Publishing.

she knew of the Chessmen. It's fascinating to wonder if she was inspired to use them in her book. One reprint of her novel in 1965, by the now defunct publisher Fontana, shows--very clearly--a Lewis bishop on the front cover art. However, this is the only version of her novel which features one of the Lewis Chessmen. Other reprints show more modern stylised chess pieces. As the publisher of the 1965 print was based in the UK, it is wondered if audiences here would more easily have recognised the piece through its British Museum connections.

2) *Rook, Rhyme and Sinker*

Yet another murder-mystery novel containing the Lewis hoard is called *Rook, Rhyme and Sinker* by R. Michael Phillips. The context in which the Chessmen are involved in the book is an interesting look at their use in modern murder-mystery popular culture. Phillips, like Christie, utilises a detective in his series of books, known as the East London Adventurers Club. The pickpocket-turned police assistant, Ernie Bisquets, is the main character in the novels. *Rook, Rhyme and Sinker* is book two in the series and is based around Ernie's inheritance of a carved ivory chessman from an old "chum" who is found dead in a canal. When Ernie and his cohorts unwrap the parcel left to him from a solicitor, the object is described as looking "like a little Viking crusader" (Phillips, 2011, 37). Ernie in fact, has no idea what he is holding, but thanks to his associates, he is informed that it is a Lewis Chessmen and a rook to be exact (Phillips, 2011, 37). His friends note that they recall that a piece "went missing in that museum years ago" but they believe the missing piece was a queen (Phillips, 2011, 37). We can assume, as this is based in London, that *that* museum refers to the British Museum. One of Ernie's cohorts performs a test of authenticity through the use of a heated hat pin which, when placed onto the piece, leaves a dark mark. The ensuing smell of "a dentist's office" confirmed that the piece was ivory and therefore, authentic (Phillips, 2011, 38). The piece is then described by the author in detail as "a Viking warrior, with a pointed helmet, drilled eyes, and large teeth biting the top of the shield he held in front," clearly, a berserker (Phillips, 2011, 38). The friends also discuss its potential monetary value and how it would prove to be a popular commodity on the Black Market if an unsavoury person were to get hold of it. In the novel, there is a chapter titled *The Lewis Chessmen* (Phillips, 2011). In this chapter, the trio discuss the pieces' origins and history. Phillips included the oral tradition which says the pieces came to be on Lewis by means of a murdering farm hand -- great fodder for a murder-mystery novel.

Phillips evidently did his background research, as he includes their appropriately titled “murky” beginnings, their materiality, the history of the Kings of the Isles of Man, the find story including MacLeod’s cow, and how they came to be at the National Museum of Scotland and the British Museum. In the novel, it is discovered that this piece is a new find, which plays nicely into the scholarly assumption that not all the pieces of the sets were found. The adventure continues with a riddle, which was included with the chess piece. The clue leads the trio to St. Ives, where in a chapel, they find a wooden box inside a sandstone block. This box, which was marked by the royal seal of Malcolm IV of Scotland, contained two complete sets of unknown chess pieces, half of them coloured by a red substance – just as Madden observed himself when they came into the collection at the British Museum (Phillips , 2011,133).

Phillips used the Chessmen, not unlike Christie, to add an air of mystery to his novel. However, unlike Christie, Phillips’ book is modern and uses the pieces as the basis for the entire story. Both authors saw the value of the Chessmen for their air of mystery and how they might convey that quality in their respective novels. In a personal email, Phillips noted that the inspiration for the book came after a long ago viewing at the British Museum which “lit the spark” for it (Personal Email, 17 May 2018). He also said that he likes adding historical contexts to his works. At the time he was pulling the novel together, he was looking for a “historical hook,” and at the time “the chessmen were making a world tour” which to him “seemed like perfect timing” (Personal Email, 17 May 2018). He noted his growing excitement as he researched the collection and found them to be “a mystery in themselves” which enviably added great context for his novel. The idea that the chess sets might not be complete also fit well into his novel of crime because of their value, remarked Phillips. He mentioned that since:

there are so few of them, they are incredibly valuable. Because the possibility others might be found, it opens an additional possibility any newly found pieces

could fall victim to unscrupulous dealers or any number of other criminal elements looking to cash in on their discovery. Perfect setup for a crime (Personal Email, 17 May 2018).

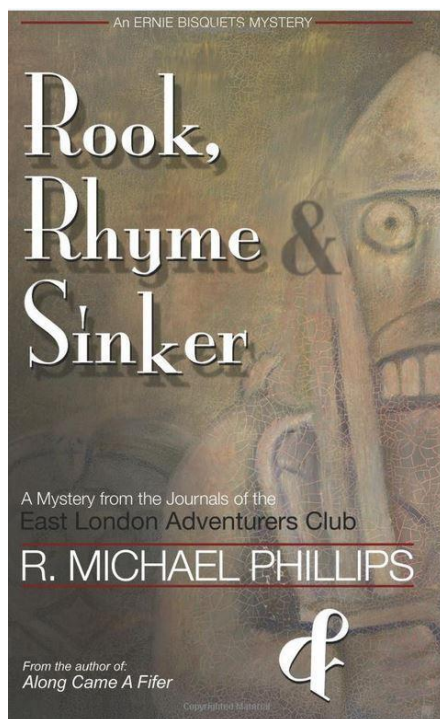


Figure 71: Front cover of *Rook, Rhyme and Sinker* by R. Michael Phillips featuring a Lewis berserker.

3) *Doctor Who: Dark Horizons*

In the twenty-first century, Doctor Who has become a highly recognised character and is wildly popular in modern culture. In 2012, Jenny T. Colgan wrote the novel *Doctor Who: Dark Horizons*. Colgan, traditionally a romance writer, took on the task of writing one of the add-on novels which are associated with the popular television show. In many interviews, she communicated that she's an "avid" Doctor Who fan. As a little girl, she even won a contest to meet Doctor Who as portrayed by Peter Davidson who unfortunately, mistook her as a boy ("Doctor Who in Lewis Chessmen Story in New BBC Book," 2012). These books are a type of fanfiction and each is considered stand-alone, but the authors do try to tie the stories in to the television series when possible. The books are written by a variety of authors, are published

by the BBC under the News Series Adventures (NSA) categorisation. *Dark Horizons* features the Eleventh Doctor as portrayed by actor Matt Smith.

The story opens with the Doctor sighing over a chess board and absentmindedly knocking over a king piece. He was looking for a chess partner, as the problem with playing with yourself, he noted, was that “you always lost” (Colgan, 2012, 7). The Doctor made a mental note not to play with Bobby Fischer again as it “had gone very wrong” (Colgan, 2012, 7). The novel then turns to a set of chess players, Henrik and Annar, who are playing the game on a Viking long ship. The pair are playing secretly, away from prying eyes as the set is the bosuns’ (a ship officer) “second most precious piece of cargo” (Colgan, 2012, 7). The chess set, according to Henrik’s recollection, “had been packed up well” and “was being taken to Iceland as part of the dowry gift, as the Duke of Trondheim prepared to marry his daughter to Gissar Polvaderson, to cement the bonds between their two lands” (Colgan, 2012, 8). The pieces were crafted to resemble the intended bride and groom. It is told that the pieces had “been made over four moons by the finest bone-worker in Trondheim, and were were the most precious, beautiful objects Henrik had ever seen” (Colgan, 2012, 9). He also noted that their “cool beauty suggested luxury and leisure time” (Colgan, 2012, 9). Out of nowhere, a “terrible screaming rent the air” and the pieces ended up tipped over on the deck (Colgan, 2012, 10). The plot then returns to the Doctor, who emerged from his TARDIS on “a flat stony shore” in the twelfth century (Colgan, 2012, 11). The book then jumps back to the long ship, where the loud noise continues, and we are told that there is a prisoner on board who is shouting to be let out. The prisoner turns out to be the intended bride. Then, a flash in the sky produced a wall of fire, engulfing the ship. The story then returns to the Doctor, who was striding “cheerfully down the beach” while on the hunt for a chess set (Colgan, 2012, 25). However, the “prospect of brokering some kind of reasonable peace deal between some hardworking, peaceable island

folk and a bunch of marauding Vikings was perking him up to no end” but he noted, that as this was Scotland, “a ruckus might be part of the fun” (Colgan, 2012, 25-26). The Doctor noticed the burning ship and proceeds to try and rescue those on board. The ship seems to be alight by some alien creature that is able to burn on surface of the water. The Vikings make it to shore and reluctantly are welcomed, after the Doctor convinced the local Chieftain, to allow them to make peaceful landfall. The Doctor stays to try and help the Vikings and villagers battle against this alien power. In several instances in the novel, the Doctor plays chess with a young village boy who really has no concept of the game. The Doctor describes a piece and a pawn, which the boy pronounces as “prawn,” and the Doctor quips that “many, many people think that” (Colgan, 2012, 219). The boy mentions the likeness of the intended bride to that of one of the queens, and we are told that “there were two carved likeness of the princess, one in red and one in white” (Colgan, 2012, 219). Evidently the boy is quite young as he is fascinated with the “horsies” in the collection. The Doctor explains that “it is quite hard to win with just these horsies” (Colgan, 2012, 220).

In an interview, Colgan relayed her interest in using the pieces for the novel. In the *Edinburgh Festival Magazine*, Scottish-born Colgan noted that her favourite exhibit at the National Museum of Scotland are the Lewis Chessmen. She had “always found them so fascinating and quirky, so recognisably human” and that she loved “the idea that while there are plenty of theories as to how they ended up so far from home, nobody really knows quite how they got there or who they were for” (“On Who’s Horizons?,” n.d.). She told the interviewer that she also found inspiration from a piece of carved stone which was displayed near the chessmen (“On Who’s Horizons?,” n.d.). The carving she saw was in the “shape of a longboat,” which “riveted her” and caused her to wonder “who drew it? What boat was it? Was it friend or foe?” (“On Who’s Horizons?,” n.d.). Colgan noted that those objects were her

inspirations for the book. She also told the interviewer when she went back sometime later, the carving she had seen had been removed, and no one at the museum seemed to know what she was talking about when she described the stone (“On Who’s Horizons?,” n.d.). The Doctor, according to Colgan, created the perfect premise for this inspiration, as he “loves mysteries, of course he loves Scotland, [and] everybody knows that and he loves chess” (“On Who’s Horizons?,” n.d.). Colgan takes advantage of the hoard’s association with Vikings but also sees them interacting with villagers in a land that today is Scotland. She recognised their human qualities through the anthromorphisation of the pieces into real-life people. There are no depictions of the chessmen on either the cover art or within the novel. Of all the chess sets through space and time, Colgan’s inclusion of the pieces in tandem with the iconic character of Doctor Who, surreptitiously attached value to them through this use in the realm of popular culture.

4) *The Chessman*

Another book in the adult-realm of chessmen-inspired works is by the extremely popular author Peter May. May has found international success with his crime/fiction genre of novels, including the well-known *Lewis Trilogy Series*. The trilogy’s books are each named in relation to something on the Isle of Lewis. The third novel in the series is titled *The Chessmen* and references the pieces found on the island. May noted in a personal email that “each book involves elements that are unique to the culture and location” (Personal Email, 30 May 2017). The series is murder-mystery in style but has added inclusions of the thriller genre as well. May found world-wide success with the series and has garnered critical acclaim from various awarding agencies. This series put a bright spotlight on an area of the world which rarely gets so much attention.

Scottish-born May was originally a script writer for television shows in the UK. His biography reflects his creation of three “major television drama series” and that he “presided over two of the highest rated series’ in his homeland before quitting television to concentrate on his first love, writing novels” (“About Peter May,” n.d.). One of those series he co-created and produced was titled *Machair*, an extremely popular Gaelic soap opera filmed on the Isle of Lewis. Filmed between 1992 and 1998, his work on *Machair* was his “first introduction to the Outer Hebrides” (Personal Email, 30 May 2017). He noted that he:

spent six years immersed in the local life and culture during the making of the series on location ... that the experience and its profound effect on him was a direct influence on his decision to write a story set there more than fifteen years later. (Personal Email, 30 May 2017)

The plot of *The Lewis Trilogy* revolves around one main character, Fin Macleod, a police detective who has come back to the island where he was born and raised to solve a series of murders that take place over the three books. In the last book of the series, *The Chessmen*, Fin has relocated to the island permanently after finding out he has a son he never knew. Fin is now working as a security guard on a private estate where he’s investigating illegal poaching. The story’s plot revolves around the reuniting of Fin with an old schoolmate, Whistler, and their discovery of a crashed plane at the bottom of a drained loch. The plane just happened to contain the body of a mutual friend. Whistler lives in Uig, the proposed find site of the Chessmen. Whistler is a known local poacher. Upon reuniting with Fin, the reader is told that Whistler makes a living by doing odd jobs to get by, including picking up driftwood. The driftwood is “fine, dry bleached wood” which he uses to make “carvings of the Lewis Chessmen for the tourists” (May, 2013, 30). The reader is given a “view” of “giant chessmen lined up against the wall” in his cottage. Whistler says:

remember Fin, how they taught us at school that when Malcolm Macleod found the wee warriors hidden in that cove just down there at the head of Uig beach, he thought they were sprites of elves and was scared shitless. Scared enough to take them to the minister at Baile na Cille. Imagine how scared he'd have been of those big bastards! (May, 2013, 30)

Whistler hauls an example, a bishop, onto his table and Fin has a closer look reflecting that:

Whistler, apparently, had unexpected talents. It was a beautifully sculptured figure, a minutely accurate replica, down to the smallest detail. The folds in the bishop's cloak, the fine lines combed through the hair beneath his mitre. The originals were between three and four inches tall. These were anything from two and a half to three feet. No doubt Whistler could have found employment in the Viking workshops in Trondheim where the actual pieces were thought to have been carved out of walrus ivory and whales' teeth in the twelfth century (May, 2013, 30-31).

The reader is told that Whistler had got a commission to produce the pieces in his house for the "Chessmen gala day," where it is revealed that:

"they are bringing them home. All seventy-eight pieces... for one day! They should be in Uig year-round. A special exhibition. Not stuck in a museum in Edinburgh and London. Then maybe folk would come to see them, and we could generate some income here." (May, 2013, 31)

It is also revealed that the giant pieces were commissioned for "some kind of giant chess game on the beach" (May, 2013, 31). Later in the conversation, Whistler explains to Fin what a berserker is, showing the sample he has carved. He described it as having "crazy bulging eyes" with "the mad bastard biting the top off his shield" but that he had "taken a few liberties with

[his] version” (May, 2013, 32-33). His version, it turns out, was in the likeness of one of their friends, Big Kenny, and Whistler states he may give it to the named man at the gala. When Whistler goes missing and Fin goes into his house to look for him, he notices the Chessmen, “lined up along the wall, silent witnesses lurking in the dark. But witnesses to what?” (May, 2013, 193). Upon discussion of the gala day later in the scene, it is noted that the pieces, which are returning to the island, are displayed in the church whose minister was the one responsible for assisting their discoverer, Malcolm Macleod, when they were originally unearthed. The reader learns that:

apparently, they are going to have a couple of real chess masters playing a game with the originals. And each move’s going to be relayed to a guy with a walkie-talkie down there on the beach. Then they will move the men on the big board to mirror the game in the church.” (May, 2013, 201)

Towards the end of the novel the gala day arrives and once again, the emphasis is on the return of *all* the chess pieces “to their last resting place for just one day” (May, 2013, 335). Interestingly, May notes that many of the pieces are housed in the British Museum, “that repository of stolen artefacts from around the world,” and despite eleven being in Edinburgh, they were “still a long way from home” (May, 2013, 335). Fin recalls the discussion with Whistler about how their return would generate income. As Fin approaches the beach, he confirms Whistler’s prediction as there are “hundreds of cars and a string of coaches parked up at the side of the road and along the machair, and a thousand or more people on the beach, which had turned, at low tide, into something like a fairground” (May, 2013, 336). Some of the events on the beach that Fin witnesses included pitched tents, boat trips, helicopter rides, a bouncy house, stalls offering games, sheep-milking trials, and haggis-throwing competitions (May, 2013, 336). The focus, as explained, is on the church where the pieces are being held

“under tight security” and where “two chess masters were engaged in a battle of wits with thirty-two of the original pieces” (May, 2013, 336). The giant chessboard displays Whistler’s chessmen, “proud Viking warriors strutting across their black and white battle ground in synchronisation with the game being played in the church” (May, 2013, 337). Fin muses that Whistler, who has died during the course of the novel, “would be proud to see his carvings animated in this way” (May, 2013, 337). Later, forensic photos of Whistler’s death scene reveal that his outstretched hand was pointing to one of his chessmen, the berserker. As recalled, this is a piece that Whistler had carved to resemble one of their friends, Kenny and was key to solving Whistler’s murder.

Unlike some of the novels which use the chess pieces as accessories to the story, May values the pieces so much that they are an essential element in his novel. May tied them to the land and its people and, in the end, they assist in solving a murder. In a personal email, May relayed that he gleaned his source materials “both in print and from local experts” which is interesting in context of the written novel. Throughout, there is an overriding sense that the pieces “belong” on the island, a topic which will be further discussed in the next chapter. This idea reflects the Scottish Government’s sentiments that they should be repatriated, but interestingly, the novel points out that even though they are partially in Edinburgh, it is still not close enough for the locals in the novel. May also noted that Whistler’s character was “inspired by an artist on the island” who also makes giant replicas of the pieces (Personal Email, 30 May 2017). These pieces can be seen scattered around Lewis at various locations including at the proposed find site. The inclusion of the gala day and the symbolic re-joining of the pieces is one that may reflect the wishes of some of the locals that May interviewed for the novel. May paints the gala day as a mixture of the old and new, the circus-like atmosphere in juxtaposition with the use of the old objects for their intended purpose as a game. Layer upon layer of

symbolism is woven together to create this scene. This section of the novel is symbolic and reflects Lewis itself-- a modern island, trying to hold on to its traditions and customs.

Despite the novel's popularity and acclaim, there have been no direct correlations between the Chessmen and the novel in terms of revenue streams. Unlike some of the other authors, he does not utilise the images of the pieces on his cover art. He does, however, have an embedded YouTube video on his website which features a montage of photographs both from his research for the book and of the Chessmen. The opening of this video begins with several photos of the Chessmen themselves, and then pans to photos of the land. There is also

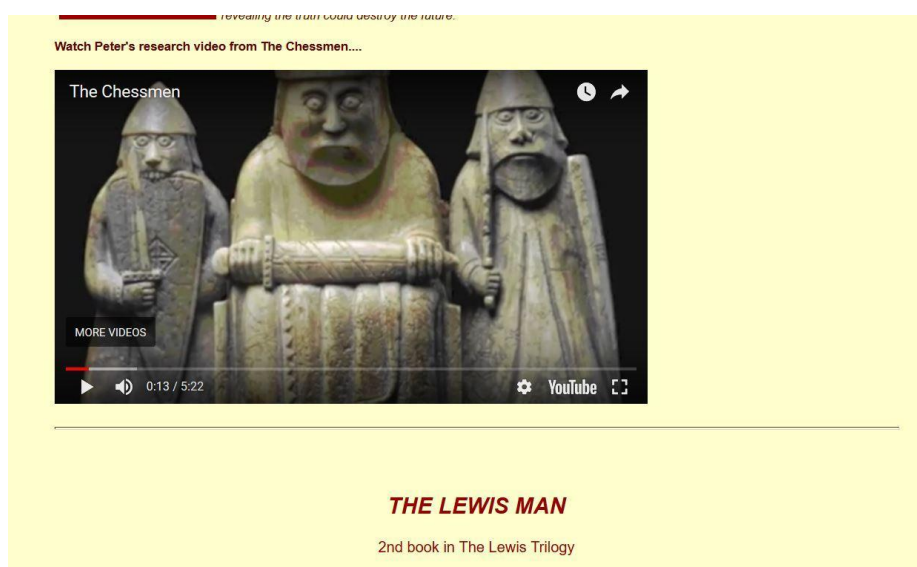


Figure 72: Screenshot of the embedded YouTube video on Peter May's website. The Lewis Chessmen are the first image watchers view when the video begins. From Peter May's website, <http://www.ur-web.net/PeterMayMain/lewispage.html#hebrides> but also on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itDX1Z3TpqI>. Accessed 21/05/2018.

a tour on Lewis of "Peter May's Trilogy" which allows visitors to the island to view locales discussed in the novel, including the beach where the Chessmen were found. One such tour, the *Blackhouse Tour*, is guided through areas in Ness where the books took place. The tour company charges interested parties £10 for the experience ("The Blackhouse Tour," n.d.). On the website, *Visit Outer Hebrides*, a tour map has been generated to coincide with May's books, allowing fans to visit places in the novel, including Whistler's House in Ardroil. The *Visit*

Outer Hebrides tour map mentions the connection of this site as the Lewis hoard's find spot. However, a different map of the area produced by the *Outer Hebrides Tourist Board*, makes no mention of Whistler's House in conjunction with the pieces' find spot ("Peter May Trilogy-Visit Whistler's House Ardroil," n.d.). In a personal email, May relayed that he himself purchased a replica set whilst living on the island during his time producing *Machair*, and that his favourite is the berserker, as the "wild-eyed warrior is particularly vivid and appealing" to him (30 May 2017). It is no wonder the berserker is utilised for these characteristics in his novel, as May saw the value because of their history, their ties to the island, and their humanistic expressions.

5) *Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure*

The last book to explore here is quite different than what has been listed so far. *Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure* is graphic novel, specifically from the Manga genre. Manga is the extremely popular Japanese comic book art form that has come to saturate popular culture in recent years. This type of book can be classified in either the adult or child genre, as a range of ages enjoy Manga. Manga can cover a range of topical genres including mystery, romance, horror, detective, and suspense, to name a few. This novel was written by artist Hoshino Yukinobu. It follows the chronicles of Professor Munakata, who has been a character in Manga since the 1990s. His stories are mystery in genre and after a visit to the British Museum, Yukinobu was "inspired by the unique setting that the museum could offer for a Professor Munakata mystery" ("Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure," n.d.). Several websites tout the book as an "exclusive" which "was inspired by the iconic objects of the British Museum" ("Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure," n.d.). The British Museum created an exhibition showcasing Yukinobu's work from the end of 2009 until 2010.

Yukinobu created special sketches for the exhibition, which, eventually, were utilised to create the book a year later.

The story opens with the Professor arriving at the British Museum where he is then shown around by a translator. The Professor gives a lecture at the museum as he is a well-known folklorist. That evening police are called to Stonehenge where they discover the stones have vanished and in their place are a set of chess pawns. The police visit the British Museum where it is revealed the pawns are part of the Lewis hoard, but curators are convinced they are copies despite their precise manufacture (Yukinobu, 2011, 52). The Professor is informed that the pawns have “another role, as a hostage” (Yukinobu, 2011, 52). Interestingly, on the adjoining page where this information is given, the Professor runs from the room of the Lewis Chessmen directly to the Parthenon Marbles questioning “is not Greece calling for the return of the famous Elgin marbles?” (Yukinobu, 2011, 52). The irony of the Lewis Chessmen being in the same scene where the Marbles are included and are paralleled as hostages is not lost on readers who understand the conflicted histories of both collections. Both collections have been asked to be released from their “captor,” in this case, the British Museum. The Professor even asks his assistant, “what other objects in the museum may have had repatriation claims in the past?” (Yukinobu, 2011, 55). It is later revealed that the Professor is actually a supporter of the British Museum and is in fact against repatriation of these contested objects. Johnathan Clements of MangaUK noted that, “Professor Munakata is a true friend of the BM, who recognises that more people will see these antiquities, for free, in the centre of London than if they are scattered around the world (n.d.). In the Marbles’ gallery, a Lewis bishop remains to create a sort of bread trail of chess pieces through the galleries to other objects which have had

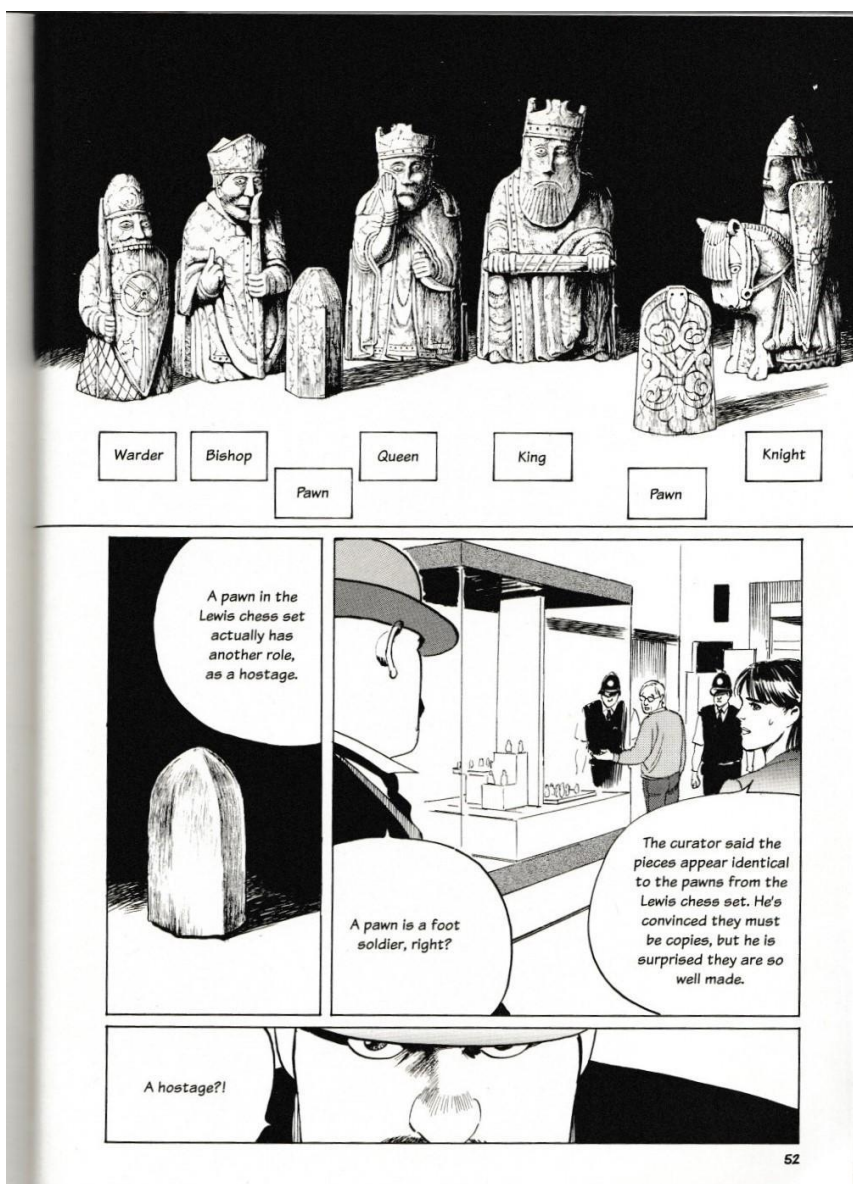


Figure 73: Scan of page 52 of Hoshino Yukinobu's *Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventures* featuring the Lewis hoard.

calls for repatriation. A stone slab in the museum displayed a ransom note with the demand for these objects to be returned to their originating countries or else the stones of Stonehenge would be demolished. The fictional curator, Victor French, bears a striking similarity to Lewis Chessmen aficionado and British Museum Curator Irving Finkle. He comes into the scene to say that the pieces in the British Museum case may in fact, be the fakes. The pieces make several other appearances throughout the novel, as do many other significant and iconic pieces

in the Museum. Yukinobu uses the Lewis queen's facial expressions, described as "turning pale" after being displayed between a pair of lion statues (Yukinobu, 2011, 158).

Due to the Professor's staunch position against repatriation, it may be that the author himself also holds such beliefs. The mutually beneficial joint publication gave the British Museum a platform to contest its various calls for repatriation, but it also gave Yukinobu access to new audience streams who may have never had exposure to Manga before. Yukinobu's usage of the Chessmen in his adventure-filled graphic novel show how he values the pieces as icons of history, of mystery, and of controversy. Through his use of objects such as the Lewis Chessmen, what originally was just a few simple sketches created on a visit to the British Museum turned into a partnership with a large institution, created a pathway for exposure in the English-speaking world, and garnered a new source of revenue for the author.

ii. Children's Books

The Chessmen have played roles in a series of children's books as well. As we will see, many times, children's authors find value in the pieces' humanistic faces to create a sense of whimsy which is more readily relatable to younger audiences.

1) *The Sleeping Army*

Author Francesca Simon, who is the creator of the extremely popular UK children's book series *Horrid Henry*, also wrote *The Sleeping Army* in 2011. This novel, intended for children aged eight and over, follows the tale of a young girl, Freya, who is living in a London that is not like what we know today. The twist to the story is that the people of Britain still worship Viking Gods. The inclusion of the Chessmen is first seen when Freya is with her father, a security guard at the British Museum. Freya wanders the halls of the Museum and is drawn

to the pieces, which were “in the centre of the room” (Simon, 2011, 11). Freya peers at their “pale, golden-brown figures” and reads their descriptive label but carries on looking at them, noting they appear:

weary and glum, with bulging, startled eyes, frowning mouths, and hunched shoulders. Some of them appeared positively disgruntled. Mostly they looked sad, as if something terrible had happened, something they were helpless to do anything about except brood for eternity. (Simon, 2011, 12)

Freya “especially liked the ferocious-looking berserkers” and recalled “dressing up and running around snarling and attacking each other” in primary school (Simon, 2011,12-13). Displayed near the pieces was a carved ivory ceremonial horn of Viking origin. Unable to resist, Freya blows the horn, causing cataclysmic noises and the upsetting of numerous displays around her. The “glass case containing the Lewis Chessmen shattered” and Freya was transported with a queen, a king, a berserk and a “riderless horse” into a spiralling “vortex of flashing lights” (Simon, 2011, 15). The book goes on to reveal that three pieces have come to life thanks to Freya blowing the horn. The king and queen turn out to be servants to the god Thor, and they relay that they “were stolen long ago” from their parents as children but that they are “still children, just old ones” (Simon, 2011, 30). The trio journey to Asgard to meet the Gods, accompanied by a man known as “Bear-Shirt” with his “iron-studded sword,” “fists like clubs,” “bulging arms,” and a face “criss-crossed with scars,” a fitting description for the crazed berserker come to life (Simon, 2011, 32). The pieces slowly begin to turn back to ivory as the group hurries to complete a mission to restore the gods of Asgard to their immortal states by a

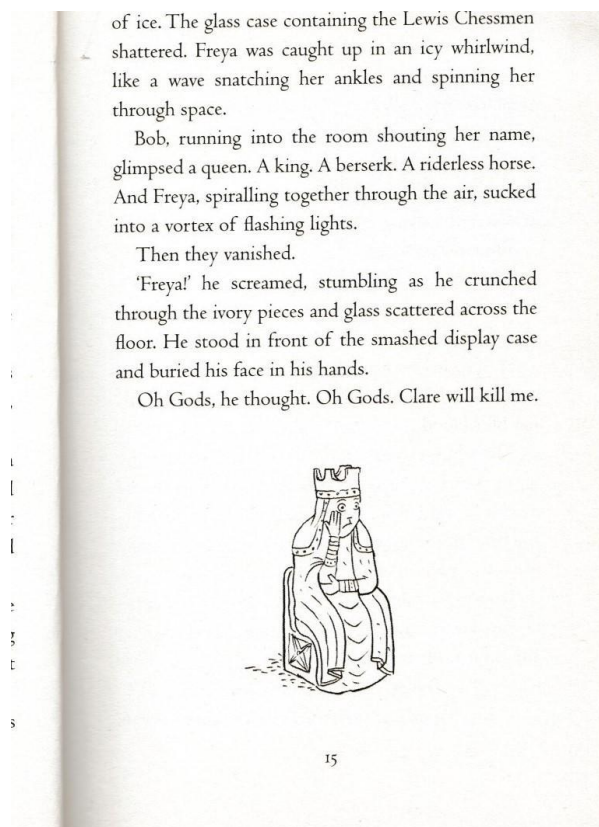


Figure 74: The end of chapter one of *The Sleeping Army* by Francesca Simon contains a sketch of a Lewis queen. Each chapter's ending contains a different piece of the hoard. Copyright, Francesca Simon.

certain time frame. After a battle, Freya is successful in her quest and the three awakened pieces stay in Asgard. Woden (Odin) tells Freya that the other pieces in the Museum shall remain sleeping for now as “their time will come with the forces of darkness rise up at the fated end of days and another world begins” (Simon, 2011, 211). Simon ends her personal acknowledgements with the line “the Lewis Chessmen are still sleeping in the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland” (Simon, 2011, 224).

Simon utilised the Chessmen's humanistic qualities and anthropomorphises them into living, breathing entities. She created a fitting world for them to be in which draws influence from their familial Norse roots. Originally student of medieval history, it is hardly surprising that Simon saw the value of the unique story-telling capacity of the hoard. As a children's

author, she made the king and queen pieces into children (albeit old children) themselves, allowing for her intended audience to relate to them more. Because there were no elements of Christianity in the world she created, the Lewis bishop is absent from the story. Like other authors, she valued their unique facial expressions to create that sense of humanity through the usage of descriptive words such as “glum, weary, frowning, hunched, and brooding.” In a personal email, Simon talked about her encounter with the Chessmen, noting:

I saw a poster for them at the British Museum in the 1970s and was struck by their sadness. My starting point was to ask: ‘Why are they so sad? What happened to them?’ I have always thought of them as a Sleeping Army, since they were buried, so it was their sadness and the idea that they were an army started me off on their story. I like Sleeping Army legends, with knights slumbering all over the world waiting to be called to defend the kingdom. Because they are Scandinavian, I started re-reading all the Norse myths, to feel my way into their story and their world. (Personal Email, 17 May 2018)

Out of over fifty penned novels, the *Sleeping Army* is counted amongst one of her favourites as the chessmen are “one of her favourite subjects” (Personal Email, 17 May 2018). As Simon is well-known for her popular *Horrid Henry* series with children, and it can be wondered how much of this popularity may have led young readers to also pick up the *Sleeping Army* and subsequently learn about the Lewis Chessmen.

2) *The Lewis Chessmen and What Happened to Them*

One children’s book featuring the Lewis Chessmen has already been briefly visited in Chapter I. Coming from British Museum Curator Irving Finkel, this children’s/young adult book centres on relaying the basics about the Lewis Chessmen for a younger audience. As we

have seen, many books which give details on the Chessmen's historic backgrounds are intended for adults. Irving's book is aimed at children aged 9-11, but the story would appeal to adults too. The story is also illustrated and depicts aspects of the plot throughout. Called *The Lewis Chessmen and What Happened to Them*, the story leads the reader from their under-earth incarceration to their unearthing, their sale, their arrival in the British Museum, and their display. Finkel is often associated with the pieces; however, he is not even in their curatorial department at the British Museum. A subtitle on a blog piece he wrote for the British Museum's website jokingly notes that "Curator Irving Finkel may have joined the wrong department to look after the Lewis Chessmen, but that has not stopped him writing a book on them" (Finkle, 2017). In addition to the book, there is also an audio cassette that comes with the purchase. The story is read by another popular culture icon: Sir David Attenborough.

Finkle's story begins with a bit of a background and gives relevant information "as far as we can know... the adventures experienced by the Lewis Chessmen after they came to light in the nineteenth century" (Finkle, 1995, 7). The reader then sees pictorial depictions of the chess pieces, which we are told are languishing away underground and feeling as though "they had always been there" (Finkle, 1995, 8). In their boredom, the pieces nap often, not unlike Simon's depiction in *The Sleeping Army*. Finkle writes, "it became simpler after a while to stay asleep. They were used to long periods of hibernation when nothing was afoot, so many of the pieces gave themselves up to semi-slumber" (Finkle, 1995, 16). Each of the pieces has a different reaction to being kept so long underground. These reactions coordinate to some of their humanistic attributes and facial expressions. The Chessmen recount the tale of how they ended up underground which includes the Lewis oral tradition of a shipwrecked sailor burying his loot. Finkle uses the word "adventure" often to describe the journey the pieces have taken to get where they are. He also includes the "fanciful" tale of how the crofter's cow unearthed

the pieces, a part of the hoard's discovery that is usually struck off as nothing but local lore. Finkle also uses capitalisation to emphasise certain words or phrases. For instance, he calls their excavators "the Cow" and "the Man" to distinguish them as important players in the story. Finkle includes historical characters such as Captain Ririe, Mr. Sharpe, and Madden to create a sense of accuracy in the telling. He also takes the time to include the idea that some of the pieces exhibit a red staining, just as Madden described in his early observations. However, he also uses humour and light-heartedness to create a sense of whimsy and make it interesting for his intended audience.

Like other authors we have seen, Finkle uses the pieces' human qualities to depict emotions such as the sorrow and bitterness felt through the parting of coupled pieces as some stayed at the British Museum while others were bound for Scotland. He also systematically gives them life when describing their hearts as "beating fast" (Finkle, 1995, 14). The author also equates the pieces as being held captive once they are in their exhibition space. He carries this idea into his 2017 blog post when he notes that "there are lots of them, waiting in a zoo-like cage. Bunched together, old and experienced, they seem anxious to be off into the fresh air, although they seem glad to be looked at, and fond of staring children down" (Finkle). The pieces, Finkle tells, get their various expressions from practicing "grimaces and disapproving, we-are-not-amused stares which they could direct back at the gaping masses" (Finkle, 1995, 35).

The story relays how the Chessmen have been witnesses to history and have watched eras go by while on display at the Museum. Finkle takes the pieces through World Wars, the flashes of the modern camera, and how they were reunited in 1993 in a joint National Museum of Scotland/British Museum exhibition. The ending scene, as depicted below, show the pieces out of their "cages" and in celebration of their temporary reunion. Finkle ends the story on a

whimsical nature by relaying that this party-like atmosphere is never witnessed with human eyes as the pieces always made a point to be back in their respective places come opening time.

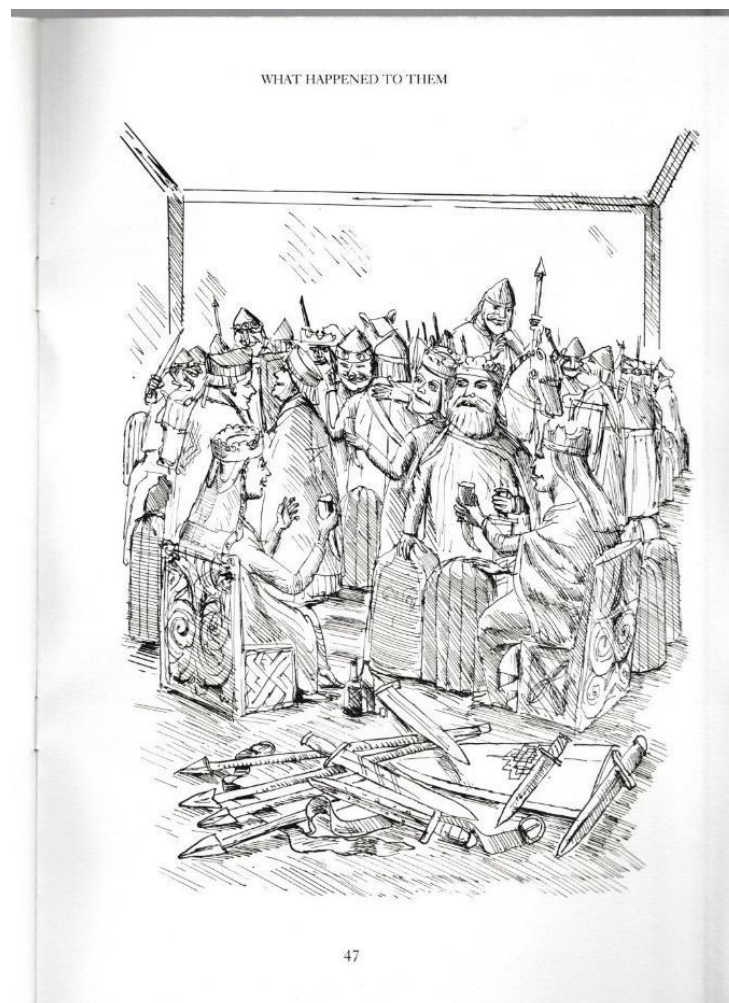


Figure 75: The last illustrated page of *The Lewis Chessmen and What Happened to Them* by Irving Finkle. Illustrator: Clive Hodgson.

3) *The Chess Piece Magician*

Another children's book which uses the Chessmen both in the story and its artworks is called *The Chess Piece Magician* by Douglas Brunton. The book was published under Floris Books, the parent company of The Kelpies Books, a range of "highly-respected and much-loved range of children's novels set in Scotland and suitable for 8 to 12-year olds" ("Kelpies," n.d.). Brunton is an English teacher in Edinburgh and wrote *The Chess Piece Magician* some

years prior to its publication in 2009. In a personal email from Brunton, he explained his reasoning for the book's creation and use of the chessmen. He noted:

I am a father and my children were small once and they loved books and I loved reading to them. We went to an exhibition at The Scottish National Museum - more than 20 years ago now. It was an exhibition centred on the chess pieces and the curator had posited an explanation for how the chess pieces made in Norway came to land up buried on a beach in Uig. I thought the explanation of a cabin boy having made the theft, and then swimming ashore and stashing the pieces before being apprehended and murdered, seemed boring and unreal. I thought if you were going to be fanciful in your explanation I could do better. That's where the idea was born. I wrote the book for my children. I wrote it quickly and read it to them at the time. Then I put it away in a drawer. It was fifteen years later that my oldest son spoke to me about the book and he was able to remember it far better than I could. I thought then it might be worth something. I entered it into the Kelpies Prize, was a runner up and offered a contract to publish. (Personal Email, 21 May 2017)

The story is of Corrie, a young boy whose family travels to Lewis every summer for holiday. Corrie is not a fan of the locale, citing it as “all the way to nowhere” and spends a lot of time scouring the beaches for washed up wood for the fire the family uses in their rented cottage (Brunton, 2009, 9). One look on the beach reveals a large post in the ground which he tries to extract. The ensuing hole left behind produces an unusual item in its depths, an object “like an overlarge ice-hockey puck...and larger than Corrie's hand” with an “impression of an embossed image” (Brunton, 2009, 17-18). Corrie meets a Gaelic-speaking girl, Kat, who is visiting family on the island. Kat predicts a Gaath, or a big wind/storm, was coming and later relates to Corrie one of her Mum's stories, “stories of what was found here on the beach, buried

in the sand. A cow stumbled over the treasure. That's what one story says" (Brunton, 2009, 24). They are interrupted by the coming storm and head to their respective homes. Later that night, Corrie is woken by an unknown entity, hears a voice, and notices that the object he found at the beach is surrounded by sand under his bed. The thing had "split almost completely in two" to reveal a "small squat figure, white, smooth, like polished bone or ivory, finely carved with its big round staring eyes that seemed, even in the dim light of Corrie's bedroom, just a little afraid" (Brunton, 2009, 41-42). Brunton describes the piece as having "a pulse, as though it were alive," creating a sense humanistic animation for an inanimate object (Brunton, 2009, 48). Corrie recognises the piece from its "squatness, the staring eyes, and the bullet shaped head" as coming from "a glass case in the museum at home" (Brunton, 2009, 49). Brunton goes on to write Corrie's recollection of all the pieces and describes their characteristics. Corrie believes his piece is "a bishop, although the figure was without a distinctive mitre. Nevertheless, he was standing in a similar pose, with a staff of some sort held close to his body" (Brunton, 2009, 50).

The chess piece turns out to be a "magical" wizard who helps save the island from a mystical sea dragon. The Lewis hoard were meant to be the guardians of the island. Corrie, Kat, and the Magician must battle the sea dragon to keep the island safe. While this book may have not had a well-known author like Simon behind it, Brunton still saw success with this novel, noting in a personal email that

the book has been well received by people who have read it. It has been studied in a few primary school classrooms. Teachers have said good things about it. It was shortlisted for the Heart of Hawick Book Award - which was nice. I suppose it has sold a little more than some books and not as many as others. I am pleased that it has done so well (Personal Email, 21 May 2017).

Like Simon, Brunton utilises the Lewis hoard to convey their human qualities. He also brings them alive using magical means, reflecting some of the pieces' more fantasy-like qualities. Unlike other authors, Brunton places the piece in situ at "home" on the island where they were found. Again, like Simon, Brunton utilises the theme of battle. This is not an unusual parallel as many scholars and players alike have equated the game to war on a board.

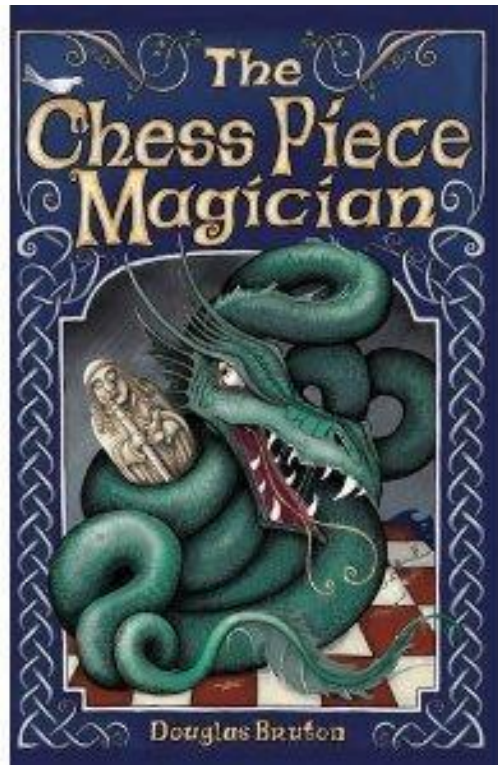


Figure 76: Cover art of *The Chess Piece Magician* by Douglas Brunton, which features a Lewis bishop.

4) *The Chessmen of Doom*

Another children's book which features the hoard is titled *The Chessmen of Doom*. It was written in 1989 by John Bellairs, a well-known American author of young adult books. *The Chessmen of Doom* was his sixteenth novel and featured serial character thirteen-year old Johnny Dixon, his friend Fergie, and next-door neighbour Professor Childermass. The stories take place in 1950s America, a far cry from the British homes of the Lewis hoard. The series of books featuring Dixon are generally put in the mystery/horror/fantasy genre young adult

literature. Despite the younger age range of the intended audience, reviewers of the book on Goodreads say that the book has a “spooky atmosphere,” is “freaky” with “creepy details” and many thought the cover artist Edward Gorey’s work was the binding element to create this air of the supernatural (“Chessmen of Doom,” n.d.). Interestingly, the front cover shown below features the Chessmen and was published in the United States this way as the novel’s first edition. Subsequent editions featured more traditional chess piece styles on their covers, and

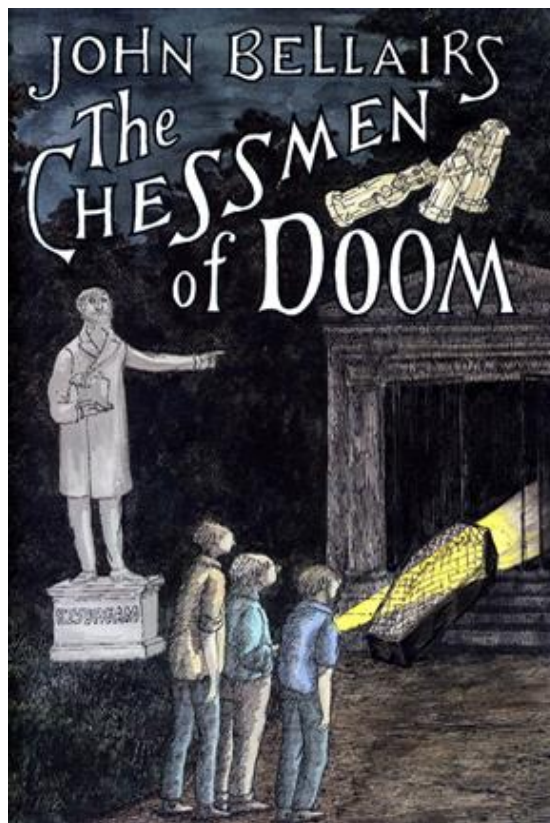


Figure 77: Edward Gorey’s cover art featuring Lewis Chessmen for John Bellairs’ *The Chessmen of Doom*.

not the Lewis hoard. Like Agatha Christie, Bellairs had an avid interest in archaeology, so it is possible the inclusion of the Chessmen in the book were due, partially, to this interest.

The story surrounds Professor Childermass and his deceased brother. His brother left behind a mysterious riddle, which included the line “why pallid dwarves on a board that’s not true,” which evidently is the first indicator of the Lewis hoard (Bellairs, 1989, 5). The first

interaction with the pieces takes place as an event of happenstance. Dixon, Fergie, and the Professor are in a car park after a movie and inadvertently run into a man carrying a case. The case is dropped to the ground, revealing “a dozen small white chessmen” which “were not the ordinary kind that you see in stores” but rather “looked like little men and women, with bug eyes and glum expressions on their faces” and were “intricately carved from ivory or maybe bone and looked as if they belonged in a museum” (Bellairs, 1989, 36). The mysterious man quickly gathers the pieces and the trio moves on. Suddenly, the Professor remembers the line of his brother’s riddle recalling the “pallid dwarves” but then dismisses the thought. When scouring the newspaper for reports of other graves being disturbed (the Professor’s brother’s grave had been ransacked), the Professor came upon an article describing a robbery which had taken place at the British Museum. When talking to the boys, he relayed that what had been stolen was “some of the little carved chessmen from the Isle of Lewis...and you know what? They look just like...The Chessmen that creep was carryin’ in his leather case!,” noted Fergie (Bellairs, 1989, 47). The Professor ponders why the man may be nearby, what he’s doing, and if it has anything to do with the poem from his brother. It turns out that the man with the pieces is using them in “occult ceremonies to bring comets towards the earth” (Bellairs, 1989, 76). Naturally, it is the intent of the trio to stop this madman. In a macabre scene towards the end of the plot, the trio come upon the Chessmen in a tower room. They are arranged on a “warped chessboard,” “some in rows and some in a little circle” with a “blood-streaked human skull staring grimly down from the mantelpiece” (Bellairs, 1989, 136). The ceremonial feel of the room is complete with the mysterious man clad in a black velvet robe. He tells them that the Chessmen, which he admits he “pinched,” are used in tandem with a spoken ritual to control the comets and wipe out most of the inhabitants of the planet (Bellairs, 1989, 137-138). This ritual is the mysterious poem that had been left to the Professor by his deceased brother. In the end, the trio save the day, but are left wondering what to do with the Chessmen in their possession.

The Professor decides to “put them in a box, wrap the box in brown paper and twine, and airmail it to Scotland Yard in London” (Bellairs, 1989, 146). Later he decides to go to England and return the pieces in person and takes the boys with him. Once the pieces have safely been returned to the British Museum, the trio visit them there. Upon exiting, they notice a man with leaflets set up on the outside of the building. The leaflet read:

Secrets of the Ancient Chessmen

A study of the mysterious ivory chessmen found over a century ago on the Isle of Lewis. Why were they stolen and then returned? Were they originally in the Great Pyramid? Can they be used to unlock the mysteries of Stonehenge? Why have the authorities tried to hide the importance of these occult objects, which at one time have been buried on Mars- placed there by beings from outer space! Learn the truth as it has been found out by Murgatroyd Freel, PhD. Can you afford to neglect this earth-shaking book? (Bellairs, 1989, 152)

The Professor is outraged and calls the man a “hornswoggling charlatan” and proceeds to chase him away from the Museum (Bellairs, 1989, 152).

Bellairs’ use of the Chessmen, unlike the two previous children’s books, does not have them coming to life. Like Christie, he similarly has pieces becoming a harbinger of death. In Christie’s work, they literally kill someone and in *The Chessmen of Doom*, Bellairs’ evil antagonist hopes to use the Chessmen in a ritual to kill most of the planet. As Bellairs is known for being in the horror/mystery realm, it is no surprise that there is the element of death. Unlike Christie’s novel, Bellairs’ books were intended for children and young adults.

As mentioned, the book takes place in America, yet the use of the chessmen, a British collection, is curious. It is possible their iconic status and universal, humanistic qualities

swayed Bellairs to utilise these values as a way to introduce them to a group of people outside the UK.

5) *Chess-Dream in a Garden*

One last children's book which features the Lewis Chessmen is titled, *Chess-Dream in a Garden*. The book, written by Rosemary Sutcliffe, was published posthumously in 1993, in both the US and UK. The book is highly illustrated and is intended for children aged 4 and up. However, as we will see, the book's plot is actually complex and could be enjoyed at any age. The intricate illustrations were done by Ralph Thompson, who was known for his pen and ink works of animals. Sutcliffe was known for her historical children's books. She enjoyed retelling famous legends and lore centred in the British Isles such as King Arthur and Robin Hood. Like other authors mentioned, she had a fascination with archaeology and utilised it in her works. The introduction tells the story of how the hoard was found by Mr. MacLeod on Lewis. Sutcliffe then mentions that part of the pieces are coloured a deep red, adding the historical context that Madden presented in his paper on the pieces in 1832. The setting for the story is in a garden, "the most beautiful in all the world," with grass and stonework made to look like "a giant chessboard, on which the people of the garden sometimes played" (Sutcliffe, 1993, 3). The "people" of the garden are a set of white Lewis pieces: a king, his queen, their knights, two bishops, two warders, and pawns. The face pieces are given Scandinavian/Norse/Viking names, and each of them have an exotic pet of some sort, much like a witch's familiar. At night, each chess piece dreams it becomes another fantastical animal. In these dreams, the Chessmen are paired with an animal that shares some of their own characteristics. The pets and animals-of-dreams range from a cheetah, an elephant, a peacock, and zebra. One day, one of the knights declares his love for the queen. The king overhears and is heartbroken, causing a large rift to

in his relationship to the queen, the knight, and in the garden itself. Because of this rift, the garden's defences are shattered, allowing the Red Hoard to penetrate the borders. This Red

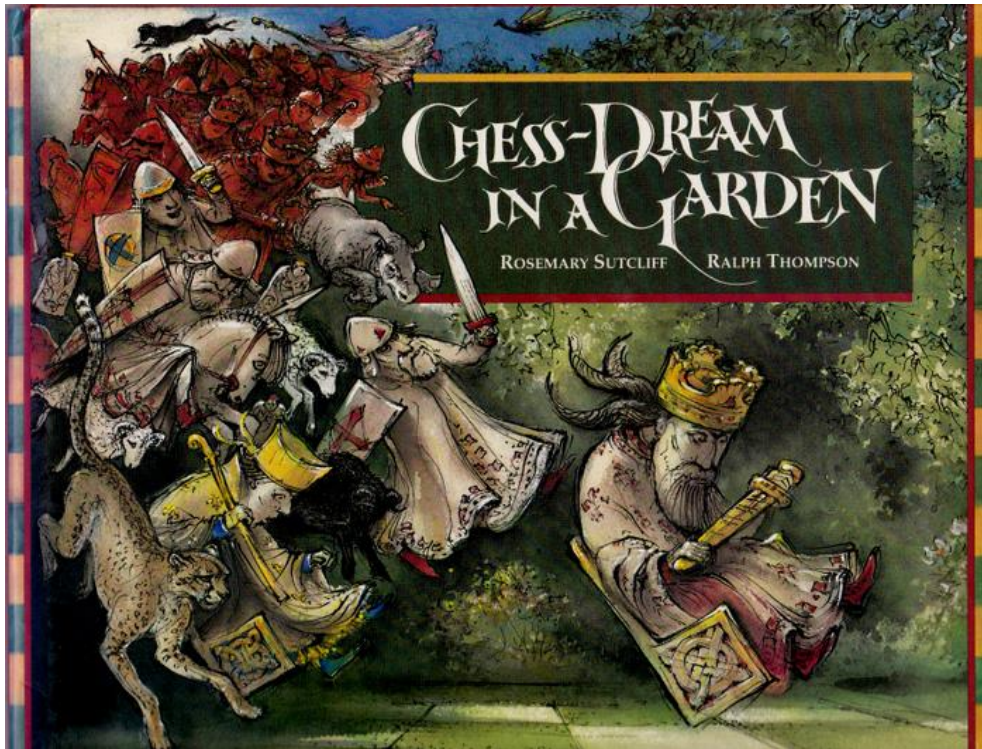


Figure 78: Ralph Thompson's cover art featuring stylised Lewis Chessmen for Rosemary Sutcliff's *Chess-Dream in a Garden*.

Hoard is the red portion of the Lewis Chessmen and the enemies of the garden. They are led by "a serpent with the head of a man who was their dark magician" and the warring parties decide to battle it out on the chessboard (Sutcliffe, 1993, 17). The pieces line up on opposite sides of the board and "to someone watching, it would have seemed more like a game of chess than a battle; but a game of chess is very like a battle anyway" (Sutcliffe, 1993, 29). There is bloodshed, reanimation of "dead" pieces, and the need to "call up the life strength of the garden itself" for the battle to be won (Sutcliffe, 1993, 34). The white queen kisses the grass to wake the garden, and the white pieces turn into their dream animals to defeat the red pieces. The garden returns to normal, as do the pieces. The king and queen reconcile, and they all danced happily in the garden.

Despite this book being written with children in mind, there are some exceedingly difficult and intense topics and vocabulary that they might not be able to grasp. She noted in an interview about another book, “I would claim that my books are for children of all ages, from nine to ninety” (Thompson, n.d.). Like other authors mentioned in this section, Sutcliffe also gave the pieces living, humanistic qualities and allowed them to have emotions such as love and jealousy. Unlike other books, though, the pieces are utilised in the action of war from the chessboard. She also uses their “magical” properties to incorporate fantasy-like themes in the story.

iii. Television

The realm of television has also seen the Lewis Chessmen utilised for various means. Since the first televisions were created in the early twentieth century, their pervasiveness in the world’s everyday life has reached epic heights. Cultural Studies professor John Storey notes that “television is the popular cultural form of the late 20th century” and that is “without a doubt the world’s most popular leisure activity” (2006, 9). Objects from museum collections may feature on television shows from time to time. Many specialised shows feature objects to show off world treasures or unique finds. Often museum objects may be used to promote a certain feel to a television show. As has been discussed, museum collections can be seen as items of “high culture” and this preconceived notion may play a force in their usage as props on set. This section will demonstrate five appearances of Lewis Chessmen in television shows and will assess the values assigned to the pieces through these usages.

1) *Noggin the Nog*

Chronologically, the first show on the list is the oldest of the five that will be discussed is considered to be a cult classic in the realm of British television. When Peter Firmin was an

art student he first saw the Lewis Chessmen on display in the British Museum. He became “enchanted by the simplistic but expressional nature of the chessmen” and “became besotted with what he called ‘Nogmania’” (‘The Saga,’ n.d.). From a personal email, he explained that he “knew they had been waiting 700 years for someone to tell their story” but countered that he was “so bad at history and learning facts that I made up my own!” (Personal Email, 8 July 2015). He penned the story and then showed it to illustrator Oliver Postgate who also fell in love with the characters. From there, *Noggin the Nog* was born. The series ran on the BBC from 1959 until 1965. Originally, only ten episodes were projected to be made (“The Saga of Noggin the Nog First Transmitted 11 September 1959,” n.d.). The show returned to television in 1979, but in colour. A series of books were also written at the same time. The premise of the show was about a Viking-era family whose royal lineage was in trouble. The King was ill and was to be succeeded by his “wicked” brother, Nogbad the Bad, unless gentle Prince Noggin could find a princess (“The Saga of Noggin the Nog,” n.d.). This need to acquire a marriageable princess led the Prince on a quest to find his bride. In the end, the Prince marries, and the royal lineage is saved, but the adventures continue long after.



Figure 79: Still of *Noggin the Nog*, which was inspired by the Lewis Chessmen. From episode 1 of the series. Written by Peter Firmin.

Firmin and Postgate created the characters to mimic the appearance of the Lewis Chessmen, including the title's main character. They also, like others who have utilised the chessmen in popular culture, play upon their human qualities by bringing them to life. The series continues to be extremely popular. In 1994, a stamp was produced to "commemorate famous children's characters" and *Noggin the Nog* was featured ("Stamps and First Day Cover," n.d.). Firmin also created a few more series' which also are now considered classics in the UK.

2) *The Walking Dead*

Many popular culture usages of the chessmen value the hoard for their original intended purpose: as chessmen. Set designers play vital roles in creating the mood of a television show. They also utilise certain pieces for design to "suggest the style and tone, create atmosphere, and give clues as to time and place" ("Set and Prop Designs," n.d.). One such show which used the Lewis Chessmen as a prop was the hit drama, *The Walking Dead*. The show, which centres around a zombie apocalypse, began in 2010 and is still in production at the time of this dissertation. It is based on a comic book series and has enjoyed considerable success in the public consciousness. In 2014, the show became the most viewed in cable history with 17.9 million viewers ("The Walking Dead vs. The Game of Thrones," 2016). In 2016, it was recognised that the series was the "third most watched television show" on at the time ("The Walking Dead vs. The Game of Thrones"). It is within this context that the Lewis chess hoard was placed. In season four (2013), the Chessmen appear in episodes six and seven. The story arc centres around "Brian" who is also known as The Governor. The Governor is the leader of a community who utilised brutal and unscrupulous means to keeping the people safe from free-roaming zombies. He wars with a man of a different community and creates an army against this competing group. After the battle is lost, The Governor rages on his community, killing

many of them. The Governor is abandoned by his remaining community members, so he leaves the area. On his travels, he befriends a family who does know who he is. While with the family, The Governor teaches the family's little girl how to play chess. Enter the Lewis Chessmen.

While sitting down with the young girl to go through the elements of the game, the pieces appear out of a bag that The Governor has brought with him from his earlier life. On the game board, we see the juxtaposition between the game of war as presented by the chess set and the war The Governor has battled earlier in the story. The little girl asks:

“What is it?” He replies, “Chess.” She notes, “it looks hard” but he responds with: “well maybe for some folk but you are smart, you will catch on quick.” She holds up a pawn and asks, “what is this one called?” He says, “it is a pawn, they are your soldiers.” She asks him, “do they die?” “Sometimes,” he responds. She questions: “do you lose if they die?” He tells her “no, not necessarily. You can lose a lot of soldiers and still win the game.” She then holds up a Lewis King. “That’s the king, it is the guy you want to capture” he tells her. She grabs a marking pen and proceeds to draw an eye patch on the king, reflecting the eyepatch that the Governor himself wears. She remarks, “looks like you” (Beattie, 2013).



Figure 80: Two scenes from *The Walking Dead*. Season 4, episode 6 (“Live Bait”) showing the use of the Lewis Chessmen. Copyright AMC.

The next episode, titled “Dead Weight,” sees the re-emergence of the Lewis pieces. The viewer is shown the opening scene which features the pieces set up outside, as if a game is being played. The camera pans out to show the little girl pondering a move. The Governor is in the background washing clothing and he tells that it is her move. She replies, “

“I am thinking.” He responds by telling her, “you cannot think forever, sooner or later you have to make a move.” She responds with “you never let me win anyway” and he tells her “that wouldn’t be winning.” They proceed to discuss how his father always beat him at chess, and we receive insight that it was an abusive relationship. The little girl asks if she was bad, equating her father’s abuse to her with The Governor’s story. As the Governor is in a haze past memories, the little girl makes her move and tells him “your turn!” (Gwinn, 2013)

In episode six, the Chessmen are used to reflect the game of war. This also allows The Governor to reflect on the loss of his own soldiers, some of which were killed by his own hand. The inclusion of the pieces in this episode gives context to characters, who are really all just players on the game board. When the little girl gives the king piece an eyepatch, it reflects the understanding that if the characters are just players, then The Governor as a leader, is the king. Set designers and writers not only used the pieces as a prop, but a prop in which the story of the characters’ actions can be symbolically told through. It is the little girl, not The Governor, who humanises the pieces when she makes one into him. In this action, The Governor becomes the embodiment of the king. Her action does make him pause as he comes to the realisation that the game is, ironically, like the actions that have taken place in his life.

3) *Isabel*

Another film which depicts the Lewis Chessmen is in a Spanish period drama, *Isabel*, which tells the story of Queen Isabella I of Castile. Likened as an equivalent to the British series *The Tudors* by some, the show is loosely based on parts of history, but fits squarely into the realm of entertainment. It was broadcast in Spain from 2012-2014, but multiple countries gained rights to the show in order to broadcast it as well. In the UK, the rights were purchased through the Sky network. The series was to be shown on Sky Arts, a channel that focuses on more art-themed programming. The programme was in Spanish but was adapted for English speaking audiences through the use of subtitles. That issue alone may turn some viewers off; however, those watching will need to be fully engaged to understand the plot.

Episode one begins as Isabella is recognised as the legitimate heir to the Castile throne and is proclaimed Queen. As she walks amongst her people, her advisor tells her he is thinking of the child he used to play chess with. At the six minute fifteen second mark of the show, the scene cuts to a memory of one such chess game and begins. In the memory, Isabella is concentrating on a move. Her advisor tells her it is her move, but she responds with “there is something I do not understand about this game. Being a queen is important, right?” (Calafí, 2012). He responds with it is and then she wonders “then why can she only move one space at a time? Even bishops and towers can move more freely” (Calafí, 2012).

The pieces are used in this first episode as a prop. It is no surprise that an exquisitely carved chess set, which at this time in history was a popular game, would have fit perfectly well into the context of Isabella’s royal house. The game of chess was transmitted into Europe via Spain, so this seemingly small detail included in the scene has merit in its historical accuracy. As the character of Isabella is in line to the throne in this memory, she can see the



Figure 81: Scene from Episode One of the Spanish historical drama *Isabel* featuring the Lewis hoard. Copyright Jordi Frades and Diagonal TV.

parallels of her life to the Lewis queen. Despite being a powerful queen in her own right, her other roles would still restrict her a life to one of servitude to her husband and her people. The real Isabella's rise to the throne was complicated and involved manoeuvring, much like the game of chess. In *The Birth of the Chess Queen*, author Marylin Yalom notes that

[The queen] represents the constricted power of queenship, an ultimate female status, but one that is played out in chess as in life on a predominantly masculine playing field. The chess queen, like other ladies of her rank, does well to keep a constant eye on her enemies and, depending on their moves, to be ready to retreat to a protected space (Yalom, 2004, 85).

Yalom researched a manuscript, *Sachs d'amor*, or *Love Chess* from the 1470s. This time period was during Isabella's reign. In her book, the author ponders, "can we establish a connection between the new mighty chess queen and Isabella?" (Yalom, 2004, 191). She answers that yes, it is possible as Isabella was a militant queen who had many depths of power (Yalom, 2004, 211). Just like the queen on the chess board, was the most important player in the game. Set

designers may not have realised the pieces' value as accurate historical props, but instead, may have used them just to demonstrate war and hierarchy in the series.

4) *Doctor Who*

The next show did not feature the Lewis hoard directly but is still worth mentioning. The reference comes in through the combination of two series' that have already been touched upon: *Doctor Who* and *Noggin the Nog*. In 2015's Season nine, Episode five of *Doctor Who*, titled "The Girl Who Died," finds the TARDIS landing in a Viking village. The Doctor and his companion are captured. The Doctor laments, "oh, not Vikings. I am not in the mood for Vikings" (Mathieson & Moffat, 2015). Like typical episodes of *Doctor Who*, there is an element of the alien. Similarly like in Jenny Calder's novel, the invasion in the episode comes from the sky as a group of suited beings. They appear to take the village's warriors to Valhalla and without warning, promptly dematerialise them, leaving everyone in shock. As in *Dark Horizons* novel, The Doctor decides to stay and help the village defend itself from this unknown source. Since the warriors are gone, it falls up to The Doctor to train remaining villagers. As he tries to teach this myriad of characters the ways of battle, one of them interrupts. From then on, The Doctor calls him "Lofty." "Lofty" replies that is not his name, but The Doctor quips that he has too much on his mind to remember names. As he goes down the line of soldiers he gives them popularly iconic names based on their appearance including Daphne, Noggin the Nog, ZZ Top, and Heidi. "Noggin the Nog" is an older man with a too-large conical like helmet on his head, resembling one of Peter Firmin's characters from the cartoon (Mathieson & Moffat, 2015). The writers are using popular culture references within a popular cult show and assuming that many people, especially in the UK, will understand them. As noted, *Noggin the Nog* was a hit show and is considered an iconic series, so many British



Figure 82: From left: Noggin the Nog as referenced by The Doctor in Season 9, Episode 5 “Girl Who Died,” Peter Firmin’s titled *Noggin the Nog* character, and a Lewis Chessmen, where the entire reference began. Photos copyright: *Doctor Who* series, *Noggin the Nog*, and the British Museum.

viewers would get the reference. Peter Capaldi, who plays the incarnation of The Doctor in this episode, was quoted in the *Guardian* saying he believed the show (*Noggin the Nog*) should be revived and that to him “it is a strangely haunting show – I can still hear the music and see the characters. It is set in the North Lands and is full of snow and Vikings, so if it came back it would be more like *Game of Thrones*” (Rawlinson, 2016). Layer upon layer upon layer of popular culture is referenced in this small, seemingly innocuous nod to a past show.

5) *Castle Rock*

The most recent use of the Lewis Chessmen in popular culture came in late July 2018. Stephen King, a famous author in the horror/supernatural fiction genre, joined with television streaming service Hulu to bring to life a series based on some of his previous works. The ten-

episode series was titled, *Castle Rock*, which is the name of the fictional town where many of King's iconic works are set. Castle Rock is meant to be in King's home state of Maine. The premise of the show is a closer look at certain characters and themes from previous novels within "a few square miles of Maine woodland" (Andreeva, 2018). The series revolves around Henry Deaver, a death-row lawyer who returns to his hometown of Castle Rock to defend an inmate. Upon his return, Henry reunites with his estranged adopted mother, Ruth Deaver her partner Alan Pangborn. The viewer is lead on a journey through Ruth and Henry's histories via flashbacks and includes memories of Ruth's dead husband, Matthew. Early on, the viewer is shown that Ruth is suffering with dementia. Her partner Alan gifted her a set of chessmen sometime before the start of the series. While it is does not explicitly state this, *Castle Rock* co-creator Sam Shaw implies that Ruth was "envisioned as having studied Icelandic literature, and the Lewis chessmen were what came up with [he] went looking for Viking chess sets" (Han, 2018). Throughout the season, Ruth places the pieces around her house as markers so that when she goes into a dementia blackout, she can see the pieces and realize she is in the present time. Ruth notes that the pieces are her "breadcrumbs" and that "if I find a chess piece in the icebox, I know it is now and not then. And I can find my way out of the woods" (Breznican, 2018). According to co-creator Shaw, the pieces also act as a "narrative solution to keep viewers oriented" as well as serving for "a repository for Ruth's memories" (Han, 2018). In what is been called the "keystone" to the entire series, the episode aptly named episode titled "The Queen," gives the audience the opportunity to go from being "witnesses to the effects of Ruth's dementia" to "active participants" (Han, 2018). The episode premiered on 22 August 2018. The episode chronicles the viewer through a day in Ruth's memories. This nonlinear journey is accompanied by the pieces as her guide. While she manoeuvres her past, her present is also fraught with an ongoing fight with an incarnation of her late husband in the form of the character "The Kid." In "The Queen" Ruth is convinced she needs to be free of this present-

day menace, so she decides to kill The Kid and attempts to do so with a gun. When she fires, she realizes that it was not The Kid she shot, but her partner, Alan.

Shaw also noted that when he was researching the Lewis Chessmen, he learned a few things about them and how in particular, the queen, could be a metaphor for Ruth's own life. Shaw learned of the Icelandic theory and the possibility they were created by Margaret the Adroit, the wife of a priest. Ruth had been the wife of a minister as well. Shaw also said that he had not realized in the development of the game of chess that the queen historically, was the weakest on the board. Shaw also was struck by the Lewis queens' looks of shock and to him, it felt like "almost a physical expression of the horror of being a character who is fundamentally limited (Li, 2018). Ruth took on the personality of the queen as like the piece, she too "had



Figure 83: Photo still from showing Sissy Spacek and a Lewis queen. AVClub.com. From the Hulu series, *Castle Rock*. Accessed 24/12/2018. Copyright *Castle Rock* series.

largely been relegated to the side-lines and dismissed up until this point" (Han, 2018). With this turning point in the story, Ruth, like the chess queen, became the most powerful player in the game. On a side note, Shaw had personal experience with the effects of Alzheimer's. One

thing he “found profound about their [Alzheimer’s patients’] experiences was that it was really important to be surrounded by objects and moments that helped contextualize their stories” (O’Keefe, 2018). He also noted that his own research about Alzheimer’s found that people struggling with the life-altering disease “often seize upon tools to hold the monsters at bay” and that “chess is one of the games that is prescribed like a medication to help exercise the brain” (O’Keefe, 2018). Shaw realized that the pieces had been used in the aforementioned *Walking Dead* and because of it, he had “a moment of existential crisis where I had to decide if we had to rip them out of the story, replace them with some other commemorative chess set” (O’Keefe, 2018). After realizing the *Walking Dead* episodes where the Chessmen were featured was directed by one of *Castle Rock*’s producers, Shaw believed it was “a sign from the universe” to use them (O’Keefe, 2018).

iv. Film

The Chessmen have seen use in two, extremely popular, culturally pervasive films in recent years. Below they will be discussed, and the values attached to the Chessmen as included props will be reviewed.

1) *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*

In 2001, the Chessmen gained attention in the Hollywood spotlight, as they featured in the blockbuster film *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s (Sorcerer’s) Stone*. Written by J.K. Rowling, the wizarding world of the *Harry Potter* books, which were wildly successful, quickly gained the adoration of millions of fans and were subsequently turned into a series of films produced by Warner Bros. Pictures. According to an *Observer* article, *Harry Potter* is the third largest selling literary work after the Bible and the thoughts of Chairman Mao (“Harry Potter, Marketing Magician,” 2005). The first film, with the above title, was a resounding

success and grossed over \$974,000,000 or £723,257,688 worldwide (Close, 2016). The series had a total of seven films and because of the success, an offshoot of the main story also has had several films produced. The way this character has permeated popular culture is iconic. In an article discussing the now seminal works' place in the public consciousness, Louise Thacker commented that:

the world Rowling creates is richly imaginative, detailed and has its own mythology. This world is separate from our reality but still appears to exist in our society. The characters grow up in real counties we recognise ... the characters we meet are sometimes eccentric, mad, charming, and others are horrifying, cruel and malicious. They show the complexities of the human psyche ... and the motif of the series is good vs evil. (2018).

Thacker also commented that “we cannot decide exactly what it is about *Harry Potter* that makes it iconic. It can be a combination of social diversity, character relatability, imagination, how compelling the plot is or how deeply it resonates with our experiences and personal struggles” (Thacker, 2018).

The premise of the books and subsequent films is of an ordinary boy who finds out there is magic in the world and learns he is a wizard. After a hard life of losing his parents as a baby, living with unloving extended family, and feeling generally downtrodden, on his eleventh birthday, he received a letter. The letter states that he has been accepted to Hogwarts, a school for witchcraft and wizardry. Once he arrives at school, he quickly learns that he is one of the most famous wizards in wizarding history. Harry eventually finds out that his parents were murdered by the Dark Lord, Voldemort. During his attempt to murder Harry as well, some unbeknownst power saved him, and Harry became “The Boy Who Lived.” The Dark Lord’s powers were nearly decimated with this attempt, giving Harry him the celebrity status he had

no idea he possessed. He makes friends with two fellow schoolmates Ron and Hermione and begins his new life in the wizarding world. The trio weave their way through a series of mysterious obstacles, revealing the magical world in which they live to audiences.

To set the scene featuring the Lewis Chessman, it is Christmastime at Hogwarts and Harry and Ron are in the school's Great Hall. The scene begins with the pair pondering over a chess board displaying pieces which have been passed down in Ron's wizarding family. Their third friend Hermione comes with her luggage on her way home. Harry says, "knight to E5" (Columbus, 2001). The knight, of its own accord, moves into position. Ron thinks and then smiles with a response of "queen to E5" (Columbus, 2001). The queen, who is on a throne gets up, takes her throne, and smashes the knight. Hermione exclaims, "that's totally barbaric" and



Figure 84: Image of Harry and Ron playing "Wizards Chess" which are the Lewis Chessmen. From *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, Copyright JK Rowling and Warner Bros.

Ron simply replies, "that's wizard's chess" (Columbus, 2001). The pieces used are the Lewis Chessmen. Like Madden pointed out after their discovery, half of the pieces are stained red

whilst the other half are the creamy colour they are known for today. This scene, which was less than one minute in length, is the extent of time that the Lewis hoard appears in the film.

At the end of the film, the trio must get past a large chess game in order gain access to the Philosopher's Stone, a stone which legend said had the power to turn base metal into gold but also to give the possessor immortality. The trio must play their way across this life-sized game in order to keep the stone from getting into Voldemort's possession. Ron has grown up playing chess and is adept at the game. They themselves became the chess pieces, sparring with other figures on the board which also move magically by vocal commands and resemble a more traditional chess set and not that of the Lewis hoard.

There are so many values that the directors and set designers may have seen in using the Lewis hoard in this game. Films have time constraints, books do not. When based off of books, writers and directors have a hard time including every single detail as was written. In the book, this scene with the Wizard's chess set is an important one as it sets parameters for the ending chess battle – the chess pieces come to life. The sheer act of the pieces' animation lends itself to the magic in Harry Potter's world. Like in other instances in popular culture, the pieces were used for their humanistic qualities as well. The use of any ordinary chess set would not have had the same ferociousness as the Lewis queen getting up and smashing the knight with her chair, as if in the middle of a human brawl.

In Edinburgh stands the Elephant House Café, claimant to the title of birthplace of *Harry Potter* as J.K. Rowling frequented the coffee shop when writing her books. Tourists flock to the locale because of its association with the series. Interestingly, the National Museum of Scotland is within view of the café. A question in this research arose: could it be that Rowling or the producers from Warner Bros. might have taken inspiration for the Wizard's Chess game from the Lewis Chessmen on display in the Museum? A search through her website garnered

no available contact information to ask, as due to her volume of correspondence, Rowling does not answer individual questions. Rowling was an integral part in the production of the films, requiring screenwriters and directors to allow her to have a say in how her books were translated onto the screen. She may have been consulted on what her vision of the Wizard's Chess game looked like, as it is an important part of the film, and the Lewis Chessmen were selected to represent these magical pieces.

The more plausible decision to include the pieces in the film was given by previously mentioned author and Lewis Chessmen enthusiast, Irving Finkle. In his 2018 YouTube video, produced by the British Museum, Finkle explained the reason why the Chessmen made an appearance in the film. He says that the wardrobe mistress, who was responsible for set designs, went to the British Museum looking to purchase a set of chess pieces to be used in the film. Finkle labeled her as a "British Museum girl" as her father and grandfather had both been keepers there, so she immediately thought of them for use in the film (*Curator's Corner: Irving Finkel and the Chamber of Lewis Chessmen*, 2017). Finkle says the Museum's gift shop was completely out of replica sets to purchase, so he lent her his collection to use, thereby binding the pieces to one of the most iconic films of our time (*Curator's Corner: Irving Finkel and the Chamber of Lewis Chessmen*, 2017).

Harry Potter has become a brand. Harry's iconic lightning bolt scar and associated verbiage from the magical world have been equated to things like the Nike Swoosh and inclusion of words into the dictionary ("Harry Potter, Marketing Magician," 2005). This brand has become saturated in the public consciousness via theme parks, city tours, spin-off films and books, video games, clothing, toys, and websites, to name a few. This iconic status and marketing brilliance also extended to the Lewis Chessmen. After the film was released, replica Lewis sets were produced as Wizard's Chess. Because of the Potter brand, no doubt these items



Figure 85: A replica set of “Wizards Chess” from the franchise *Harry Potter*, depicting the Lewis Chessmen. Image from: <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2011/the-game-of-kings-medieval-ivory-chessmen-from-the-isle-of-lewis/exhibition-blog/game-of-kings/blog/under-their-spell>. Accessed 20/05/2018.

sold well as they were also included in both the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland’s gift shops. They have become part of an iconic brand whose breadth in popular society is seemingly immeasurable.

Throughout my personal PhD journey, I would mention the Lewis Chessmen as the topic of this thesis, when asked. Nine times out of ten, colloquially speaking, those I gave this information to had no idea what the pieces were. It was only when I told them, “they were the Wizard’s Chess set in the first *Harry Potter* film” that most of them understood what I was referring to. Even though the chess pieces were only featured on the screen less than a minute, this is evidence enough of the impact an object can have when associated to elements of popular culture.

2) *Brave*

In 2012, the chess pieces gained further Hollywood status as a feature in the Disney/Pixar smash hit *Brave*. Unlike *Harry Potter*, this film was an animation. The film, set in “lush, ewild Scotland,” features fiery Scottish princess Merida, as she “confronts tradition

and challenges destiny to change her fate” (Pixar - “Brave,” n.d.). The idea of changing one’s fate is the centre of the entire film. *Brave* turned out to be a history-maker for the production company Pixar.

Pixar is an animations company, which, in part, was started by George Lucas of LucasFilms, and was then purchased by Apple founder Steve Jobs in 1986 (“Pixar,” n.d.). The company was purchased by the Walt Disney Corporation in 2006, so the name DisneyPixar is sometimes used to describe the new union although there had been a relationship between the two companies from prior years. Pixar is best known for its use of CGI (computer-generated imagery) to create more realistic animated productions. Until *Brave*, none of Pixar’s films had contained a feature of many of Disney’s productions: a princess. It was also the first fairy tale produced by the Pixar branch of the company. In a Disney first, Merida was to have no love interest either. The film’s original creator, Brenda Chapman, had a passion for Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm, so she included this style of fairy tale in the film (Fandom Pixar Wiki –“Brave,” n.d.). Yet another first for the DisneyPixar production was the use of Merida as the first female protagonist. She was to be the lead character where traditionally, groups of characters were used for the story line.

The premise of the film is about Merida a Scottish princess who--against her parent’s wishes--does not want to marry a chosen suitor. The story is mostly centred around the conflict between daughter and mother. Merida an independent spirit, with unruly red hair, and is an expert in archery. This quality creates a warrior-like persona for her. She and her mother spar over how a princess is supposed to act via lessons given to Merida by her mother. When her parents decide that she should marry the victor of a Highland Games’ match Merida refuses, and runs to her room. Her mother follows and tells her the following story at fifteen minutes ,

twenty seconds into the film:

The Queen: “Once, there was an ancient kingdom...” [she goes to pick up a chess set which lives in Merida’s room. Half are white, half are black.]

Merida: Ugh, mum! Ancient kingdom...

The Queen: ...its name, long forgotten. Ruled by a wise and fair king who was much beloved [she shows Merida the king, a white piece, clearly inspired by the Lewis hoard. The piece transforms into an image of the king].



Figure 86: The Queen showing Merida the image of the king from her fairy tale. The pieces were directly influenced by the Lewis Chessmen. From the film *Brave*, Copyright DisneyPixar.

“And when he grew old he divided the kingdom among his four sons, that they should be the pillars on which the peace of the land rested [She takes four soldiers, three white and one black, and places the chess board on top of the pieces to represent the land]

“But, the oldest prince wanted to rule the land for himself [the black piece is transformed into the prince]

“He followed his own path and the kingdom fell to war and chaos and ruin [she removes the black piece from the board, the board falls, scattering the rest of the pieces to the floor]

Merida: [sarcastically] That’s a nice story...

The Queen: It is not just a story, Merida, legends are lessons that ring with truth.

Merida: Och mum!

Merida decides to choose her own fate and picks the sport, archery, for the potential suitors to compete in. She defies tradition by stating she would “be playing for her own hand.” Her mother is outraged, and Merida rides off into the Scottish forest, looking for a way to change her fate. She follows Will O’ the Wisp, a legendary creature of Scottish lore, to a witch’s hut. The witch gives her a potion to change her fate, which she slips to her mother in a treat. Her mother is turned into a bear, and to reverse the spell, the two must mend their bond before the sunset on the second day, or her mother’s transformation is permanent.

To add accurate details, the CGI team from DisneyPixar travelled to various locales in Scotland to get views of the landscape for film’s the setting. The animators were “determined to get the details just right” and “returned with notebooks full of drawings and memories, and cameras filled with pictures—everything from majestic panoramas to careful studies of lichens and mosses” (Pixar - “Brave,” n.d). One such visit for the team was at the National Museum of Scotland, the heart of Scottish artefacts and history. The visit allowed them to draw “inspiration from real objects” (McKenzie, 2012). Whilst at the Museum, the team took note of the Lewis Chessmen. One research officer at the National Museum of Scotland stated that “amongst the pieces they have used are the Lewis Chessmen, which also give us ideas about

the role of women in the past” and that the inclusion of queens in the hoard “tells us that queens were recognised as being important” (McKenzie, 2012). She also noted that:

several hold drinking horns in their laps. These horns were prestigious and used for communal drinking. It is possible that the women in the society represented by the chess pieces played a kind of peace weaver role. They would travel around the men in the hall with the cup, allowing them in turn to drink from it. (McKenzie, 2012)

As we see in the film, both Merida and her Mother are strong women of this era, yet no comparison is made between the Lewis queens and the female characters.

The animators of *Brave* probably saw the value of the Lewis Chessmen as historically accurate “props” for the era they wished to portray in the film. However, the film does have confusing time periods as indicated from the inclusion of clothing styles of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the use of war paint on the men, which was common in the Iron Age (Barnett, 2018). The pieces could also have been valued for their ancientness, which is clearly one of the key factors the creators wished to portray. The Queen harkens back to times long gone and then uses the ancient-looking chess set to tell the tale. Interestingly, the set was located in Merida’s room. As a noble girl, and one whose mother was trying to shape into a “proper” princess, knowing some of the arts of womanhood in that era, including music, poetry, and possibly gaming, were qualities a lady of breeding should possess. However, she is also a teenager, so the pieces could simply have been placed in her room as an age-appropriate form of entertainment. Like other children’s stories using the Chessmen, they also could simply have been utilised for their clearly human qualities. As the Queen is telling Merida the tale, the pieces become the actual characters in her story, giving them life as the real representations of the men they were meant to depict.

Like the *Harry Potter* films, *Brave*'s box office figures were staggering, with a gross of over \$540,473,063 or £401,358,652 worldwide (Box Office Mojo – “Brave,” n.d.). Unlike the *Harry Potter* series, *Brave* did not produce a line of merchandise relating to the Lewis Chessmen. However, after the film's release, DisneyPixar did design another way to capitalise on the Chessmen. Their touring company, Adventures by Disney, had a *Brave*-themed planned tour called “Scotland: A Brave Adventure.” This tour is no longer available, but at the time it was, the website noted that the tour allowed you to “walk amongst lush landscapes where ancient stone castles rise from the mist, heralding a proud heritage that served as the inspiration and backdrop for the DisneyPixar animated film *Brave*” (“Adventures by Disney,” 2014 – now defunct). The screenshot below shows Day 2 of the tour, which included a visit to the National



Figure 87: Original screenshot of Adventures by Disney Scottish-themed traveling company. The site no longer reflects the *Brave* connection as shown above. Accessed 11/10/2014.

Museum of Scotland to see the pieces used in the film. As of 26 June 2016, the National Museum of Scotland's portion of the tour has been taken off the itinerary, and the entire tour is now renamed simply, “Scotland.” The emphasis on the film has been removed, possibly due to the length of time since the film was released. VisitScotland, a go-to website of information for travellers and tourists, previously had a page which linked the film and its National Museum of Scotland-inspired treasures. In 2014, VisitScotland's website reflected that “during visits in

2006 and 2007, DisneyPixar company members photographed objects from the Museum's extensive Scottish collections to help design weapons, fabrics and decorations included in the film...(including)...artefacts like the Lewis Chessmen" ("DisneyPixar's Brave"). However, this site, as of 2015, has been reworked and this information is no longer available. A link which lead from the VisitScotland page to the National Museum of Scotland's webpage is also now defunct as well. The film has been out for some years, but as it is the only DisneyPixar production associated with Scotland, there is little information available now connecting the film, the Museum, and the Lewis Chessmen.

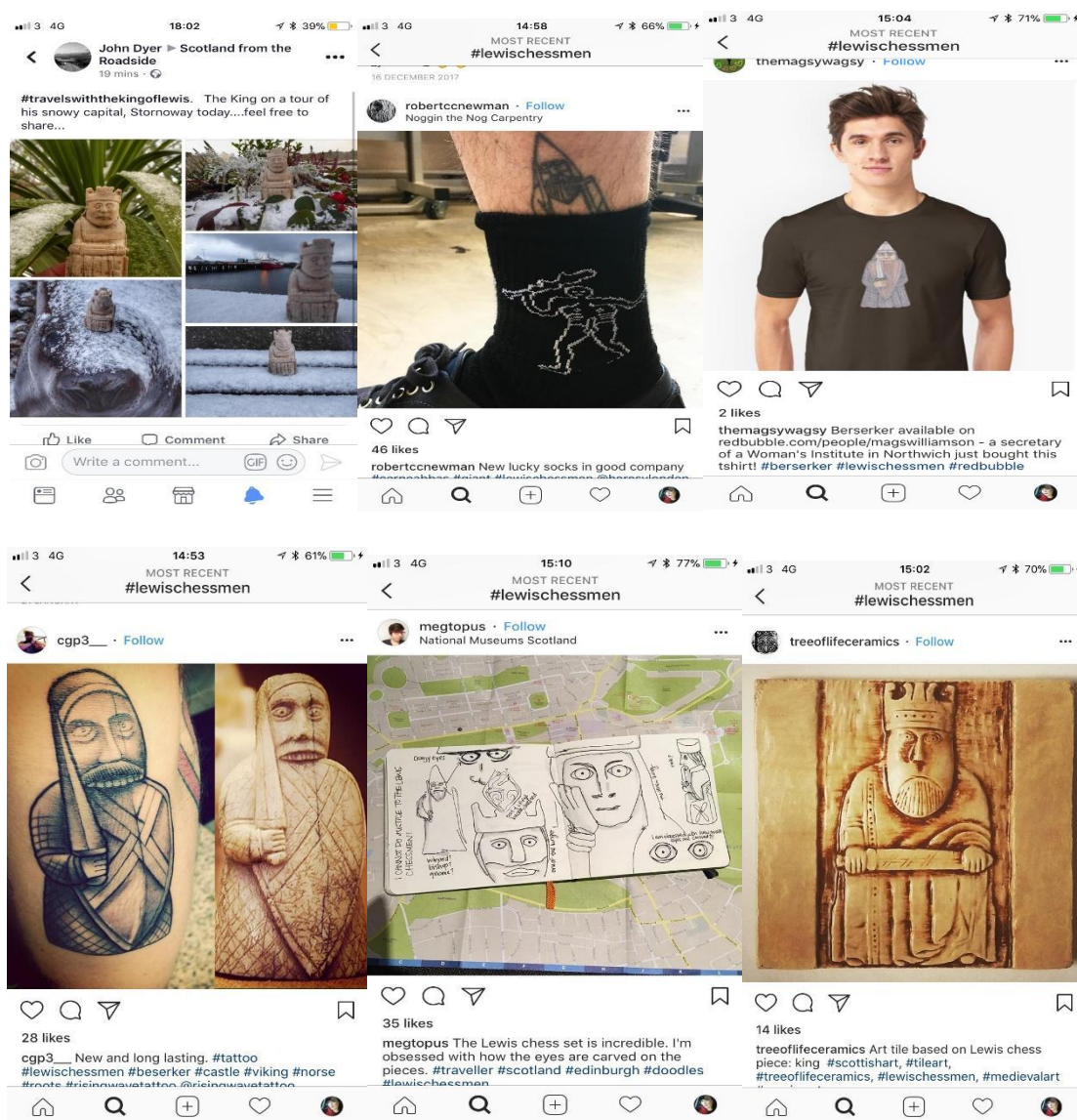
v. Ads and Social Media

1) The Festival of Museums

The Lewis Chessmen have been used in various ad campaigns, but the most notable and still used inclusion is found in the Festival of Museum's (FoM) brand logo. The Festival is a series of events held at museums and heritage institutions around Scotland on one prescribed weekend per year. These institutions "throw open their doors vaults and imaginations to celebrate the magic of history, heritage, and science. Museums are encouraged to let their hair down, take risks and try something new" ("About Us," n.d.). It "offers museums the opportunity to plan events that raise their profile amongst their existing and potential visitors and stakeholders. It supports museums to develop skills in planning and delivering sustainable and enterprising events" ("Festival of Museums," n.d.). In 2015, the project underwent a major rebranding design. The design included a montage of a few museum objects with humans in various costumes in a whimsical layout. A berserker from the Lewis hoard is amongst the very few objects which are used to represent Scotland's museums. According to

2) Social Media Presence

One last discussion about the pervasiveness of the Lewis hoard in popular culture is the collection's numerable appearances on social media outlets. The chess pieces are used by both organisations, like the British Museum and the National Museum of Scotland for marketing, retail sales, and to promote events. However, what is more interesting is to see how the average person uses the Chessmen in their everyday lives. This view shows how they are valued by the public and, through their use, how they have permeated society. Below (except for the first photo) is a series of photographs showing the ways in which the pieces have been used on just



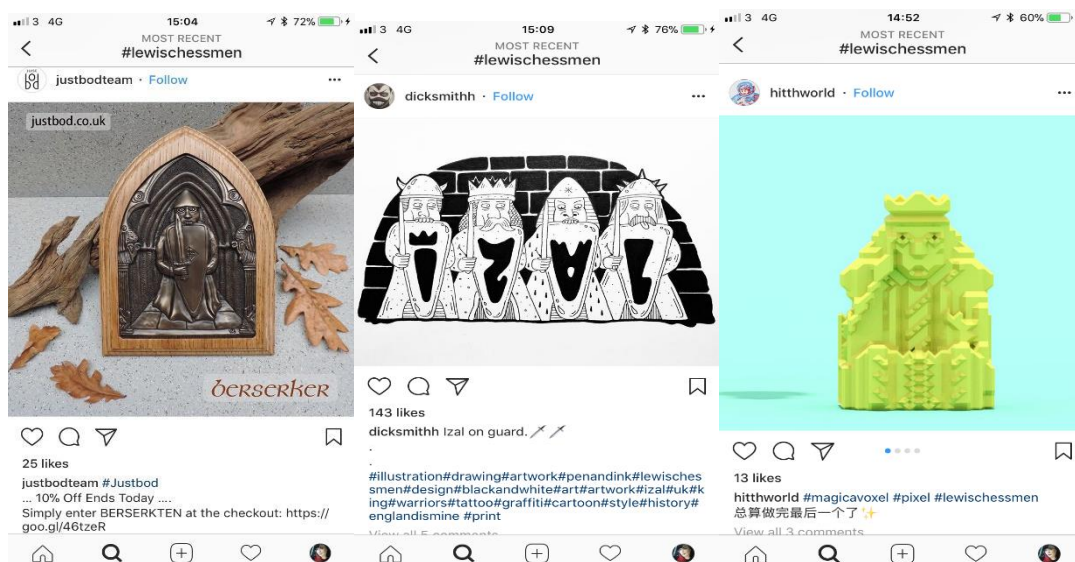


Figure 89: All shots (except the first) from Instagram using the hashtag “Lewis Chessmen.” February 2018. Copyrights belong to their owners.

one social media outlet, Instagram. To list all the possible uses on all the possible different platforms could be a thesis in itself. This is just a small look at how the public utilise the pieces based on their own wants, needs, likes, and artistic inklings.

The above photos show a myriad of ways in which the public has valued the pieces enough to utilise them in their personal lives. Some have seen their value as pieces of art and have used them to form their own artistic creations. There are quite a few berserkers used in the collection above, which begs the question of why this piece seems to be more relevant than others. Simply, people may be attracted to the pieces’ bizarre, manic-like expression and, therefore, see value in the funny nature of the piece. Others see the pieces’ marketability and have created Chessmen-related goods. One man, John Dyer (first photo in collection above), utilises a Lewis king for photo opportunities around Lewis. In a personal Facebook message from 16 January 2018, Dyer stated that he and his family moved to Stornoway a few years ago, that he is a keen photographer, and was looking for a symbol to use in a series of photos of the area. He said he had seen others use other figurines in their photos, but then he:

quickly realised that there cannot be a more iconic figure to represent the islands, so I settled on one of the kings. He's gaining in popularity and I take him out with me every time I am out taking photos, and always look for photo ops. I love the worried look he has on his face and it makes me smile and others seem to be warming to him too. (Personal Facebook Message 16 January 2018)

Dyer also said he picked the king because of his facial expression and that "the idea of the king travelling around his kingdom was a good concept" (Personal Facebook Message 16 January 2018).

The aim of this chapter was to show in depth, the use of the Lewis Chessmen in popular culture. The sheer bulk of items presented is testament to their saturation and value in society. They have been valued by authors for their mysterious and fantasy-like qualities. The genre of television has seen the chessmen appear as characters to describe war, as children's entertainment, and as a nod to already-established popular culture. The Chessman have been used in children's novels, picture books, and thrillers. Hollywood has used them in blockbuster films as magical set props and representatives of people from long ago. Both film production companies and tourism industries have valued the marketability of the chess pieces. The very idea they were used in both *Brave* and *Harry Potter* is testament to their importance in society. However, their use in these films has also perpetuated more enthusiasm about the pieces as people now recognise them for their inclusion in these two works. Many articles, texts, signage, and exhibitions about the Lewis hoard now reference their use in these cameo appearances, thereby further raising the awareness in these areas of popular culture. The Chessman have also been used as part of a brands to represent Scotland's heritage institutions. Marketing entities saw the value of their iconic status and recognisability when creating the logo for the Festival of Museums. Their frequent appearances on social media outlets, which

have now become a cornerstone of society, is testament to their value. On these platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, the general public share photos of how they use the pieces in everyday life. People see the value in their humanistic qualities and as pieces of art to be copied in their own way. Just how much the Lewis Chessmen saturate popular culture or how popular culture perpetuates them in return, is truly unknown. Yet as we have seen, the two are intrinsically linked together, creating what Conselatore terms as the magical “medium brow” blend – the place where fine art and mass appeal ideologies exist together (2018).

Chapter VII: The Pawn: The Politics Surrounding Material Culture

Museum controversies occur more frequently than one might think. In order to combat certain sensitive issues, museums may do a myriad of things in order to dispel public conjecture and to prevent scandals. Larger institutions are more likely to have controversial materials in their collections due to the sheer number of items they possess. Once a colonial power, British subjects took, legally and illegally, objects of cultural significance from all over the world to fill its private and public museums. While the British Museum's aim is, "to tell the story cultural achievement throughout the world, from the dawn of human history over two million years ago until the present day," some of the items in their collection have proven to be very controversial (British Museum - "The Lewis Chessmen," n.d.). On the British Museum's website, there is rather tucked away page entitled "News and Press Releases." One of the categories on the page is labelled "Statements." According to the page "the British Museum is often involved in events, research or a topic that becomes the subject of public discussion," and therefore, this section is meant to, "provide key information for understanding these complex issues, including the provenance of objects, human remains in the collection and the Parthenon sculptures" ("News and Press Releases," n.d.). The Lewis Chessmen are one of a small collection of items discussed in these statements. In this chapter, the value of the chess pieces as objects with political influence will be investigated further.

i. The Parthenon Marbles: A Call for Repatriation

Repatriation is a hot "it" word in the museum field, as artefacts from all over the world are constantly being requested to be returned "home." According to Dictionary.com, the term repatriation means, "to return to one's own country" ("Repatriation," n.d.). Since the 1980s,

museums in the UK have received an influx of requests for certain cultural items to be returned to their nations of origin. These requests have brought to light, several issues including war-looted cultural objects and items collected or stolen through imperialism or colonisation. The types of objects that have been requested run the range of cultural heritage items from art to artefacts, and even human remains and burial goods. Museums worldwide have undertaken this sensitive and highly emotionally charged topic of repatriation requests through policy changes and new implementations including art registry databases, codes of practices, and with thorough research into their collections' origins.

The Parthenon Sculptures (also known as the Elgin Marbles) are unarguably one of the British Museum's most contested collections, and one of the world's most famous examples of a controversial museum collection. The Sculptures were once part of the Greece's Parthenon, a 2,500-year-old temple dedicated to the goddess Athena. According to the British Museum's website, in around the early 1800s, only about half of the original works remained at the site. In 1805, the British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Lord Elgin, removed approximately half of the remaining sculptures to send back to Britain. He then passed on the sculptures to the British Museum in 1816, and they have remained on display there ever since. At the time of removal, Greece was ruled by the invading Ottoman Empire. These non-Greek rulers allowed the Sculptures to be removed without the Greek people's approval. The British Museum specifically notes that, "in 1816, a Select Committee of the House of Commons found that the collection had legitimately been acquired by Elgin as a private collector" ("The Parthenon Sculptures: Facts and Figures," n.d.). However, the present-day Greek Ministry of Culture's idea of what occurred is vastly different. In a section of their website called "The Review of the Seizure," Greek authorities note

concurrently, by showering Turks in Constantinople and Athens with gifts and money and by using methods of bribery and fraud Elgin persuaded the Turkish dignitaries in Athens to turn a blind eye while his craftsmen removed those parts of the Parthenon they particularly liked. Elgin never acquired the permission to remove the sculptural and architectural decoration of the monument by the authority of the Sultan himself, who alone could have issued such a permit. (“The Review of the Seizure,” n.d.).

On this Greek governmental website, Elgin is accused of “hacking off [the sculptures and] causing considerable damage” (“The Review of the Seizure,” n.d.). In complete opposition to the British Museum’s stance that a full committee approved the decision to keep them at the time of their acquisition, Greek authorities contend that:

a debate took place, where many voices expressed their scepticism and disapproval. Even thoughts about the return of the Marbles were expressed for the very first time. Strenuous objections were heard outside Parliament as well, the most impassioned being that of Lord Byron. (“The Review of the Seizure,” n.d.).

The Ministry’s webpage also contains a subpage dedicated to various public opinion polls in favour of the return of the Sculptures. Since the 1980s, the Greek government has argued, pleaded, and petitioned the British Museum for the repatriation of the Sculptures. Greece has also disputed the British Museum’s legal rights of ownership of the collection, saying that as the country was occupied by a foreign nation, even a “legal” allowance for the removal by the Ottomans would have been invalid. Recently, even the European Union has stated that “the return of the Elgin Marbles to Greece would be a key move in promoting Europe's common cultural heritage” (“Declarations,” n.d.).

The 2009 redevelopment of the Acropolis Museum in Athens includes the Parthenon Gallery where “some specific window-cases will remain unoccupied waiting for the restitution of the fragmented Sculptures” (“The Official Greek Position,” n.d.). However, The Acropolis Museum states that in the gallery space, “the narrative of the story of the Panathenaic Procession is pieced together with a combination of the original blocks of the frieze and cast copies of the pieces in museums abroad, such as the British Museum and the Louvre” (“The Parthenon Gallery,” n.d.). It is an interesting parallel to consider the Greek government’s more impassioned declaration that the museum’s gallery space would be empty, as in mourning for the lost pieces, while the museum itself decided to include replicas and casts in order to show a more cohesive visual story.

The British Museum’s belief is that it is a centre of world-wide “cultural achievement” with the Sculptures being a big part in the story of a “shared heritage” (“The Parthenon Sculptures: Facts and Figures,” n.d.). This statement aids in legitimising the Museum’s hold on the collection by demonstrating that collections “transcend cultural boundaries,” therefore contradicting the idea of objects belonging in the location where they came from (“The Parthenon Sculptures: Facts and Figures,” n.d.). The British Museum is “convinced that the current division allows different and complementary stories to be told about the surviving sculptures, highlighting their significance within world culture and affirming the place of Ancient Greece among the great cultures of the world” (“The Parthenon Sculptures: Facts and Figures,” n.d.). Some argue that had the British not taken the Sculptures, they would not have survived to be in their present condition, but rather, would have ended up as “pollution-wrecked, blurry stones that were only recently brought indoors in Athens” (Pryce & Selwood, 2014). There are countless books, articles, websites, and other publications debating and arguing this issue; a decision, either way, does not seem to be in sight. As of the publication

date of this thesis, the UK has elected to leave the European Union. It is unknown how this debate between the British Museum and the Greek Government will, if any, be changed moving forward.

ii. Scotland's Repatriation: The Return of the Lewis Chessmen

In addition to the Elgin Marbles, the British Museum also has listed their stances on a nine other objects or collections of sensitivity/debate including items acquired during World

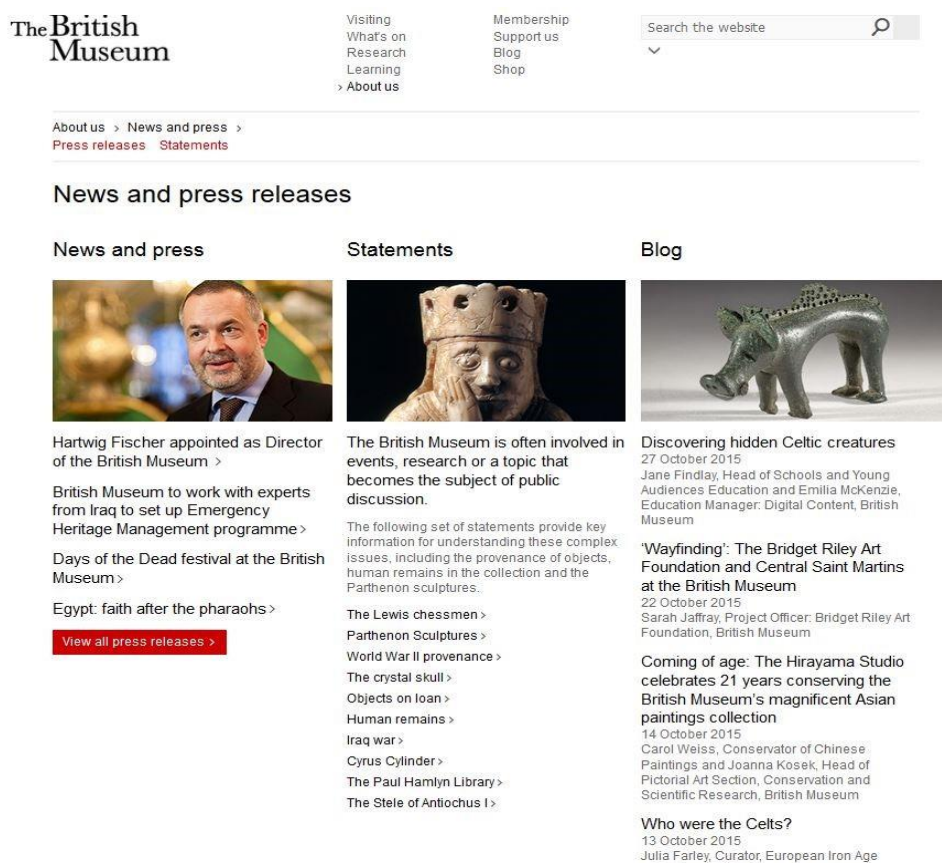


Figure 90: Screenshot, British Museum Website: News and Press Releases. Accessed 29/10/2015.

War II, the Crystal Skull, objects on loan, human remains, objects acquired during the Iraq War, the Cyrus Cylinder, the Paul Hamlyn Library, the Stele of Antiochus I, and the Lewis Chessmen. Out of the millions of items the museum holds, these ten items were deemed

important or controversial enough to be mentioned in this special section of the website. The Lewis Chessmen are first on the list and a photo of one of the queens is utilised as the representative icon for the entire special statements page. The link connected to the Chessmen describes what they are, tells where they are on display, explains their tour of Scotland, gives information on their return to Lewis, and outlines previous loans of the pieces. At the time this page was researched, it was the sole location of information about the Chessmen if a general search was conducted on the website.

In the section titled “Previous Loans” within this special statements section of the webpage, the British Museum gives information about the 2010-2011 partnership exhibition, *The Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked*. The exhibition was to be a “tour of a group of the Lewis Chessmen, in partnership with the National Museum of Scotland” (“Statements: The Lewis Chessmen,” n.d.). Pieces from both museum collections came together for the exhibition, which was funded by the Scottish Government. As discussed previously, the travelling exhibition would be going to four different locations on its journey: the National Museum of Scotland, Aberdeen’s Art Gallery, Shetland’s Museum and Archives, and then would end its journey at the pieces’ beginning: on Lewis (Carmichael, 2010, 10). According to the British Museum, the exhibition was “hugely successful and was seen by over 115,000 visitors” and “more than 70% of visitors were seeing the Lewis Chessmen on display for the first time” (“Statements: The Lewis Chessmen,” n.d.).

Like Greece with the Parthenon Sculptures, Scotland has also asked the British Museum for the return of what is called Scotland’s “most well-known archaeological find,” the Chessmen (National Museum of Scotland - “Lewis Chessmen,” n.d.). As Chapter II has covered, The Lewis Chessmen were legally purchased by the British Museum, and there is a followable timeline of how the pieces got to their current locations today. Unlike both Greece

and the British Museum, the National Museum of Scotland has no official statement of their stance on the Chessmen.

A major bid for the repatriation of the Chessmen began in December 2007 with former SNP leader Alex Salmond's "high-profile campaign to repatriate 82 of the beautiful figurines back to Scotland from their current home in the British Museum in London" ("Salmond Plots First Move in Scottish Battle to Win Back Lewis Chessmen"). According to the article, Salmon insisted that all of the pieces should be returned on the basis that they "spent most of their lives buried in Scotland" ("Salmond Plots First Move in Scottish Battle to Win Back Lewis Chessmen, 2007"). This first major undertaking for the return of the Chessmen was done simply because "they should be back where they belong" but also that "they could be a boost for the Western Isles economy" ("Salmond Plots First Move in Scottish Battle to Win Back Lewis Chessmen," 2007). Salmond found it "utterly unacceptable that the Lewis Chessmen are scattered around Britain in a bizarre parody of the Barnett Formula" and assured SNP campaigners at the time that he would "continue campaigning for a united set of Lewis Chessmen in an independent Scotland" ("Salmond Plots First Move in Scottish Battle to Win Back Lewis Chessmen," 2007). As reference, the Barnett Formula "dictates the level of public spending in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland and is based on the population of each nation and which powers are devolved to them" ("What is the Barnett Formula?," 2015). Scotland has had a devolved government since its 1997 referendum which included the re-establishment of its own parliament. Wales and Northern Ireland also have levels of devolvment, so this formula measures how much funding each area is allotted. The formula was, "relatively uncontroversial at its origins, but friction has arisen as the wealth gap between Scotland and England has closed," and now "public spending being 19 percent higher in Scotland than in England has inevitably resulted in the formula becoming controversial"

(“What is the Barnett Formula?,” 2015). A month later in January 2008, Former Minister for Culture Linda Fabiani visited the British Museum to discuss the return of the Chessmen. Minister Fabiani consulted with former Deputy Director Andrew Burnett who told her that “the artefacts were an important symbol of European civilisation” while Fabiani stated that “the government [Scottish] would continue to consult with interested parties to reach a consensus... and would take matters forward with a proposal” (“Piece Talks over Ancient Chessmen,” 2008).

One of the most vocal individuals for the pieces’ return was MP Angus MacNeil, representative of Na H-Eileanan An Iar, or the Western Isles constituency. MP MacNeil took the matter all the way to the House of Commons on 10 March 2010. To open the debate, MacNeil told a personal story of seeing a poster from the British Museum with a chess piece on it and the phrase “AD 1150-1200 and Norway” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). MacNeil was “stunned” as he felt that “the connection with Lewis had been airbrushed from history” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). He further went on to say that one of only two absolute known facts about the Chessmen was that they were found on Lewis. MacNeil challenged the British Museum in stating that he “would love to know what incontrovertible evidence the British Museum has to assert in its poster campaign that Norway was the place of origin” and wondered if “there are other places where historical objects have been deleted from history” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). Welsh MP Elfyn Llwyd interjected that Wales also had objects withheld by the British Museum, despite efforts to have them returned and commented that “such artefacts are part of our collective national memory” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects”). MacNeil reiterated the idea of returning objects to the area where they were found and noted that “what made sense in the 19th century may now be a dated approach” and questioned “why must everything be in London? It seems to be historical centralisation

and imperialism” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). He argued that the British Museum “has a colonial attitude of keeping artefacts that belong to another place and another people” and noted that “in Lewis, they would be in their own cultural setting” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). MacNeil also explained that “they would be a year-round tourist attraction which would be a “great draw” to the local economy of the Hebrides” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). One of his arguments for the repatriation request was as a “Hebridean defending [his] indigenous rights,” which, in his opinion, was no different than the recently returned ghost shirt to the Sioux Nation from Glasgow’s Kelvingrove Museum (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). Within this debate, the British Museum Act of 1963 was brought to the attention of the House. The Act, which delineates the legal guidelines the British Museum must follow, was challenged by MacNeil who questioned if the act or museum policy could be changed. He then went on to argue that the Chessmen could be housed in the Museum nan Eilean where “finance for their security would not be a problem” or a second option could be that “the British Museum could open up an extension to its main campus in London in the Museum nan Eilean itself” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). “Ultimately,” MacNeil argued, “I am looking for any mechanism whatsoever to get the chess pieces back to Lewis,” back to their “natural home” as “the economic boom that such historical objects could generate is vast” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). He closed with a sentimental statement of the fact that the people of Lewis “need a knight in shining ivory to help up, the underdogs, against the impediments of the British Museum” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010).

In strong opposition to MP MacNeil’s debate was the Minister of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport Margaret Hodge, who sarcastically congratulated MacNeil for “securing the opportunity for us to debate the repatriation of historical objects yet again”

(“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). Minister Hodge explained that “national museums are centres of excellence and scholarship and a part of a wider international web of information sharing,” and not for “promoting nationalism,” and that these institutions should “focus on promoting an understanding of our shared past so that we can better deal with the present and tackle the problems of the future” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). She went on further to argue that objects were for sharing and to be enjoyed as “widely as possible, not in just one nation” as “they do not enhance the lives of just one community, but of all of us in all our communities” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). Minister Hodge also stated that she “profoundly disagreed with the underlying premise of his [MacNeil’s] argument that culture is to be enjoyed by only the nation most closely identified with it” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). MP John Mason of Glasgow questioned whether “the sharing [of historical artefacts] has not been very even,” and stated that “perhaps those countries that used to have an empire, or were powerful for whatever reason have tended to suck-in worldwide artefacts” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). Minister Hodge replied that “things are where they are and if we wish them to be shared, the British Museum has an excellent first-class record in both collaboration and giving out loans” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). She also noted that “a coherent story about the history of the world is being told within the British Museum” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). She also pointedly went on to mention that “politicians do not interfere in the management of museum collections,” and communicated her hopes that “all members [of the House] continue to support the arm’s length policy” by not allowing “cultural and artistic decisions to be determined by political views and prejudices” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). In contradiction to Minister Hodge’s last declaration, the British Museum is in fact governed by politicians, as it was politicians who established the Museum with an Act of Parliament in 1753. In a direct contrast to MacNeil’s speech, Hodge went on to point out that “most scholars who have examined the chessmen

generally agree that the most likely place of manufacture was Trondheim in Norway” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). MacNeill noted the caveat, “most likely” and that “the Lewis Chessmen were found in Lewis and we know nothing else for certain” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). Minister Hodge also pointed out the, “the chessmen legally came into the possession of the British Museum,” that “they form a key part of the collection-hence they were used recently in the radio programme *A History of the World in 100 Objects*,” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). She ended her time on the House floor by expressing the ties between the British Museum and other museums in Scotland and expressed hope that the co-operation would continue so that “the wonderful Lewis Chessmen can be enjoyed by all” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010).

Prior to this debate in the House of Commons, MP MacNeil had already gone head-to-head with Minister Hodge in a *Scotsman* article entitled, “Burning Issue: Should the Lewis Chessmen be Brought Back to Scotland” on 29 January 2008. Minister Hodge was the “no” while MacNeil was on the “yes” side of the argument. Hodge noted that MacNeil was “keen to provoke a debate” and that he “did [his] best to stir the pot by stretching the argument for returning them to ever more absurd lengths” (“Burning Issue,” 2008). She went on to discuss her beliefs in the shrinking of culture in the twenty-first century and because of that “culture - whether it is works of art, great literature, music, or fine craftsmanship- should be available to all” because “it enriches everyone” (“Burning Issue,” 2008). She further went on to note that “it [culture] should not primarily be an instrument of the tourism industry, nor an icon of nationalism, although it can support both” but more so “culture is what ties us together (and) that those who would pull everything back to its alleged point of origin are working against this” (“Burning Issue,” 2008). She went on to argue that if the Chessmen were removed from their home in the British Museum that millions of people would never have the chance to see

them. Once again, MacNeil stressed the “Lewis” part of the pieces’ name and that as “magnificent as they would be anywhere, placed in London is something wrong –almost like a rook moving diagonally on a chessboard” (“Burning Issue,” 2008). He also noted that a “twenty-first century Hebrides is more than capable of looking after their chessmen (and that) in Lewis, they would have a massively disproportionate beneficial impact, which is more than they do in London” (“Burning Issue,” 2008). MacNeil also stated that opponents of the repatriation “will shout that it is all political posturing by the SNP” (“Burning Issue,” 2008).

Despite the efforts of Former First Minister Salmond, MP MacNeil, the SNP/Scottish Government and multiple other supporters, the British Museum vehemently declined the absolute return of the Chessmen to Scotland citing that it is “forbidden by law from giving away or selling its assets (because) being in the British Museum means the artefacts can be seen by millions of international visitors every year” (“Fabiani Plays Next Move in SNP’s Battle for Return of Lewis Chessmen,” 2008). *The Hebrides News*, a paper local to the islands including Lewis, starkly noted in an article from 14 March 2010 that “the UK Government has refused to repatriate the Uig (as they are known to locals of Lewis) Chessmen” and then goes on to tell the events of MP MacNeil’s debate in the House of Commons (“Government Refuses to Repatriate Uig Chessmen”).

iii. The 2014 Scottish Referendum and Looking to the Future

The Scottish Nation, guided by the in-power SNP party with Alex Salmond as its First Minister, held a referendum vote in 2014 to legally separate itself from the United Kingdom. With an unprecedented eighty-six percent of voter turnout at the polls, a fifty-five percent majority voted “no” in the debate. While many voters were “no,” it was by no means a landslide victory for them. Because of previous statements and actions of Salmond and other member of

the SNP regarding the repatriation of the Lewis Chessmen, if the referendum had been a yes vote, it would have been interesting to see what future debate, if any, would have occurred. The push for the repatriation of the Chessmen in the first place was clearly to restore these items to Scotland as a means of national pride, something both MP MacNeil and Former Minister Hodge debated in Parliament. After the referendum loss, First Minister Salmond, one of the first vocal supporters for the Chessmen's return to Scotland, stepped down from his post as First Minister. Nicola Sturgeon became the new First Minister and like Salmond, she too is a member of the SNP. The Chessman debate seemed to die down after the British Parliament refused to return the Chessmen and as the referendum was lost to the SNP.

As previously mentioned, the UK majority (at again, a non-landslide amount of fifty-two percent) elected to leave the European Union. However, the vote to remain part of the union was a resounding yes in all counties of Scotland. At time of publication of this thesis, the British government is having an ongoing debate on the particulars of the exit from the union, and Scotland, with its devolved government, is very much paying attention to how Westminster and the Prime Minister are handling the current situation. First Minister Sturgeon has taken heed to the fact that Scotland did in fact, vote to remain in the European Union. Taking this into account as well as ongoing debate as to Scotland's future relationship with the UK post-Brexit (colloquial term coined for "British Exit"). At the time of this thesis, there are constant new speculations if First Minister Sturgeon and the SNP will try again for a referendum. If a new vote happens in the future and if Scotland chooses to leave the UK, would an independent, SNP-run Scotland will again ask for the return of the Chessmen? Only time will tell.

iv. The Legal and Cultural Implications of Repatriation

As previously mentioned, the British Museum Act of 1963 is the governing legislature that controls the actions of the British Museum and its contents. The museum is run by a twenty-five-person trustee body which consists of appointments made by: The Queen, the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State, and the Trustees themselves. Contradictory to previous claims by Former Minister Hodge, government is very much involved in all processes of the British Museum. In the argument for the return of the Lewis Chessmen, one relevant section is number 5: *Disposal of Objects*. This section states that the British Museum Trustees may:

sell, exchange, give away, or otherwise dispose of any object vested in them and comprised in their collection if –

- a) The object is a duplicate of another object or,
- b) The object appears to the Trustees to have been made no earlier than the year 1850, and substantially consists of printed matter of which a copy made by photography or a process akin to photography is held by the Trustees, or
- c) In the opinion of the Trustees the object is unfit to be retained in the collection of the museum and can be disposed of without detriment to interests of students.

(“British Museum Act of 1963, Section 5”).

What could also be a favourable act for the return of the pieces is that of Section 9. This section, titled, *Transfers to Other Institutions*, notes that “any moveable property vested in the Trustees of either Museum may be transferred by them to the Trustee of the other Museum...” (“British Museum Act of 1963, Section 9”). However, part of this section was repealed with the 1992 Museums and Galleries Act which took out some phrases and paragraphs. While the law itself

may be set in stone, the actual language itself is flexible enough for either the British Museum/Government or those who were working for the return of the Chessmen (MacNeil/SNP/Scottish Government) to mould and interpret these guidelines for their own purposes and uses. As MP MacNeil noted in his debate in the House of Commons

under section 5(1) of the British Museum Act 1963, which was made in this place, the British Museum may not sell items that are believed to have been crafted before 1850, but under Section 4 of the same act it is allowed to lend pieces of the collection. Perhaps it could do so permanently if there is no change in the law. Had the hand of fate turned up those pieces to daylight in 1931 or 2001 rather than 1831, I do not believe that our cultural heritage would have been sold for £30-a veritable 30 pieces of silver” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010).

In this section of the debate, MacNeil appears to be trying to show the House how laws could be changed and/or interpreted to allow the pieces to return to Scotland on a permanent basis, even if it was still through loan. Minister Hodge also had her own take on the Act by stating that “leaving the question of whether an object should be de-accessioned is at the trustees’ discretion” which is “consistent with those legal principles” as the act “prevents the museum from removing objects from its collections” (“Repatriation of Historical Objects,” 2010). As previously mentioned, the removal of objects from the collection *has* occurred. Hodge noted in the debate that the law had been ratified with the 2005 allocation for human remains to be removed, and in 2007 where Nazi-era looted material was returned as both were on grounds of morality.

The repatriation of cultural materials is a colossal topic mixed with many conflicting and emotionally charged issues including national pride, morality, cultural sensitivity, and religious beliefs, to name a few. One could make the argument that the return of important

cultural items to the country in which they “belong” is also the moral thing to do. The idea of cultural ownership will be discussed later in this thesis. The idea of knowing museum items’ complete history and provenance has just recently become an important moral and hotly contested issue within the bodies that govern these institutions and the museum community at large. As previously mentioned, eras of colonialism and imperialism resulted in cultural artefacts from around the globe being taken, either by legal or illegal means. Debate can, and has, ensued over what exactly qualifies as the legal gathering of cultural objects from other countries.

If museums around the world, like the British Museum, were to repatriate all their collections to the nearest “original” source of location or cultural identity group to which they might belong, would museums as we know them become extinct? According to some in the museum field today, the idea of creating and nurturing encyclopaedic museums, or museums which offer visitors the chance to see the world’s history through a global, non-homogenised and non-nationalist centric view, allow ideas of a whole shared human experience rather than local cultural history to shine through. Two outspoken proponents of this idea are James Cuno, Director of the Art Institute of Chicago, and former Director of the British Museum, Neil MacGregor. According to Cuno, despite its best interests, the UNESCO Convention of 1970, or more formally, *The Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* “encouraged countries’ calls for repatriation” and has “also inspired many governments to make combative and sometimes dubious claims for restitution” (2014). Cuno also notes that the convention’s committee “has a broad mandate to facilitate bilateral negotiations for the return of any cultural property that a state deems to have fundamental significance from the point of view of the spiritual values and cultural heritage of [its] people” (2014). The latter part of that statement could be construed to

facilitate the demand of repatriation of all cultural artefacts as it relies on the idea of the construct that is cultural heritage. According to a *Scotsman* article detailing MacNeil's call for repatriation of the Chessmen in Parliament, "museum chiefs said moving the chessmen back to Scotland was impossible, since it would open a Pandora's box for the return of artefacts ("At Least Six Lewis Chessmen to Return Home After Deal Struck with British Museum," 2012). MacGregor was the Director of the British Museum at the time the talks, negotiations, and pleas over the Chessmen were being conducted, and undoubtedly had a sizeable contribution in the negotiation process between the opposing parties. It is possible that this concept of an encyclopaedic museum came to fruition from Cuno and MacGregor in 2014 as a direct result of the call of repatriation of the Chessmen. The debate that MP MacNeil brought forth in 2010 then encouraged other MPs within the UK to also call for the return of their cultural items from areas including: Staffordshire, Suffolk, and Wales, which is directly what museum officials had predicted may occur ("Lewis Chessmen Must Stay in British Museum, Minister Says," 2010). Instead of repatriation, Cuno and other defenders of the idea of encyclopaedic museums encourage the "world's museums to share cultural property through loans" but warns that "unfortunately, not every museum sees the value in lending" (2014). Cuno reiterates by sharing this wealth of knowledge, encyclopaedic museums' purpose is to "fulfil their promise of cultural exchange" is complete (2014).

While MacNeil/SNP/Scottish Government were unsuccessful in their bid in securing the permanent return of all the Chessmen to Lewis, strides were made to return a partial collection of them. According to a BBC article in June 2010, a mere three months after the petition for the return of the pieces made by MP MacNeil to Parliament "talks to return at least some of the Lewis Chessmen to the Western Isles have been described as "very positive," MacNeil commented after a meeting with the deputy director of the British Museum ("Lewis

Chessmen Could Be Returned,” 2010). In June 2012, it was announced that a deal had been struck between the British Museum and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, (Western Isles Council) where some of the Chessmen would be returning to a refurbished Lews Castle, the future home of the new Museum nan Eilean, but only on a loan basis. Original talks, according to MacNeil, looked to send “around thirty pieces back to Lewis on a long loan” (“Lewis Chessmen Could Be Headed Home to the Western Isles, Says MP,” 2010). In the end, it was decided that only six of the pieces would be returning to the island. The six pieces, all from the British Museum’s collection, consisted of: one king, one queen, one bishop, one knight, one warder, and one pawn. Mixed reviews came from the decision to include only 6 pieces including this from local councillor Iain Mackenzie: “it is an exciting thing to happen but it is a pity they will not take all the pieces up here” (“At Least Six Lewis Chessmen to Return Home After Deal Struck with British Museum,” 2012). Many however, saw the return of the pieces in a more favourable light. Councillor Charlie Nicholson for Stornoway South remarked that “we are really pleased that they are coming back, and it will be good for tourism” (“Lewis Chessmen Pieces Returned to Uig,” 2015). This loan came after the very successful *Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked* exhibition, which brought out over twenty thousand people to see them in four locations across Scotland, including to the island itself. For one day, even Uig, the location of their discovery, had the Chessmen available for locals to see them “in place.” As we saw in the previous chapter, the six chessmen are now situated in their new, albeit temporary home, at Museum nan Eilean.

From this examination of the debate in Westminster in 2010, we can see how passionate both the British Museum and Scottish groups and individuals are about where they believe the Lewis Chessmen belong. From the comments, we can see that each entity has its own unique values they’ve assigned to the Chessmen. The British Museum sees them as pieces of the world,

a point which has been examined in this chapter before. Interestingly, it was members of political parties who were on the Scottish side of the debate, and were valuing the pieces as icons of nationhood, culture and something that Scotland should “possess.” MP MacNeil, from the Western Isles, saw the pieces as valuable assets to bring more visitors and thereby, bring more economic prosperity to the islands as well. The National Museum of Scotland has been quiet in this debate, choosing to remain neutral to both opinions.

Chapter VIII: The Defence: Who Owns Culture?

As was seen in the previous chapter, the Scottish government has asked for the Lewis Chessmen to be returned to Scotland. Much of the reasoning for this return of the pieces stems from feelings that the pieces “belong” in and even to Scotland. These ideas of ownership over cultural artefacts is not new concept. Colonialism created opportunities for invading nations to take, either legally or illegally, another country’s material cultural heritage. Wars have also aided in the looting of cultural items from invaded nations. Most recently, we can see the effects of war through the Iraqi conflict and the utter destruction of the national museum in Baghdad. The result of the American invasion kicked off a riotous crowd who burned and looted over 170,000 objects in what has been called the “one of the greatest cultural disasters in recent Middle East history” (Burns, 2003).

Many items of cultural significance have been returned from museums across the world to nations who have asked for their repatriation. Scotland is not so different in their quest for the chess pieces to be returned from the British Museum. In fact, as this paper has shown, the British Museum has been asked by several nations for the return of “their” objects. More recently, a special “guerrilla-style,” unofficial “Stolen Goods” tour of the British Museum saw speakers communicate information to a large crowd about the stolen cultural items “from Indigenous Australia, Iraq, the Pacific Islands, and the Parthenon” (BP or Not BP?, 2018).

There is a marked difference between the call for the Lewis Chessmen’s return and that of these looted artefacts because the chess pieces were purchased, legally. However, this persistent want for the Chessmen to be returned to their “home” has continued to go on the last few years. This chapter will look at the underlying ideas of ownership of culture, material

culture and identity and the concept of being at “home” in order to demonstrate even more values that the pieces have been imbued with.

i. What is Culture?

To try and precisely define the idea of culture is akin to trying to count the grains of sand at a beach: it is impossible. There are various definitions of culture, but for the needs of this thesis, the focus is the idea of culture in relation to groups of humans. For hundreds of years, scholars in the fields of psychology, anthropology, sociology, and other behavioural sciences have attempted to define what culture means. First used by English anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his 1870 book *Primitive Culture*, he defined the term thusly:

culture or civilisation, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (1).

Due to the complex nature of the effort in defining something so subjective, famed American anthropologists Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn authored an entire book which listed one hundred, sixty-four curated definitions of the term. This book, published in 1952, shows how incredibly difficult it is to define something that is really a social construct. According to Tripathi, “culture is a ubiquitous term and is one of the most frequently as well as indiscriminately used terms” and that it is “employed as a hypothetical construct not only for descriptive purposes but also as an explanatory concept” (2001, 129). Tripathi also noted that, according to anthropologists and psychologists, culture is “not as a process but ... a product of human activities” and that it is a type of “medium in which human beings grow, develop, and become conditioned to operate” (2001, 130). Culture can be a shared phenomenon or an individual experience and can be extremely variable depending on a person’s background.

Culture can also be influenced by more tangible features such as geography and the environment.

The world as we know it is changing. We live in a more complex, globalized society, and the idea of “stable cultures becomes totally irrelevant” (Tripathi, 2001, 134). Having a homogenized group of people defined by their culture based on a geographical location is becoming less applicable and more so, our modern world is creating a hybrid understanding of what it means to be human. Despite this, societies and individuals across the globe still cling to the traditions and the common elements that bind their groups together and make them unique from others. Tied to the idea of a culture is a term which is used interchangeably for both the individual and group experience: identity.

Identity and culture are inextricably bound. How one defines themselves can be influenced by how and where they were raised, the language they speak, the religion they practice and the environment they are surrounded by, collectively known as their culture. Like culture, identity is also a social construct. As the world becomes more interconnected and “creolized” the “desire to find oneself and a place for the self” is pervasive in society (Tilley, 2006, 8). Christopher Tilley noted that the increase in the want of one’s own identity, both individually and socially “become imperative when they can no longer be assumed and are perceived to be under threat” and that “identities are only safe and unproblematic when we do not begin to question them” (2006, 8). He also noted that the idea of asking “who you are, and to which group you belong is a contemporary problem” (Tilley, 10). In tandem with globalization is the “waning significance of the nation state” and because of this, Tilley noted that there is want of a “collective identity, such as shared historical traditions linked with ethnic identities, or religious identities, that people may increasingly turn to in order to provide ontological moorings” (2006, 11).

Heritage is also linked to identity and culture, both personal heritage and the group affiliation. Not unlike identity and culture, heritage is also a complex subject to define. Like its linked companions, heritage is also a social construct and more definitively, heritage is “something that is connected to people, culture, the past and the future” and broadly defined is “everything that is considered to be worthy of preserving in culture and that one wants to leave to subsequent generations” (Konsa, 2013, 124). Kurmo Konsa links culture and heritage in his paper “Heritage as a Socio-Cultural Construct: Problems of Definition” as he believes the two are cyclically tied to one another. He noted that “it is culture that helps people to transcend time and it is thought that the ability to perceive time is the basis for the development of culture” (Konsa, 2013, 124). This construct, he argues, is “ideological and symbolic” which is “impacted by historical, political, and social conditions” (Konsa, 2013, 125). Heritage, Konsa noted, was “closely linked to the development of nations and nation-states, since heritage played an important role in the consolidation and harmonisation of the identities of states and nationalities” (2013, 125).

ii. What is Material Culture?

One part of culture and heritage is the physical the objects which people use. “Collective identities,” according to Tilley, “are always bound up with notions of...shared material forms” (2006, 12). The study of these objects and how we as humans relate to them in our lives is the genre called material culture. Material culture can be thought of as the physical objects that we interact with but also, how we create meanings and values around them. Ian Woodward noted that the term material culture “emphasises how apparently inanimate things within the environment act on people and are acted upon by people for the purposes of carrying out social functions, regulating social relations and giving symbolic meaning to human

activity” (2007, 4). In essence, material culture looks at how people and objects interact. This field of study is relatively new. It stemmed from anthropological studies and only began to emerge as its own defined entity in the 1980s and 90s. Today, the field is multidisciplinary and can encompass archaeology, sociology, psychology, geography, literature, architecture, art, and science. Woodward noted that while material culture studies believes that “objects have the ability to signify things-or establish social meanings-on behalf of people” he warns that this “culturally communicative capacity should not be automatically assumed” (2007, 5). He also notes that while “the object (on its own) can be rendered all-powerful, perfectly understandable and historically crucial,” once you add in the context of the consumer, a plethora of other layers of interpretation and meaning can be added, blurring the clearly defined boundaries of the object itself (Woodward, 2007, 5). As museums, at their core, display objects of humanity, naturally the two genres are intimately connected.

As mentioned identity, and in turn, heritage, are both social constructs and can be seen both on collective and individual levels. Particularly relevant in our globalizing world is the idea of national identity, or the sense that you belong to a place which shares parallel cultural, linguistic, and other similar signifiers. Part of belonging to a nation gives a “sense of where we came” which “is central to the definition of who we are” (McCrone, 2002, 265). Some of the characteristics which bind people into the boundaries of nationhood are not unlike those seen in the confines of cultural groupings. Clifford Geertz, when looking at tribal societies and communities noted that a sense of belonging to a nation comes from “primordial sentiments” such as “assumed blood ties, race, language, region, religion, and custom” (1973, 262). However, Smith, in his book *National Identity*, noted that in the Western sense, the binds that tie us to a sense of nation are “embodied in the historic memories, myths, symbols and ceremonies” (1991, 77). “Nation-ness,” according to Catherine Palmer, “became imaginable

as a consequence of the rise of ‘print capitalism,’ mass literacy, mass communications, and political democratization, all of which enable people to conceive of themselves as bound together across space and time” (1998, 178).

iii. Scottish National Identity

Since the early 1990s, there has been an unprecedented amount of material published by scholars on the rise of the Scottish national identity. Indeed, even the Scottish government has a section on identity in their *Scotland Performs* report. This report aims to “provide a broad measure of national and societal well-being” (n.d.). In a now defunct version of the Scottish government’s homepage, one of these measurable indicators was national identity. *Scotland Performs* is updated regularly based on the changing needs of the country. In an older version of this report which is prior to 2015, national identity is defined “by our sense of place, sense of history, and sense of self. It is defined by what it means to be Scottish; to live in a modern Scotland; to have an affinity to Scotland; to be able to participate in Scottish society” (n.d.). On the new Scottish Government’s website, this same report, which was updated in December 2017, now notes the national outcome is that “we take pride in a strong and inclusive identity” (“Scotland Performs,” 2017). Bond and Rosie note that this rise in nationalism can be measured by the change in census recordings of identity over the last twenty-five years. They argue that “there has been a substantial strengthening of Scottishness” as their collated data shows that “the proportion of those claiming an *exclusively* Scottish identity almost doubled between 1992 and 2001” (Bond and Rosie, 2002, 37-8). The reasons for this sudden increase in nationalistic pride have been debated repeatedly in recent years. One hotly debated and possible explanation for this rise was the 1997 ratification of the *Treaty of Union*, which saw the reestablishment of Scotland’s Parliament.

Since 1707, Scotland has been joined with England in the *Treaty of Union*. With this treaty, the United Kingdom of Great Britain was formed. The first referendum to the treaty to create a Scottish Assembly was held in 1979, and despite a majority, it failed to achieve the 40% needed to pass. According to the Scottish Parliament's timeline of its history, from this failed referendum, "there was a growth in the number of campaigns supporting some form of devolution for Scotland" and in 1989, the Scottish Constitutional Convention was "set up to prepare for a scheme for a Scottish Assembly or Parliament" ("Past and Present," n.d.). On 11th September 1997, the people of Scotland voted in another referendum for a devolved Scottish Parliament. This historical vote saw over 60% of the nation voting for the measure. In 1998, the Scotland Act was established within the British Parliament. This act laid the foundation for the function of the Scottish Parliament along with the parameters this devolution included. On 6 May 1999, the first election for representatives was held. The opening of the Parliament on 13th May 1999 was presided over by Winnie Ewing, a prominent Scottish Nationalist and "mother of the house" (McCrone, 2002, 253). Upon opening the session, Ewing said: "I want to start with the words that I have always wanted either to say or to hear someone else say - the Scottish Parliament, which adjourned on March 25, 1707, is hereby reconvened" ("Winnie Ewing reconvenes Scottish Parliament," 1999). On 1 July, the power was transferred from Westminster via Queen Elizabeth, to the newly formed Parliament.

This historical event took place precisely within the confines of the rise of national pride in Scotland. Not surprisingly, since the establishment of the Scottish Parliament, scholars have reflected on ideas of Scottish identity and if the increase in "Scottishness" directly correlated to the devolution. Soule et al. comment that "devolution is important in respect to correlations with national identity because it marks significant constitutional change in the political psychology of the UK" and also brings to light "political and cultural difference

between the constituent nations of the UK state” (2012, 1-2). Studies conducted by Bechhofer and McCrone have shown that Scots already, before the devolution, had a strong sense of their national identity (2009, 73). As the Scottish Parliament was “created by social movement from below rather than a top down political decision” so in fact, the feelings of Scottishness created this movement and in turn, devolution “has further strengthened the sense of being Scottish” (Bechhofer and McCrone, 2009, 8). Pittock, however, noted that for many Scots, devolution was “the restoration of a symbol of national sovereignty as Scots not Britons” (2008, 83).

Saying that however, does not mean political entities have not employed tactics to justify Scottish nationalism. The Scottish National Party (SNP) has “sought to present itself as the sole legitimate voice of an authentic and historically justified Scottish nation” (Mycock, 2002, 55). Mycock argues that the SNP employs a form of “black sheep nationalism” where they promote their own definitions of what it means to be Scottish while simultaneously discrediting other constructs of identity (2002, 54). History, David McCrone notes, is the epicentre of selling nationalism, but usually, the interpretation of the past, as employed by politicians, is incorrect (2002, 253). The SNP’s portrayal of what it means to be Scottish has permeated the media but in fact, the media has also had an influence on the idea of Scottish nationalism. According to McCrone, the SNP rode on the coattails of the release of the 1995 film *Braveheart* and its portrayal of bleeding-heart nationalism. The SNP created leaflets to reiterate this idea of the Scottish nation, which were handed out at cinemas. Alex Salmond, former First Minister of Scotland, and avid campaigner for Scottish independence, made the correlation between the Scots of history who were “fighting for their independence, the same way [we] are at the moment” (McCrone, 2002, 258).

Bechhofer and McCrone suggest that instead of political influence, Scots see shared identity markers more in the form of symbols and shared culture including “heritage, landscape

and languages” (2009, 89). There is a cornucopia of icons which are utilised to promote the idea of a shared Scottish history and heritage. Symbols, Palmer emphasises, “gently remind people of who they are rather than leap out with flashing lights, brass bands and calls to defend the nation” (1998, 181). Some of these symbols, Billig argued, show that an awareness of one’s national identity is not kept in a box for special occasions, but rather, there is a constant reminder of it through banal, everyday reminders of home (1995, 6). Before devolution came to fruition, Scottish cultural policy was “aligned with the rest of the UK,” but after, “culture was placed at the heart of the government” (Orr, 2008, 310). Funding streams were able to be funnelled down to not only large cultural institutions, but also for the creation of new and smaller entities as well. At the end of a 2004 speech in which then First Minister Jack McConnell noted a renewed sense of the importance of culture, a review of the cultural policy which followed, declared that culture “defines who we are” (Orr, 2008, 312).

During the resurgence of national pride and the vote for their own Parliament, Scots also gained a massive symbol of their heritage in the completion of the national museum. What better way to define a nation while using the past as “a powerful source of legitimacy” during this dramatic change in the country and show off the nation’s “heritage” (McCrone, 2002, 264-6). Museums and heritage, Tilley noted, are themselves “artefacts or pieces of modern material culture” (2006, 17). The opening of the National Museum of Scotland came right between the referendum for devolution and the reopening of the Scottish Parliament, a political statement if there ever was one. McLean and Cooke note that unlike national identity’s changeability, “the image of stability and authority a museum offers have been compared to the reification of a church” (2003, 111).

As we have seen, nations are social constructs and because of this, there is the need to “create their own histories or interpretation of themselves” (McLean and Cooke, 2003, 113).

The country's nationalist narrative, McCrone points out, is "told and retold through national histories, literatures, the media and popular culture, which together provide a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols and rituals" (2002, 264). Not only was the National Museum of Scotland formed in this era, but other galleries were as well. This then created the need to either curate pre-existing or acquire a collection of national art. Scotland has, according to Beveridge and Turnbull, suffered what they called the "cultural cringe" and the creation of a "inferiority complex' stemming from its "consequence of cultural subordination to England" (1989, 12). Naturally with the election of a new, independent Parliament, the need to show the world what Scotland stands for can be seen through the lens of the creation of all these national spaces, these points of pride in the identity of the nation. The presentation of Scotland's history in museums is dependent on the material culture they display and how the curators interpret and portray these symbols of the nation.

vi. The Lewis Chessmen: A Symbol of the Scottish Nation?

It is hardly surprising that within the walls of the symbol of the nation, Scotland's best archaeological find, the Lewis Chessmen, have become iconic images that help define the identity of the country. As shown in previous chapters, the value of the Lewis Chessmen is not limited to merely monetary means. Scotland, as a nation, has asked for the return of these icons of their national identity. The SNP, in their bid to create a sense of nationhood following the devolved Parliament, took up the cause for the pieces to be returned. Wishes for their return had no doubt preceded the installation of the new Parliament, the National Museum, and the SNP's reign of power, however, it was during this surge of nation-rebuilding activities that the pieces' "rightful" place was so hotly contested. While Lewis Islanders had campaigned for years for their return, Alex Salmond, the former First Minister and SNP leader, began an

official campaign for repatriation after coming to power in 2007. What began as a call for their return from Lewis' local chess club then transformed into a rallying point by the SNP for the nation. Scottish Government leaders pointed out that according to the rules of the Treasure Trove, a type of finder's keeper's scenario if found today, the chess pieces would "belong" to Scotland. As we saw in the chapter on repatriation, Scotland and the SNP were briskly shut down in their attempts by the British Museum and Westminster. MSP opposers to the outright repatriation saw Salmond's claims for their return as "a Nationalist ploy to stoke up calls for independence" ("Salmond Plots First Move in Scottish Battle to Win back Lewis Chessmen," 2007). Once talks of an independence referendum came about and plans were in place for the vote to take place, many wondered if the fragmentation of the Union would result in the SNP continuing to demand repatriation of the pieces. In fact, Salmond was quoted saying that he would "continue to campaign for a united set in an independent Scotland" (Burnett, 2013). Even former Lewis Chessmen Keeper at the National Museum of Scotland, Dr. David H. Caldwell, believed that the party had no legal case for repatriation as the collection was purchased legally. For the SNP, following a successful referendum, it was indicated that concession would be sought from Westminster and the British Museum. Big topics for discussion after a political referendum would be issues of founding a military, the creation of a monetary denomination, a division of assets, and in the case of Scotland, the return of cultural icons in the form of a set of museum pieces.

This begs the question, out of all the collections that the British Museum holds which may have with Scottish origins or associations, why did the SNP fixate specifically on the Chessmen? The repatriation claim of the Chessmen provided the perfect symbol for the SNP to show Scotland and the rest of the world what "belonged" to them. The pieces ticked all the boxes for SNP usage: culture, history, they were symbolic, and the SNP believed they would add a boost to the economy through tourism. With all the nationalist propaganda flying around

at this time including the new Parliament taking control of the nation and the new museum as a representation of the nation, the idea of returning items which “belong” to Scotland was unquestionably another symbolic means of returning power from England back to the nation.

One issue that needs to be addressed in these contexts is the idea of the ownership of cultural artefacts. Who owns the world’s material culture? As mentioned earlier in this chapter material culture, those items of human life, is a way groups of people can be connected. The SNP fixed on the Lewis Chessmen as the symbol to unite Scotland through material means and independence. Alex Salmond and the SNP’s ideas of ownership and identity through material objects were not radically new. David Steuart Erskine, the 11th Earl of Buchan, one of the founders for the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and a staunch patriot, believed in the “forming of a national collection in Scotland to reinforce a sense of national identity perceived as atrophied since the Union of Parliaments in 1701” (Cheape, 2010, 364). Dr. Joseph Anderson, keeper at the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland for forty-two years, believed his “principle audience was the nation of the Scots” whom he urged to “take up their cultural entitlement to their country’s history and museums” (Cheape, 2010, 359). Scotland’s antiquities, he argued, belonged to Scotland as “they are inseparable features of her individuality; and they belong to Scotchmen in general in a sense in which they can never belong to the holders of the lands in which they are placed” (Anderson, 1881, 9). Anderson delivered this sentiment in a lecture in 1879, many years after the Lewis hoard was purchased by the British Museum and before the eleven pieces came to reside in Scotland. We can never know for sure if he had the pieces in mind specifically when giving this speech, but it shows that ideas of ownership over cultural items was well-established prior to the modern-day call for their return.

v. Ownership of Cultural Items and the Importance of Place

The premise for this section came from two separate visits to Museum nan Eilean in Stornoway on Lewis. My first visit in May 2014 was prior to the museum's relocation to the refurbished Lews Castle but after the *Unmasked* exhibition had come to the island. The museum graciously let me see their personal visitor's book which coincided with the exhibition. Whilst looking through the comments left by visitors from around the globe, I was struck by how many people had a belief that the Chessmen "belonged" where they were exhibited. Some of the comments I viewed told a story of the belief in the public consciousness that material culture has a place...a home. Here are some of the comments I took note of:

"Loved the chessmen! Should be here permanently." (Glasgow)

"Great to see the chessmen at their homeland." (Suffolk)

"Please return the chessmen." (London)

"Meaningful to see them here rather than London. My son (aged 7) got so much from seeing them-it caught his imagination and made a connection to places for him."
(Northumberland)

"Great to see the originals at home here." (Cheshire)

"Wonderful to see the chessmen 'here' in Lewis." (Yorkshire)

"Chessmen should be in Lewis, not in England." (Kilsyth)

"The chessmen should be returned to Lewis. At least in Scotland if not Lewis itself."
(Inverness)

The 2012 announcement of the loan of the Chessmen from the British Museum came as a bit of an amazing surprise to Museum nan Eilean staff. At a personal interview in 2014, staff noted that this news of the offer of the Chessmen from the British Museum came as a welcomed shock. As mentioned previously, the British Museum has a dedicated webpage to discuss their views of items of contention within their vast holdings. The Chessmen are one of ten items deemed controversial enough to warrant a spot on this list. On the link leading to the Chessmen's portion of this area, there are several titled sections which discuss information the British Museum wishes to communicate. After a short introduction on the Chessmen, the first item listed for discussion on this stance taken by the British Museum is titled "Lews Castle." At its core, this authored statement emphasises how the Museum cooperated with Scotland for the return of some of the pieces to the island for the Lews Castle display. They also reiterate how they have partnered with museums in Scotland such as the National Museum of Scotland and Museum nan Eilean to loan the Chessmen out for exhibitions. It is probable that the British Museum saw a need to provide this statement due to previous demands from the SNP for the pieces to be returned to Scotland. The creation of these partnerships and the loan of the pieces to Museum nan Eilean for their new museum may have been done with the idea of appeasing those who have demanded their return. It is significant to note that this partial return of items was done just prior to the 2014 Scottish referendum. In 2011, Scotland's SNP published its manifesto which included its pledge for the independence referendum ("Scottish Election: SNP Manifesto"). This was around the same time that Lews Castle was granted funding for its refurbishment and a year later, the British Museum surprisingly promised a portion of the collection of Chessmen to return to Lewis. This could have been complete coincidence, but it also may have been done to staunch the flow of possible SNP demands for repatriation should the referendum have passed. As it did not, we may never know for sure either way. Interestingly, the exact length of the loan for the pieces unknown, but the Heritage Lottery

website notes that it is “long term” (“Lews Castle and Museum Opens to the Public,” 2016). Simply stated, the Chessmen are at Museum nan Eilean at the will of the British Museum.

My second visit to the museum was in May 2017, after the renovation of Lews Castle and the installation of the Chessmen in the exhibition space. Again, I was able to view visitor book entries and notes from queries that museum employees have recorded from the museum’s opening until May 2017. As with my previous visit, these comments also proved to be a treasure-trove of interesting perspectives in response to visitors seeing the Chessmen. Visitors who commented came from a myriad of locations including: many states in America, Australia, Hungary, Italy, Holland, Canada, Sri Lanka, Germany, Ireland, Denmark, Spain, England and of course, Scotland, to name a few. Some comments were general in their praise including ones like:

“interesting to see them at last”

“an unexpected treasure in a less often visited place”

“I would like to hear more about the chessmen”

“the chessmen are cool” and,

“loved it! Chessmen are fabulous.”

Like my previous visit to the Museum, more comments revealed that yet again, visitors felt a sense of the pieces being at “home” where they belonged. Some of these visitor comments included:

“Great to see the Lewis Chessmen actually on Lewis” (Somerset)

“Fantastic asset to our island” (Stornoway)

“Shame you have not more chessmen to display-not all can get to the British Museum”

(unknown location)

“Bring back the chess pieces!” (Skye)

“Great sense of place, community and its people” (England)

“Great to see the chessmen-they should be home, all of them” (Brora)

Museum staff keep a log of visitor enquiries that are made at the front desk. When I went over the entries, I found some of the questions asked to be relevant for the discussion in this chapter including:

“Why do you not have all the chessmen on the island?”

“I do not understand why if 93 chess pieces were found, how there can be 11 in Edinburgh, 82 in London and 6 here?”

“Why do you only have 6 on loan?”

“Will more chessmen be returned?”

“At last, the chessmen are home, but you should really have all of them!”

“Gathering the full collection? They belong here.”

“Are they here for good?”

“Are we getting more?”

“Why are they not always on the island?”

“Who owns the chessmen?”

“Do you think one day they will be back?”

Finding one's "roots" has become extremely popular in the last twenty-five years. We have seen a rise in activities in the heritage field with the creation of websites such as ancestry.com, genealogical themed television shows, and DNA test kits which allow individuals to trace their lineage. The land and one's ties to it seems to stimulate a search for identity, both on local and national levels. Places of origin are attached to the idea of family and because of this, an anthropomorphising occurs, where in a place can become the "motherland." Palmer noted that the land is "an essential mould for nation-building because [it] symbolises the history and the roots of the nation and thereby, engages people in a relationship with their past that can help them to make sense of the present" (1998, 191). A landscape, Palmer relays, is not merely the physical manifestation of the boundaries that make a nation, but also is "a symbolic expression of a nation's past, its present, and its future" (1998, 191). The idea of place, home, and the land, is put forth by the media and through the tourism industry. In Scotland, there has been an increase in what Sim calls the "tartan imagery," a mythic image of what the country is to those who do not live there (2012). Again, we can refer back to the *Braveheart* film and its popularity in the public sector. The film produced an "idea," albeit a historically inaccurate one, of the people of Scotland and their homeland. The creation of the epitomised Scottish landscape has come to be synonymous with the rural, the traditional, and the expanse of untouched land with its unforgiving terrain and is geographically specific to places such as the Highlands and Islands. The media has perpetuated these myths about Scotland and the heritage and tourism sectors too have played this idea to drive visitor numbers at their venues.

One way the tourism industry has continued these images of Scotland is to create ties to the "homeland." The Scottish diaspora is far flung, and heritage leaders know that to attract these people who seek their roots, it is vital that Scotland is defined not only by things such as

bagpipes, tartan, and shortbread, but also with the connection to the land. Since devolution, agendas of the Scottish Parliament have always included tourism to generate a greater income. In their 2007 Manifesto, the incoming SNP laid out important issues that they were committed to overseeing, one of which was tourism which would be a “key priority” for their government (“SNP Manifesto”). The Manifesto also noted that tourism is a “major industry and employer” that is “directly linked to economic development” (“SNP Manifesto,” 2007). “It is not surprising,” Tilley noted that, “tourist boards, planners and developers, political parties and non-governmental organisations attempt to stress the unique-ness or Otherness of a place as a unique piece of cultural capital to be maintained and marketed” via “deliberated presentation” (2006, 14). Within this framework, events dubbed “Homecomings” were produced, which were with the intention of bringing visitors back “home.” These events were, according to Sim, “aimed clearly at a diasporic market, rather than a home one,” but perhaps, it can “be seen as an element in the SNP government’s strategy to raise the nation’s sense of Scottishness, as part of its campaign for independence” (2012, 109).

As our identities can be tied both to the land and to material objects, it is no surprise that in this cyclical nature, so too are items of material culture linked to the land. As we saw from the visitor books at Museum nan Eilean, people understand this connection between material culture, history, identity, and the land. The setting in which the visitors viewed the Chessmen was special. Away from the bustle and largess that is London or Edinburgh, a display of the Chessmen on Lewis, a “remote,” traditional island with its iconic picturesque landscapes and ties to the sea created the perfect idealised image of the “real,” Scotland. This rural climate can evoke feelings of a more “traditional” life. Visit the Outer Hebrides, the tourism information website, notes that the islands are “one of Europe’s last untouched habitats” and that being there can show visitors “insight into the way of life on the islands for thousands of

years” (“Our Islands,” n.d.). The website contains evocative photos of the landscape, further creating this attachment to the land. Just getting to Lewis can be an undertaking, and the journey is part of the experience. Flights onto the island are limited, and the only other means of arriving is via a ferry, which may evoke ideas of a slower pace of life there. Gaelic is still spoken as a first language for many, and many islanders still strongly observe the Sabbath. “Traditional” activities such as fishing, peat-cutting, and guga (gannet) hunting harken back to times past. There are also physical links with the past in the form of blackhouses, the Callanish standing stone circle, and Dun Carloway Broch. Visitors to the Museum can see the authentic chessmen, which they may have seen in contemporary popular culture, in the location where they were found. The myths that surround the Chessmen, as we have seen throughout this thesis, are plentiful. Add all of this up and you are left with a powerfully symbolic and emotive experience.

vi. Material Culture and Emotion

The connection between material culture and emotions is a genre of study which is just coming to the forefront in the social sciences. In the past, the “possibilities for physical and emotional interaction with objects in museums were assumed to be non-existent or restricted to an elitist response” (Dudley, 2010, 3). Inherently, objects are just things. Humans create meaning for objects based on their culture, their heritage, and their perception of identity. Objects may provide “powerful alternatives or additions to textual interpretation in enabling visitors to understand and empathise with the stories objects may represent” (Dudley, 2010, 4). Harris and Sørensen, in their paper on emotion and material culture, define emotion as “the act of being moved, which is always tied to specific situations and the perception of particular bodily states” (2001, 149). “Emotion, affect, and sensation all form a significant part of the

experiences of objects,” argues Sandra Dudley (2010, 8). In the museum setting, it is up to curatorial staff to create emotion and effect between the objects and the visitors. The fact that museum objects are generally not allowed to be touched creates a rift in the experiences that visitors might have with objects in real life. So, curatorial staff must create these emotional engagements through display techniques and verbiage. As looked at in Chapter V, the exhibition of the chess pieces in the three museums they are housed in all create different levels of engagement and sensory experiences through their vastly different displays. Displays create context and through this context, the visitor can attach meaning. The National Museum of Scotland’s display of the pieces is simple and unassuming within the larger context of the importance to Scotland. At the British Museum, the pieces are exhibited amongst other objects of their time and a more detailed description and display are employed. The importance of the pieces on a global scale is emphasised and the extremely busy atmosphere may affect the way in which visitors can experience them. Then, at Museum nan Eilean, the pieces are in their own space of importance in relatively quiet surroundings. An audio/visual aid creates another way for the visitor to interact in the space and the variance in information provided creates different emotional connections. Although visitors can not physically touch the Lewis Chessmen, the museums provide opportunities for them to create emotional bonds with them through the ability to purchase replicas to take home and remember their experience. The act of physically holding a piece, albeit even a replica, can evoke memories of the time spent in the museum location. Having tangible pieces to hold can also evoke emotional responses, especially if one considers the object to be tied to their origins or heritage.

As this thesis has shown, there are strong emotional ties between objects and the idea of the nation. Pride in one’s heritage and identity can be experienced when viewing objects which contain historical or other important significance to a nation or even a particular place.

The visitor comments from Museum nan Eilean prove this point as time and time again, visitors produce in themselves, feelings of the Chessmen being “home.” The SNP was very aware of the important emotional bonds that objects can create in relation to the nation. Their campaign for repatriation in conjunction with seeking independence was laden with ideas of ownership, heritage, identity, and nationhood when referencing the Chessmen. Even being in a national museum which is titled to your identity, can prove emotive as you gaze at objects of your nation’s history. When building the National Museum of Scotland, architects put thought not only into the significance of the objects it would contain, but also to the building itself, imbuing it with countless symbols of Scotland.

Chapter III briefly touched on the idea of the emotion that the pieces physically produce themselves. Their facial features display a variety of emotions. Their meanings are subjective to the individual viewing them. Some have seen them as comical, some, scary. The queens’ expression, with their hands being held up to their faces, have been theorised to convey feelings of worry over the war at hand on the board. Others have believed her expression shows one of boredom. In the berserkers, many see frenzy with their bug-eyed appearance while others just think they are hilarious. What we bring with us, emotionally, into a museum setting can impact how we are able to connect to and interact with the objects. The ways in which objects are presented also provide more opportunities for emotional attachment.

UNESCO has declared that “no culture is a hermetically sealed entity” yet the idea of ownership of material objects for a nation persists (Cuno, 2014). The idea that a nation is exclusive to the rest of the world is impossible as globalization, imperialism, technology, and other means have opened nations up to one another to create a more homogenised existence of mankind. Yet, in the case of Scotland, ideas of nationhood, identity, and material culture are irrevocably tied in a cyclical nature. Scotland’s resurgence of national identity has occurred

over the last twenty-five years with the arrival of a devolved Parliament, a national museum, and a nationalist political party in power who tried to separate the country from the UK in the failed referendum of 2014. They utilised the ideas of the nation and what “belongs” to them to ask Westminster and the British Museum to return the Lewis Chessmen to them. The chess pieces were the perfect link to create emotional ties to the nation.

Chapter IX: Checkmate: The End of the Game

The primary objectives for this thesis was to give a holistic view of the Lewis Chessmen and to bring to light, the multitude of ways we add meaning to them through the assignment of values. My main research questions were:

1. What values are placed on the Lewis Chessmen?
2. What impact can ideas of identity and politics have on material culture, and specifically, museum collections?
3. How and why are museum collections, specifically the Lewis Chessmen, utilized in popular culture?
4. Why does this research matter in the greater context of museums?

Chapter II presented much of the background information about the pieces. In order to understand the ways in which the pieces are valued, it is important to know their history. Throughout the chapter, I presented information on the origins of the game of chess and demonstrated that as chess sets go, the Lewis hoard was valuable for their functionality as usable gaming pieces. Through their addition of the queen and bishop, we can trace the lineage of Christianity throughout Europe, and the rise of the female to power. This set is an early and rare example of such. In addition, I touched on the value of the pieces in the folklore of the Hebrides. Woven into the find stories of the Chessmen were the farmer's belief that they were supernatural beings of old. The pieces tie concepts of traditional and local to the islands where they were found and in turn, provide even greater context for the history of Scotland.

Chapter III's focus was on answering more questions as to their provenance including where they may have come from, where they may have been made, when they may have been made, and why were they on Lewis. With these questions and subsequent scholarly research

materials, I was able to show how the pieces have been given values of rarity, age, the mysterious, and as art pieces in their own right. Upon discussing the craftsmanship, we could see how rare these pieces are, as to date, nothing else has ever been found like them. Indeed, their rarity makes it difficult for scholars to answer some of the above questions and to date, many of them remain unanswered. The value these pieces would have been given based in their own time also was of a status symbol. These kinds of pieces would have been reserved for the elite of society as the very idea of their materiality and craftsmanship were not intended to be for the common masses. Just obtaining the walrus ivory was a dangerous feat but getting enough for almost four sets makes these pieces unique. Each individual piece was handcrafted by someone. They are intricately detailed and as we were shown, they display distinct and creative carving styles. The pieces are also valuable for their durability to stand the test of time. While there is some damage on them, the fact that so many of the hoard remains intact over a thousand years later is testament to their creators. We also saw in Chapter III that as new research is conducted on the Chessmen, they are valued as a bridge between the disciplines of art and science. Traditionally, these two subjects rarely intersect, but the qualities the Chessmen possess allow these disciplines to work in tandem to reveal more information about them. This chapter also touched on the idea of the ongoing debate over from whom and from where they may have come from. Scholars seem intent on knowing where the pieces were made and who made them. We have seen there are essentially two schools of thought for their origins: Iceland by a woman, and Norway by unknown individuals. This “battle” over the pieces shows their value in being important and exciting research material.

Chapter IV’s contents focused on where the Lewis Chessmen currently reside. To date, they are broken up into three museum collections, and one piece was purchased in 2019 by a yet unknown individual. These museums are the British Museum, the National Museum of

Scotland, and the recent addition, Museum nan Eilean. Each museum presents different sets of values when exhibiting their portion of the hoard. For instance, the British Museum touts itself as a museum of the world. Therefore, they emphasise the importance of the Lewis Chessmen, not on a British stage, but on one of global importance. In the National Museum of Scotland, the story is quite different. This museum presents items important to the nation of Scotland and as the Chessmen have been called “Scotland’s best archaeological find,” the Museum values the Chessmen to tell the story of Scotland’s past. Most recently, Museum nan Eilean, the Museum of the Western Islands, acquired six of the pieces on loan from the British Museum. The bringing “home” of the pieces to Lewis is emphasised in the museum’s display. The pieces are valued here on a local scale and with ties to the land and its history.

We can also see values in how the pieces are displayed. The British Museum situates their portion of the hoard within a “European” gallery, emphasising the greater reach of the pieces’ importance. Their display shows them both in playing positions and as individual pieces, giving value to them both as functional objects and works of art. At the National Museum of Scotland, the pieces are in a very inconspicuous display, tucked away into a dark corner of a gallery. Their colouring even blends into the surrounding case and stonework of the building, creating a sense of them being part of the whole. It is surprising that the Museum does not display the pieces in a more prominent area, seeing as they are so culturally significant to Scotland, but it may be that the designers and curators wanted all of the pieces in the Museum to have the same value as every other object which is important to the makeup of the nation. Museum nan Eilean allocated a specific area for the Chessmen, while also incorporating them into the greater whole of the gallery space. This allows them to stand alone as significant pieces, but also as part of the story the Museum is telling. In addition, each of these museums also understand the value of the Lewis Chessmen as commodities for generating income. As they

are popular with visitors at each location, each museum takes advantage of this by including a wide range of items which the visitor can purchase to take home from their gift shops. This allows the visitor to have a memory of their visit, but also is an income-generating blessing to the museums as well.

Chapter V introduced recent special projects and exhibitions which included Chessman. Simply by being selected to participate in these exhibits, museum curators are showing the value that they place on them as popular items for visitors to see. In a BBC/British Museum collaboration, the Lewis Chessmen were included in a radio series called *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. With their inclusion, right away we can see that they are valued as one of the most important one hundred pieces in the collection to tell the history of the world. This series was highly successful and gave the public a deeper way to learn about museum collections and their importance in our shared history. The pieces themselves were deemed valuable enough to warrant their own exhibition too. In 2011, the *Lewis Chessmen: Unmasked* exhibit toured Scotland, giving many more people access to the collection. This exhibition saw the joining of pieces from both the British and Scottish National Museums in order to present a unified look at the hoard as a whole. The pieces have also been on tour to various locations throughout the world, proving their value to be included in so many other exhibitions. In addition, some of the pieces went on display at the Manx Museum. Along with the *Chronicles of the Isles of Man*, the Lewis Chessmen were valued as representatives to tell the story of the island's history. These special exhibitions also generated merchandise including replica Chessmen pieces. Their value as recognisable figures make them a great commodity to generate sales.

Chapter VI gave evidence of how the Lewis Chessmen have been utilised in popular culture. They have been used many times in adult books, especially murder/mysteries. Authors recognise and value them for their aura of mystery. For children's books, authors see the value

of the pieces for their human qualities, and in many cases, the characters appear to come to life in the stories. Many of the children's books examined in this research show how there is a value of whimsy associated with the pieces, no doubt also related to their facial expressions. I also touched on the fact that the Lewis Chessmen have been used in several television shows. *Noggin the Nog*, a British cartoon classic, was inspired directly by the Chessmen themselves. Creator Peter Firmin wanted to tell their story and did so through the medium of animated cartoon. Zombies have become extremely popular in our culture, and the fact that the Lewis Chessmen have made an appearance in this genre is somewhat surprising. In the very popular series *The Walking Dead*, the pieces are utilised as actual gaming pieces first, but then they are also valued as an instrument in which to educate a child about war and offer foreshadowing of the story as it unfolds. As the show revolves around the "war" between humans and zombies, the pieces give the child something relatable and human in form to help grasp the concept of the turmoil that they live in.

The pieces have also been valued for their historical qualities and have appeared in historical dramas such as the Spanish series *Isabel*. Most recently (at the time of this thesis) the Lewis Chessmen were an integral part to the Stephen King series, *Castle Rock*. In the series, the main character uses the pieces, which she got as a gift, to bring her out of her Alzheimer's episodes. The pieces are dotted around her living space to let her know when she is in the real world. While the show values them as game pieces, more so, they are used as representative icons of the present for this character. In addition, they are symbolic of her past as a scholar of Icelandic studies as well. The pieces have also been included in two very high-profile films. The *Harry Potter* franchise has worked its way into the awareness of many people. In the first film of the series, the Lewis Chessmen make an appearance as a magical chess set which systematically "kill" one another once the player's move is done. The inclusion of the pieces

shows that producers saw their value not only as gaming pieces, but for their ability to give an air of magic too. Another film, *Brave*, also saw great success in popular culture. The DisneyPixar film was based on a Scottish princess and her need to be an independent woman in a time where she was looked at as a marriageable commodity. Merida, the main character, is given a lesson on ancient kings by her mother who used the Lewis Chessmen to represent four kings, placing them as a balance for the chess board itself. The producers of the film visited the National Museum of Scotland in order to get inspiration for the animation and deemed the pieces valuable enough as a prop in the film to include them. Lastly in this chapter, I presented information about the use of the Chessmen as works of art and identity in advertising campaigns and on social media platforms.

Chapter VII dove into the complex topic of museum repatriation, or the returning of culturally significant artefacts to their countries. As we saw in the chapter, the Scottish government petitioned Westminster for the iconic Lewis Chessmen to be returned “home” to Scotland. The fact that this debate made it all the way to Parliament is testament to how much value the Scottish government placed on these items of Scotland’s past. The fight for their return was mostly fuelled by the Scottish National Party, the ruling political party in Scotland. The SNP is known for their nationalistic views, so it is hardly surprising that they focused on the Chessmen as an item that they wanted returned to Scotland. The SNP got behind the idea that like their independence referendum, the Lewis hoard “belonged” to the people of Scotland and should not be in the hands of the British. The Museum pointedly turned down the request citing a host of reasons why the pieces would be more beneficial to the world if they remained in the British Museum’s care. To date, the Scottish government has made no further requests for the Chessmen to be returned to Scotland, however, there are consistently whispers of another referendum. If Scotland chooses to become an independent nation again, would

political leaders again ask for their return? This scenario could create additional research potential if the issue of independence ever comes to fruition. As a comparative in this thesis, I included information on the ongoing call for the repatriation of the Parthenon Marbles, a debate which even at the time of this publication, is still very much in the public consciousness.

Chapter VIII examined ideas of the ownership of cultural items, how identity and politics are linked, and how emotion and ties to the land are all values which have been placed on the Lewis Chessmen. This chapter was a further expansion of the one before, giving more insight into the delicate relationships between humans and the values they place on objects. I began by discussing how ideas of identity can be linked to material culture items and how in many cases, this is linked to politics too. I showed that in the 1990s, there was a rise in the idea of the Scottish nation and national pride, especially after Scotland received its own devolved government. On the coattails of this “win” for their heritage, we saw how the SNP found value in the Lewis Chessmen as icons of the nation and so, they doggedly pursued the idea that the pieces needed to return “home.” I discussed the concept of “home” and how it can evoke strong emotional links to both the land, and to objects perceived to belong there. As a case study, I included my research on visitor comments at Museum nan Eilean, where many people emphatically voiced their happiness in seeing the Lewis Chessmen “at home” on Lewis. Many saw value in this link with the place/land as significant to both heritage and identity. I also touched on how objects of material culture can create impact and meaning through the values we place on them.

Throughout this thesis, the idea of monetary value has never been discussed other than from their original purchase after the pieces were found and split up. However, the 2019 “discovery” of a new piece has stimulated significant interest in the monetary value of the pieces. Many of the headlines declaring the find mention that the antiques dealer who

purchased the warder in 1960s, paid a mere £5 for an item that would probably be auctioned off for as much as £600,000-1,000,000. In the end, the “new” warder sold at Christie’s to an unknown individual for £735,000.

So, why is any of this important in the greater scheme of things? Through the utilisation of the Lewis Chessmen as a case study, I have shown how we, as humans, place values onto what are essentially inanimate objects. We give objects life and meaning through the ways we use them, how we perceive them, and how we create bonds with them through ideas such as our identity and political values. This thesis’ aim was primarily to give a holistic view to a collection which has been researched in various ways. Through this holistic exploration, I wanted to present the first ever, full picture of the Lewis Chessmen in order to give greater context to why there is a myriad of values placed upon them. I also wanted to demonstrate, through the use of the Chessmen as a case study, how media and popular culture use historic objects for their own uses and needs. This research could be a guiding example for others who are interested in the role that material culture plays in our society. In a world which is constantly becoming more of a globalised unit than individual societies, there may be a rise in the number of claims of repatriation of cultural items, which will have a significant impact on cultural institutions around the world. As this homogenisation of society continues to develop, it may come to pass that more nations will want to hold onto the items of cultural significance that defines what it means to be uniquely them.

References

- Adventures by Disney. (n.d.). *Scotland: A brave adventure*. Retrieved 11 October 2014, from <http://www.adventuresbydisney.com/europe/scotland-vacations/>
- Agatha Christie Online. (n.d.). *Poirot*. Retrieved 16 May 2018, from <https://web.archive.org/web/20100412131601/http://uk.agathachristie.com/story-explorer/characters/poirot/>
- Allan, C. (2011, December 02). *26 Treasures: Scottish history comes alive at the National Museum of Scotland*. National Museum of Scotland. <https://blog.nms.ac.uk/2011/12/02/26-treasures-scottish-history-comes-alive-at-national-museum-of-scotland/>
- Amit, V. (2000). Introduction. In V. Amit (Ed.), *Constructing the field: Ethnographic fieldwork in the contemporary world*. (pp. 1-18). Routledge.
- Anderson, J. (1881). *Scotland in early Christian times*. David Douglas.
- Andreeva, N. (2018, May 11). *Castle Rock: Andre Holland to topline J.J. Abrams & Stephen King Hulu series*. Deadline. <https://deadline.com/2017/05/castle-rock-andre-holland-star-jj-abrams-stephen-king-hulu-drama-series-1202089587/>
- Andrews, M., Chapman, B., & Purcell, S. (Directors). (2012). *Brave* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures.
- ArtsAlive. (n.d.). *Set and prop designs*. Retrieved 19 May 2018, from <http://artsalive.ca/en/eth/design/set.asp>
- Atkinson, R. (2012, June 14). *Lewis chessmen to return to Western Isles*. Museums Association. <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/14062012-lewis-chessmen-returned-to-western-isles>

- Barnett, L. (2018, May 20). *A Scottish historian on Brave*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2012/aug/29/scottish-historian-view-brave>
- Barrowman, R. C. & Hooper, J. (2006). *Lewis Coastal Chapel-Sites Survey: Topography Survey 2005*. Project Report. University of Glasgow.
- Beattie, N. (Writer), & Uppendahl, M. (Director). (2013, November 17). Live bait (Season 4, Episode 6). [Television series episode]. In Alpert, D. (Producer), *The walking dead*. AMC.
- BBC. (n.d.). *Episode one transcript: A history of the world in 100 objects*. Retrieved 13 May 2018, from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/about/transcripts/episode1/>
- BBC. (n.d.). *Episode sixty-one transcript: A history of the world in 100 objects*. Retrieved 13 May 2018, from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1YJKCtchQSlKDjzvCyrkLhf/episode-transcript-episode-61-lewis-chessmen>
- BBC. (n.d.). *Status symbols (AD 1100-1500): A history of the world in 100 objects*. Retrieved 13 May 2018, from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00tgxxm>
- BBC. (n.d.). *The saga of Noggin the Nog first transmitted 11 September 1959*. Retrieved 19 May 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/anniversaries/september/noggin-the-nog>
- BBC. (1999, May 12). *Winnie Ewing reconvenes Scottish Parliament*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/hi/historic_moments/newsid_8187000/8187312.stm
- BBC. (2008, January 26). *Piece talks over ancient chessmen*. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/highlands_and_islands/7210537.stm

- BBC. (2010, January 18). *Welcome to a history of the world*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/ahistoryoftheworld/2010/01/welcome-to-a-history-of-the-wo.shtml>
- BBC. (2010, June 15). *Lewis chessmen could be returned*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10319804>
- BBC. (2011, April 14). *Lewis chessmen exhibition opens up in Stornoway museum*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-13085170>
- BBC. (2011, April 14). *Scottish elections: SNP manifesto*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-13083953>
- BBC. (2012, January 20). *Doctor Who in Lewis chessmen story in new BBC book*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-16651810>
- BBC. (2012, June 13). *Historic Lewis chessmen returning to Western Isles*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-18429790>
- Bechhofer, F & McCrone, D. (2009). Being Scottish. In F. Bechhofer & D. McCrone (Eds.), *National identity, nationalism and constitutional change* (pp. 64-94). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bechhofer, F. & McCrone, D. (2009, Spring). Stating the obvious: Ten truths about national identity. *Scottish Affairs*, 67, 7-21.
- Bellairs, J. (1989). *The chessmen of doom*. Bantam Skylar/Dial Books.
- Beveridge, C. & Turnbull, R. (1989). *The eclipse of Scottish culture*. Polygon.
- Billig, M. (1995). *Banal nationalism*. Sage.

- Black, E. (2014). Open moves: Introducing dynastic women and state propaganda to the chess board. In D. H. Caldwell & M. A. Hall (Eds.), *The Lewis chessmen: New perspectives* (pp. 45-70). NMS Enterprises Limited.
- Bond, R. & Rosie, M. (2002, Summer). National identities in post-devolution Scotland. *Scottish Affairs*, 40, 34-53.
- Box Office Mojo. (n.d.). *Brave*. Retrieved 20 May 2018, from <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=bearandthebow.htm>
- BP or not BP. (2018, December 12). *Hundreds join unofficial tour to challenge British Museum stolen objects and BP sponsorship*. <https://bp-or-not-bp.org/2018/12/10/hundreds-join-unofficial-tour-to-challenge-british-museum-stolen-items-and-bp-sponsorship/>
- Brenneis, D. & Ellison, P. (2009, October 21). Preface: Holism and Anthropology. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 38(1), V-VI.
- Breznican, A. (2018, August 22). *Castle Rock recap: A frantic chase through Ruth Deaver's fractured mind*. Entertainment Weekly. <https://ew.com/recap/castle-rock-season-1-episode-7/>
- British Library Board. (2007). British Library. *Recommendation for the loan of the Chronicles of the Kings of Mann and the Isles to Manx National Heritage for display at the Manx Museum*. Retrieved 15 May 2018, from <https://www.bl.uk/aboutus/foi/pubsch/pubscheme4/BLB1214.pdf>
- British Museum. (n.d.). *12 Objects to see with children*. Retrieved 27 March 2018, from http://www.britishmuseum.org/visiting/family_visits/12_objects_for_children.aspx

- British Museum. (n.d.). *61. Lewis chessmen*. Retrieved 13 May 2018 from https://www.Britishmuseum.org/explore/a_history_of_the_world/objects.aspx#61
- British Museum. (n.d.). *A history of the world in 100 objects*. Retrieved 27 March 2018, from http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/a_history_of_the_world.aspx
- British Museum. (n.d.). *About us*. Retrieved 4 September 2018, from <http://www.britishmuseum.org/about-us>
- British Museum. (n.d.). *British Museum architecture*. Retrieved 14 April 2018, from http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/the_museums_story/architecture.aspx
- British Museum. (n.d.). *Gallery talk: Introducing the Lewis chessmen*. Retrieved 27 March 2018, from http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats_on/events_calendar/event_detail.aspx?eventId=4278&title=Introducing%20the%20Lewis%20Chessmen&eventType=Gallery%20talk
- British Museum. (n.d.). *History of the British Museum*. Retrieved 14 April 2018, from http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/the_museums_story/general_history.aspx
- British Museum. (n.d.). *Homepage*. Retrieved 28 March 2018, from <http://www.britishmuseum.org>
- British Museum. (n.d.). *International touring exhibition*. Retrieved 15 May 2018, from http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/tours_and_loans/international_exhibitions.aspx
- British Museum. (n.d.). *Lewis chessmen*. Retrieved 27 October 2015, from http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/news_and_press/statements/the_lewis_chessmen.aspx
- British Museum. (n.d.). *News and press releases*. Retrieved 27 October 2015, from http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/news_and_press.aspx

- British Museum. (2017). *Review 2016-2017*. Retrieved 27 October 2015, from https://www.britishmuseum.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/British_Museum_Annual_Review%202016_17.pdf
- British Museum. (n.d.). *Sir Hans Sloan*. Retrieved 24 March 2018, from http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/the_museums_story/general_history/sir_hans_sloane.aspx
- British Museum. (n.d.). *The Parthenon sculptures: Facts and figures*. Retrieved 27 October 2015, from http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/news_and_press/statements/parthenon_sculptures.aspx
- British Museum. (n.d.). *Tours and Talks*. Retrieved 27 March 2018, from http://www.britishmuseum.org/visiting/planning_your_visit/tours_and_talks.aspx
- British Museum. (2009). *New Medieval gallery at the British Museum*. Retrieved 27 March 2018, from http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/news_and_press/press_releases/2009/medieval_gallery.aspx
- British Museum. (2017, September 25). *Curator's Corner: Irving Finkel and the chamber of Lewis Chessmen* [Video], YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZBXTy5KK3I>.
- Brown, M. (2011, June 15). *British Museum wins art fund prize*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2011/jun/15/british-museum-wins-arts-fund-prize>
- Brown, N. M. (2015). *Ivory Vikings: The mystery of the most famous chessmen in the world and the woman who made them*. St. Martin's Press.

- Brown, N. M. (2015, November 18). Iceland's medieval art. *God of Wednesday*.
<https://nancymariebrown.blogspot.com/2015/11/icelands-medieval-art.html>
- Brown, N. M. (2016, February 16). Were medieval women artists? How do we know? *God of Wednesday*. <https://nancymariebrown.blogspot.com/2016/02/were-medieval-women-artists-how-do-we.html>
- Brown University. (n.d.). *What is a cabinet of curiosities?* Retrieved 26 March 2018, from
https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/courses/archaeologicaltheory/5146.html
- Brunton, D. (2009). *The chess piece magician*. Kelpies.
- Bubandt, N. & Otto, T. (2010). Anthropology and the predicaments of holism. In N. Bubandt & T. Otto (Eds.), *Experiments in holism: Theory and practice in contemporary anthropology* (pp. 1-15). Blackwell Publishing.
- Bunz, M. (2010, January 18). *Beyond 100 objects: Exploring the BBC's online history of the world*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/pda/2010/jan/18/100-objects-bbc-online-history>
- Burnett, B. (2013, January 02). *Scotland: Chessmen in the battle for independence*. The Foreign Report. <http://www.theforeignreport.com/2013/01/02/scotland-chessmen-and-battle-independence/>
- Burns, J. F. (2003, April 12). *A nation at war: Looting; pillagers strip Iraqi Museum of its treasure*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/13/world/a-nation-at-war-looting-pillagers-strip-iraqi-museum-of-its-treasure.html?rref=collection%2Ftime+stopic%2FNational%20Museum%20of%20Iraq>

- Calder, J. (1998). *The museum of Scotland*. NMS Publishing Ltd.
- Caldwell, D. H. (2014). The Kingdom of the Isles. In D. H. Caldwell & M. A. Hall (Eds.), *The Lewis chessmen: New perspectives*. NMS Enterprises Limited.
- Caldwell, D. H., Hall, M. A., & Wilkinson, C. M. (2009). The Lewis hoard of gaming pieces: A re-examination of the context, discovery, and manufacture. *Medieval Archaeology*, 53, 155-203.
- Caldwell, D. H., Hall, M. A., & Wilkinson, C. M. (2010). *The Lewis chessmen: Unmasked*. NMS Enterprises Limited.
- Calafi, J., Olivares, J., Perpigan, S. (Writers), & Ferrer, O., Frades, J. (Directors). (2012 September 10). Isabel, la reina. (Season 1, Episode 1). [Television series episode]. In Banacolocha, J., Bas, J., Garcia, M., Lara, N. (Producers), *Isabel*. Televisión Española.
- Canmore. (n.d.). *Lewis, Mealista*. Retrieved 6 February 2018, from <https://canmore.org.uk/site/3981/lewis-mealista>
- Canmore. (n.d.). *Lewis, Tigh nan Cailleachan Dubha*. Retrieved 5 February 2018, from <https://canmore.org.uk/site/3983/lewis-tigh-nan-cailleachan-dubha>
- Carmichael, J. (2010). Foreword. In D. H. Caldwell, M. A. Hall, & C. M. Wilkinson (Eds.), *The Lewis chessmen: Unmasked* (p. 10). National Museums of Scotland.
- CGTN. (2017, October 09). *A history of the world in 100 objects exhibition wows museum goers in Shanghai*. https://news.cgtn.com/news/35416a4d7a597a6333566d54/share_p.html

- Cheape, H. (2010, June). The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and their museum: Scotland's national collection and a national discourse. *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 14(3), 357-375.
- Christie, A. (1965). *The big four*. Fontana.
- Clements, J. (n.d.). *Professor Munakata's British Museum adventure*. MangaUK.
<https://www.mangauk.com/museum-piece/>
- Close, K. (2016, November 17). *This is how much the Harry Potter movies have made so far*. Time Magazine. https://finance.yahoo.com/news/much-money-harry-potter-movies-162444641.html?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuYmluZy5jb20v&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAADT9RuWGE8VtUoTAjsLCXw-FjKVRbgToTMpQmuu65TR sLD7jhjQr34f_PA1pTJUutu9MwfKwg1FXQ4qJpJZdKbN3uQMxghyyXRzMFzf6Bhk2aFKghr-1IMmmWFGvmCOxJC2gdj1jNWFg1oi6f58GC0J9HzG74-eifG6Fw7G-rBnu
- Colgan, J. T. (2012). *Doctor Who: Dark horizons*. BBC Books.
- Columbus, C. D. (Director). (2001). *Harry Potter and the philosopher's stone* [Film]. Warner Brothers.
- Comann Eachdraidh Uig/Uig Historical Society. (n.d.). *Uig Chessmen*. Retrieved from 7 February 2018, from <http://www.ceuig.co.uk/uig-chessmen>
- Comunn Eachdraidh/Uig Historical Society. (2008). *The Uig chessmen. Norway, 1150? Ardrol, 1831*. [Brochure]. Ardrol, Uig, Lewis, Scotland: Comunn Eachdraidh/Uig Historical Society.

Comann Eachdraidh Uig/The Uig Historical Society. (2009, May 26). *The Uig landscape*.

<http://www.ceuig.co.uk/the-uig-landscape/>

Conselatore, B. (2018, February 26). *Medium brow: The case against cultural elitism*.

Articulate. <https://www.articulateshow.org/articulate/medium-brow-case-against-cultural-elitism>

Cowan, I. B. & Easson, D. E. (1976). *Medieval religious houses in Scotland*. Longman Publishing.

Cracknell, E. (May 1885). Art. In A.W. Besant (Ed.), *Our corner* (pp. 304-306). Freethought Publishing Co.

Cuno, J. (2014, November-December). *Culture war: The case against repatriating museum artifacts*. Foreign Affairs: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/culture-war>

Dandridge, P. (2011, December 6). From tusk to treasure: Part I. *Metropolitan Museum of Art*. <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2011/the-game-of-kings-medieval-ivory-chessmen-from-the-isle-of-lewis/exhibition-blog/game-of-kings/blog/from-tusk-to-treasure-part-i>

Delaney, B. (2016, September 08). *Curated history: How to tell a 2-million-year-old story with one exhibition*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/sep/08/curated-history-how-to-tell-a-2-million-year-old-story-with-one-exhibition>

Dictionary.com. (n.d.). *Popular culture*. Retrieved 16 May 2018, from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/popular-culture>

- Dictionary.com. (n.d.). *Repatriation*. Retrieved 13 January 2018, from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/repatriation>
- Dudley, S. H. (2010). Museum materialities: Objects, sense, and feeling. In S. H. Dudley (Ed.), *Museum materialities: objects, engagements, interpretations* (pp. 1-17). Routledge.
- Edinburgh Festival Magazine. (n.d.). *On who's horizons?* Retrieved 17 May 2018, from [http:// www.edfestmag.com/general/jenny-colgan/](http://www.edfestmag.com/general/jenny-colgan/)
- Edinburgh Spotlight. (2011, December 26). *26 Treasures at the National Museum of Scotland*. <http://www.edinburghspotlight.com/2011/12/26-treasures-at-the-national-museum-of-scotland/>
- Etheridge, D. Hart, M., Heans-Glowska, E., & Kupiec, P. (2014). Introduction. In B. Shorn & J. Quinn (Eds.), *Languages, Myths, and Finds: Vol 2: The Vikings in Lewis [Booklet]*. Centre for the Study of the Viking Age, University of Nottingham: Mitel Publishing. Retrieved from <https://languagesmythsfinds.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/lmf2.pdf>
- Etheridge, D., Hart, M., Heans-Glowska, E., & Kupiec, P. (2014). Chapter 1: Settlement. In B. Shorn & J. Quinn (Eds.), *Languages, Myths, and Finds: Vol 2: The Vikings in Lewis [Brochure]*. Centre for the Study of the Viking Age, University of Nottingham: Mitel Publishing. Retrieved from <https://languagesmythsfinds.files.wordpress.com/2013/09 /lmf2.pdf>
- Evans, S. (2012, January 08). *The chessmen have landed. The game of kings: Medieval ivory chessmen from the Isle of Lewis is luring crowds to New York's beloved Cloisters*. Art of the times. <https://artofthetimes.com/2012/01/08/the-chessmen-have-landed-the->

game-of-kings-medieval-ivory-chessmen-from-the-isle-of-lewis-is-luring-crowds-to-new-yorks-beloved-cloisters/

Fandom Pixar Wiki. (n.d.). *Brave*. Retrieved 20 May 2018, from

<https://pixar.fandom.com/wiki/Brave>

Festival of Museums. *About us*. (n.d.). Retrieved 20 May 2018, from

<https://festivalofmuseums.com/about-us>

Finkle, I. (1995). *The Lewis chessmen and what happened to them*. British Museum Press.

Finkle, I. (2017, September 25). *Curator's corner: Irving Finkle and the Lewis chessmen*.

British Museum: <https://blog.britishmuseum.org/curators-corner-irving-finkel-and-the-lewis-chessmen/>

Floris Books. (n.d.). *Kelpies*. Retrieved 21 May 2017, from

<https://www.florisbooks.co.uk/subjects/kelpies>

Fox, A. (2013, January 11). *The forgotten kingdom: The kingdom of Man and the Isles: 1000-1300 A.D.* [Insert booklet]. Isle of Man: Isle of Man Stamps and Coins.

Geertz, E. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. Basic Books.

Gingell, C. (Director). (2006, June 28). *Lewis chessmen* (Season 1, Episode 3). [Television series episode]. In J. Bugler (Executive Producer), *Masterpieces of the British Museum*. Fulmar Television & Film Ltd for BBC/The Trustees of the British Museum.

Glenn, V. (2003). *Romanesque and Gothic decorative metalwork and ivory carvings in the Museum of Scotland*. NMSE Publishing.

- Good Reads. (n.d.). *Chessmen of doom*. Retrieved 17 May 2018, from https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/295804.Chessmen_of_Doom
- Gwinn, C. (Writer), & Podeswa, J. (Director). (2013, November 24). Dead weight (Season 4, Episode 7). [Television series episode]. In Alpert, D. (Producer), *The walking dead*. AMC
- Hall, S. (1992). The question of cultural identity. In S. Hall, D. Held, & T. McGrew (Eds.) , *Modernity and its futures* (pp. 273-376). Polity Press.
- Han, K. (2018, August 26). *Castle Rock showrunner Sam Shaw explains the series' best episode yet*. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/2018/8/26/17779444/castle-rock-episode-seven-recap-sissy-spacek>
- Harris, O. J. T. & Sørensen, T. F. (2001). Rethinking emotion and material culture. *Archaeological Dialogues*, 17(2), 145-163.
- Hebridean Connections. (n.d.). *Baile na Cille, Lewis*. Retrieved 8 February 2018, from <https://www.hebrideanconnections.com/locations/2770>
- Hensher, P. (2010, October 15). *The objects of my affection*. The Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/philip-hensher/philip-hensher-the-objects-of-my-affection-2106649.html>
- Heritage Lottery Fund. (2016, July 15). *Lews Castle and museum opens to the public*. <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/lews-castle-and-museum-opens-public>
- Highlands and Islands Enterprises. (2017, March 6). *Official opening of Lews Castle Museum and Archive*. <http://news.hie.co.uk/all-news/official-opening-of-lews-castle-museum-and-archive>

- Hirose, I. & Olson, J. (2015). Introduction to value theory: What is value theory?. In I. Hirose & J. Olson (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of value theory* (pp. 1-12). Oxford University Press.
- House of Commons (2010, March 10). *Repatriation of historical objects*. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmhansrd/cm100310/halltext/100310h0009.htm>
- Hunter-Tilney, L. (2014, March 4). *Vikings: Life and legend, British Museum, London-review*. Financial Times. <https://www.ft.com/content/61504c6c-a3b7-11e3-aa85-00144feab7de>
- Inventory of the ancient and historical monuments and constructions in the Outer Hebrides, Skye, and the small isles assigned to a date before 1707, No. 85. Hut Circles (Ernoal) Uig. (1928). *Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland: 9th Report, Edinburgh*.
- ISO Design. (2017, February 15). *Lewis chessmen: A king's game* [Video], YouTube. <https://youtu.be/PiOKTjk6vYE>
- Jones, J. (2014, February 28). *Secrets of the Viking hoard - interactive*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/ng-interactive/2014/feb/28/vikings-360-degree-interactive-gallery>
- Kennedy, M. (2010, October 14). *Radio 4's a history of the world in 100 objects draws to a close*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2010/oct/14/radio-4-history-world-objects>
- King James Bible. (2020). *King James Bible Online*. <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/> (original work published in 1769).

- King, S., Shaw, S. (Writers), & Yaitanes, G. (Director). (2018, August 22). The queen. [Television series episode]. In Abrams, J.J (Producer), *Castle Rock*. Hulu.
- Konsa, K. (2013). Heritage is a socio-cultural construct: Problems of definition. *Baltic Journal of Art History*, 6, 125-151.
- Laing, D. (1857). A brief note of the small figure cut in ivory, supposed by pennant to represent the King of Scotland in his coronation chair, which was discovered in Dunstaffnage Castle. *Archaeologia Scotia*, 4, 366-369.
- Lasko, P. E. (1960). A Romanesque carving. *The British Museum Quarterly*, 23(1), 12-16.
- Legate, D. (2011, January 24). *The Lewis chessmen come to Shetland*. Shetland online. <https://www.shetland.org/60n/blogs/posts/lewis-chessmen>
- Li, S. (2018, August 22). *Castle rock boss on that devastating Sissy Spacek showcase episode*. Entertainment Weekly. <https://ew.com/tv/2018/08/22/castle-rock-sissy-spacek-sam-shaw-episode-7-postmortem/>
- Lund, G. K. (2014). Early Medieval chess in Scandinavia: An introduction. In D. A. Caldwell & M. A. Hall (Eds.), *The Lewis chessmen: New perspectives*. pp. 261-282. NMS Enterprises Limited.
- MacDonald, Donald. (1976). *Tales and traditions of the Lews*. Stornoway: Mrs. MacDonald.
- MacDonald, Donald. (1978). *Lewis, a history of the island*. Gordon Wright Publishing.
- MacMillan, D. (1999). Museum of Scotland. In Benson + Forsyth & August Media (Eds.), *Museum of Scotland* (pp. 110-119). Benson + Frotyth.
- MacSween, F. (1998). Address. *Dualchas mara/sea heritage*. The Celtic Congress.

- Madden, F. (1832, January 28). Historical remarks on the introduction of the game of chess into Europe, and on the ancient chess-men discovered in the Isle of Lewis. *Archaeologica*, XXIV, 203-291.
- Mallowan, M. E. L. (1953). The excavation at Nimrud, 1952. *Iraq*, 15(1), 1-42.
- Manx National Heritage. (2012, November 12). *Official opening of the forgotten kingdom?* <https://manxnationalheritage.im/news/official-opening-of-the-forgotten-kingdom>
- Martenstyn, L. (2013, May 3). *Digital archives: Making museum collections available to everyone*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2013/may/03/museum-archives-digital-online>
- Mathieson, J., Moffat, S. (Writers), & Bazzalgette, E. (Director). (2015, October 17). The girl who died (Season 9, Episode 5). [TV series episode]. In Ritchie, D. (Producer), *Doctor Who*. BBC.
- May, P. (n.d.). *About Peter May*. Retrieved 21 May 2018, from <http://www.ur-web.net/PeterMayMain/petermay.htm>
- May, P. (2013). *The chessmen*. Quercus Editions.
- McClain, D. L. (2010, September 8). Reopening history of storied Norse chessmen. *The New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/09/arts/09lewis.html>
- McCrone, D. (2002). Tomorrow's ancestors: Nationalism, identity, and history. In E. J. Cowan & R. J. Finlay (Eds.), *Scottish history: The power of the past* (pp. 253-271). University of Edinburgh Press.
- McKean, C. (2008). *Making of the Museum of Scotland*. NMS Publishing Ltd.

- McKenzie, S. (2012, August 3). *The search for the real Merida of Disney Pixar's Brave*. BBC Scotland. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-18674980>
- McLean, F. & Cooke, S. (2003, Autumn). The National Museum of Scotland: A symbol for a new Scotland? *Scottish Affairs* (45), 111-128.
- Metropolitan Museum of Art (n.d.). *Dog, Assyrian*.
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/323812>
- Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.). *The Met cloisters*. Retrieved 15 May 2018, from <https://www.metmuseum.org/visit/met-cloisters>
- Metropolitan Museum of Art. (2011-2012). *Game of kings exhibition blog*. Retrieved 15 May 2018, from <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2011/the-game-of-kings-medieval-ivory-chessmen-from-the-isle-of-lewis/exhibition-blog>
- Metropolitan Museum of Art. (2012, April 16). *The game of kings: Medieval ivory chessmen from the Isle of Lewis* [Video], YouTube. <https://youtu.be/OTyvqnNvUi4>
- Mezzofiore, G. (2019, June 03). *Lost Lewis chessman worth over \$1 million found in drawer*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/style/article/lost-lewis-chessman-scli-intl/index.html>
- Moore, K. (1997). *Museums and popular culture*. Leicester University.
- Morrison, N. (1936). *Hebridean lore and romance*. Highland News Office.
- Museum & Tasglann nan Eilean. (2017, March 21). *The Chessmen had a rare trip out of their case yesterday when Verena from the British Museum came to do*. [Image attached] [Status update]. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/MuseumnanEilean/posts/1421785374520049>

Museums Association. (n.d.). *What is a museum?* Retrieved 9 April 2018, from <https://www.museumsassociation.org/about/frequently-asked-questions>

Museums and Heritage Adviser. (2015, September 12). *Temporary and touring exhibitions: Reaching out to audiences*. <http://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/features/temporary-and-touring-exhibitions-reaching-out-to-audiences>

Museums Galleries Scotland. (n.d.). *Festival of Museums*. Retrieved 20 May 2018, from <https://www.museumsgalleriescotland.org.uk/projects/festival-of-museums/>

Mycock, A. (2012). SNP, identity, and citizenship: Reimagining state and nation. *National Identities*, 14(1), 53-69.

National Geographic Online. (n.d.). *Walrus*. Retrieved 25 April 2018, from <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/mammals/w/walrus/>

National Museum of Scotland. (n.d.) *History of National Museums Scotland*. Retrieved 27 March 2018, from <https://www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/history-of-national-museums-scotland/>

National Museum of Scotland. (n.d.). *Lewis chessmen*. Retrieved 5 October 2018, from <https://www.nms.ac.uk/explore-our-collections/stories/scottish-history-and-archaeology/lewis-chessmen>

National Museum of Scotland. (n.d.). *Lewis chessmen*. Retrieved 29 October 2015, from <https://www.nms.ac.uk/lewischessmen.aspx>

National Museum of Scotland. (n.d.). *Map*. Retrieved 02 May 2018, from https://www.nms.ac.uk/media/1156421/scotlandmap_dec2017_final.pdf

National Museum of Scotland. (n.d.). *Scottish history and archaeology galleries*. Retrieved 2 May 2018, from <https://www.nms.ac.uk/national-museum-of-scotland/things-to-see-and-do/scottish-history-and-archaeology>

National Museum of Scotland. (n.d.). *Scottish history and archaeology themed tours*. Retrieved 2 May 2018, from <https://www.nms.ac.uk/national-museum-of-scotland/whats-on/tours/tour-themes/scottish-history-and-archaeology>

National Museum of Scotland. (n.d.). *Tours*. Retrieved 10 May 2018, from <https://www.nms.ac.uk/national-museum-of-scotland/whats-on/tours>

National Museum of Scotland. (n.d.). *Vision, aims, and values*. Retrieved 07 July 2018, from <https://www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/our-organisation/vision-and-values/>.

National Museum of Scotland. (n.d.). *Walkthrough material: The Lewis chessmen: Unmasked*

National Museum of Scotland. (March 2012). *Added value project: The Lewis chessmen unmasked project report*

National Museum of Scotland. (March 2012). *Digital media, website, and learning & programmes: The Lewis chessmen unmasked project report*.

National Museum of Scotland. (March 2012). *Executive Summary: The Lewis chessmen unmasked project review report*.

National Museum of Scotland. (March 2012). *Introduction: The Lewis chessmen unmasked project review report*.

National Museum of Scotland. (March 2012). *Raising profile: The Lewis chessmen unmasked project review report*.

- National Museum of Scotland (March 2012). *Project delivery: The Lewis chessmen unmasked project review report*.
- National Museum of Scotland. (March 2012). *Success factors: The Lewis chessmen unmasked project review report*.
- National Museum of Scotland. (2017). *Review 2017*. <https://www.nms.ac.uk/media/1155677/nms-annual-review-2016-17.pdf>
- Northlands. (n.d.). *The saga*. Retrieved 21 May 2018, from <http://www.nogginthenog.co.uk/welcome.htm>
- O’Keefe, M. (2018, August 22). *Inside Sissy Spacek’s big Castle Rock episode, The Queen*. Decider. <https://decider.com/2018/08/22/castle-rock-episode-7-the-queen-secrets/>
- Orr, J. (2008, December). Instrumental or intrinsic?: Cultural policy in Scotland since devolution. *Cultural Trends*, 17(4), 309-316.
- Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.). *Cist*. Retrieved 2 February 2018, from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/cist>
- Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.). *Highbrow*. Retrieved 26 October 2020 from, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/86863?redirectedFrom=highbrow#eid>
- Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.). *Lowbrow*. Retrieved 26 October 2020, from <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/110661?redirectedFrom=low+brow#eid>
- Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.). *Warder*. Retrieved 2018 May 1, from [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/ definition/warder](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/warder)
- Palmer, C. (1998). From theory to practice: Experiencing the nation in everyday life. *Journal of Material Culture*, 3(2), 175-199.

- Parker, P. (2017, December 11). *The private collector who made the British Museum*. Apollo.
<https://www.apollo-magazine.com/the-private-collector-who-made-the-british-museum>
- Pease, V. (2017, July 20). *Scotland in objects: Pivotal pieces that helped shape history*. STV
<https://stv.tv/news/features/1393887-unveiled-the-25-historical-artefacts-that-shaped-scotland/>
- Phillips, R. M. (2011). *Rook, rhyme, and sinker*. Asylett Press.
- Pierce, E. (2014). Walrus hunting and the ivory trade in the North Atlantic. In D. H. Caldwell & M. A. Hall (Eds.), *The Lewis chessmen: New perspectives* (pp. 169-184). NMS Enterprises Limited.
- Pittock, M. (2008). *The road to independence? Scotland since the sixties*. Reakiton.
- Pixar. (n.d.). *Brave*. Retrieved 20 May 2018, from <https://www.pixar.com/feature-films/brave>
- Poplin, F. & Rahimifar, M. (2006). L'ivoire de rhinocéros et les ivoires du Proche-Orient ancien. *Comptes Rendus des Seances de la Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, 2, 1119-1130.
- Þóraminsson, G. G. (2014). The Lewis chessmen: The Icelandic Theory. In D. H. Caldwell & M. A. Hall (Eds.), *The Lewis chessmen: New perspectives* (pp. 201-220). NMS Enterprises Limited.
- Pryce, V. & Selwood, D. (2014, November 13). *Duel: Should we return the Elgin marbles*. Prospect. <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/regulars/duel-should-we-return-the-elgin-marbles>

- Rawlinson, K. (2016, March 21). *Doctor Who star Peter Capaldi says BBC should do more regional drama*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/mar/22/dr-who-peter-capaldi-bbc-regional-drama>
- Rembrandt. (1633). *Portrait of a man rising from his chair* [Painting]. Retrieved 24 December 2018, from The Taft Museum of Art. https://taftmuseum.org/art/permanent-collection /collection_highlights/1931-409
- Rembrandt. (1633). *Portrait of a young woman with a fan* [Painting]. Retrieved 24 December 2018, from Metropolitan Museum of Art. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/437391>
- Robinson, J. (n.d.). *A history of the world in 100 objects: Lewis chessmen*. BBC. Retrieved 13 May 2018, http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/LcdERPxmQ_a2npYstOwVKA
- Robinson, J. (2004). *The Lewis chessmen*. The British Museum Press.
- Russell, D. (1989-1990). What is popular culture? *Social History in Museums: Journal of the Social History Curators Group*, 17. 5-10.
- Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Art and Culture. (n.d.). *Professor Munakata's British Museum adventure*. Retrieved 18 May 2018, from <https://www.sainsbury-institute.org/info/professor-munakatas-british-museum-adventure?rq=professor%20munakata>
- Sandbrook, D. (2010, October 11). *An object lesson in history from Radio 4*. The Telegraph. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/tvandradio/8057212/An-object-lesson-in-history-from-Radio-Four.html>

- Scotland's Places. (n.d.). *Ross and Cromarty ordnance survey name books*, Vol. 78. Entry 87. (1848-1852). <https://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/ross-and-cromarty-os-name-books-1848-1852/ross-and-cromarty-insular-volume-78/87>
- Scott, N. (2017, March 06). *Formal opening of Lews castle and museum*. Còmhairle nan eilean siar. <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/Press/170306.asp>
- Scottish Book Trust. (n.d.). *Author details, V Campbell*. Retrieved 15 May 2018, from <http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/profile-author/95115>
- Scottish Government. (n.d.). *Scotland performs: National identity*. Retrieved 29 December 2018, from: <https://www2.gov.scot/About/Performance/scotPerforms/outcome/natidentity>
- Scottish Government. (2017, December 14). *Scotland performs update: National outcome*. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotland-performs-update-2017/pages/26/>
- Scottish Parliament. (n.d.). *Past and present*. Retrieved 30 December 2018, from <http://www.parliament.scot/global/games/education-timeline/timelinejs/index.html>
- Screen Online. (n.d.). *The saga of Noggin the Nog*. (n.d.). Retrieved 19 May 2018, from <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/562377/index.html>
- Shenk, D. (2007). *The immortal game: A history of chess*. Souvenir.
- Sim, D. (2012). Scottish devolution and the Scottish diaspora. *National Identities*, 14(1), 99-114.
- Simmons, J. (2012, September). *26 Treasures*. Unbound. <https://unbound.com/books/26-treasures/>

Simon, F. (n.d.). *Here are the answers to some of your questions*. Retrieved 16 May 2018, from <http://www.francescasimon.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Francescas-FAQs.pdf>

Simon, F. (2011). *The sleeping army*. Faber and Faber.

SmallFilms. (n.d.). *Stamps and first day cover*. Retrieved 19 May 2018, from <http://www.smallfilms.co.uk/noggin/stamps.htm>

Smith, J. A. (1857-59). Notice of bronze relics &c., found in the Isle of Skye. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 3, 101-106.

Smith. A. D. (1991). *National identity*. Penguin.

Spòrnis. (n.d.). *The blackhouse tour*. Retrieved 21 May 2018, from <http://www.spornis.co.uk/the-blackhouse-tour/>

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. (n.d.). *About us*. Retrieved 6 April 2018, from <https://www.socantscot.org/about-us/>

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. (n.d.). *Our history*. Retrieved 27 March 2018, from <https://www.socantscot.org/about-us/our-history>

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. (1782-1890). *Fragments*. Edinburgh: National Museum of Scotland's Library.

Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. (1831, April 11). Minutes. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*.

Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland. (1888-1889). Meeting minutes: Purchases for the museum. *Proceedings of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland*, (23), 9-14.

- Sotheby's. (2019, June 03). *The Lewis chessmen: A window into the Medieval world*. <https://sothebys.gcs-web.com/static-files/44d069ff-4c09-441e-aa02-c93afdc2f4d8>
- Soule, D. P. J., Leith, M. S., Steven, M. (2012). Scottish devolution and national identity. *National Identities*, 14(1), 1-10.
- Statistical Account of Scotland*. (1791-1799).
- Stevenson, J. (1832, August 17). Letter to David Laing. *Laing Collection*. Edinburgh: The Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh.
- Stornoway Historical Society. (2009, November 21). *History of the Lews castle*. <https://stornowayhistoricalsociety.org.uk/lewscastle/>
- Stratford, N. (1997). *The Lewis chessmen and the enigma of the hoard*. The British Museum Press.
- Sutcliffe, R. (1993). *The chess-dream in a garden*. Candlewick Press.
- Tate, J. (2011, October 21). *150 Years and still going strong!* The Feast Bowl. <https://feastbowl.wordpress.com/2011/10/21/150-years-old-and-still-going-strong>
- Tate, J., Reiche, I., & Pinzari, F. (2014). The Lewis chessmen: What can examination of the surfaces tell us? In D. H. Caldwell & M. A. Hall (Eds.), *The Lewis chessmen: New perspectives*. (pp. 11-28). NMS Enterprises Limited.
- Tate, J., Reiche, I., Pinzari, F., & Caldwell, D.H. (2011). History and surface condition of the Lewis chessmen in the collection of the National Museums Scotland (Hebrides, late 12th-early 13th centuries). *ArchaeoSciences-Revue d'Archeometrie*, 35, 249-258.
- Taylor, M. (1978). *The Lewis chessmen*. British Museum Publications Limited.

- Thacker, L. (2018, March 11). *What makes Harry Potter iconic?* Sci-Fi fantasy network.
<http://www.scififantasynetwork.com/makes-harry-potter-iconic/>
- The Acropolis Museum. (n.d.). *The Parthenon gallery*. Retrieved 13 January 2016, from
[http:// www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/content/parthenon-gallery](http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/content/parthenon-gallery)
- The Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports. (n.d.). *Declarations*. Retrieved 27 October 2015,
 from <http://odysseus.culture.gr/a/1/12/ea123.html>
- The Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports. (n.d.). *Review of the seizure*. Retrieved 27 October
 2015, from <http://odysseus.culture.gr/a/1/12/ea125.html>
- The Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports. (2004, June 04). *The official Greek position*.
[http:// odysseus.culture.gr/a/1/12/ea121.html](http://odysseus.culture.gr/a/1/12/ea121.html)
- The Guardian. (2005, June 25). *Harry Potter, marketing magician*. The Guardian.
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2005/jun/26/media.books>
- The Guardian. (2007, April 5). *SNP manifesto 2007*. [http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/
 Politics/documents/2007/04/12/SNPManifestoprogramme.pdf](http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Politics/documents/2007/04/12/SNPManifestoprogramme.pdf)
- The Hebrides News. (2010, March 14). *Government refuses to repatriate Uig chessmen*.
[http:// www.hebrides-news.com/uig_chessmen_row_14310.html](http://www.hebrides-news.com/uig_chessmen_row_14310.html)
- The Independent. (2016, October 21). *The walking dead vs. the game of thrones: Why zombie
 drama is better than George RR Martin's fantasy hit*. [https://www.independent.co.uk
 /arts-entertainment/tv/features/the-walking-dead-vs-game-of-thrones-why-the-
 zombie-drama-wins-a6867556.html](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/features/the-walking-dead-vs-game-of-thrones-why-the-zombie-drama-wins-a6867556.html)

The Scotsman. (n.d.). *Art review: The Lewis chessmen – unmasked*. Retrieved 14 May 2018, from <https://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/art-review-lewis-chessmen-unmasked-1-805490>

The Scotsman. (1831, June 29). *Antiquaries*, p. 3.

The Scotsman. (2007, November 05). *Salmond plots first move in Scottish battle to win back Lewis chessmen*. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/salmond-plots-first-move-in-scottish-battle-to-win-back-lewis-chessmen-1-1428513>

The Scotsman. (2008, January 19). *Fabiani plays next move in SNP's battle for return of Lewis chessmen*. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/fabiani-plays-next-move-in-snp-s-battle-for-return-of-lewis-chessmen-1-1428986>

The Scotsman. (2008, January 29). *Burning issue: Should the Lewis chessmen be brought back to Scotland?* <https://www.scotsman.com/news/burning-issue-1-1076063>

The Scotsman. (2009, October 01). *Lewis chessmen to be reunited in Scotland for the first time in 150 years*. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/lewis-chessmen-to-be-reunited-in-scotland-for-first-time-in-150-years-1-777081>

The Scotsman. (2010, January 16). *Scotland's story in 100 objects*. <https://www.scotsman.com /lifestyle/scotland-s-story-in-100-objects-1-786492>

The Scotsman. (2010, March 10). *Lewis Chessmen must stay in British Museum, Minister says*. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/lewis-chessmen-must-stay-british-museum-minister-says-1730497>

The Scotsman. (2010, June 15). *Lewis chessmen could be headed home to the Western Isles, says MP*. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/lewis-chessmen-could-be-heading-home-to-the-western-isles-says-mp-1-813216>

The Scotsman. (2012, June 13). *At least six Lewis chessmen to return home after deal struck with British Museum*. <https://www.scotsman.com/whats-on/arts-and-entertainment/least-six-lewis-chessmen-return-home-after-deal-struck-british-museum-1622416>

The Scotsman. (2015, 11 September). *Lewis chessmen pieces returned to Uig*. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/lewis-chessmen-pieces-returned-to-uig-1-3883852>

The Stornoway Gazette. (n.d.). *Politicians welcome start of Lewis chessmen tour*. Retrieved 14 May 2018, from <https://www.stornowaygazette.co.uk/news/politicians-welcome-start-of-lewis-chessmen-tour-1-120056>

The Sunday Morning Herald. (2016, October 20). Pryor, S. *History of the world in 100 objects at National Museum of Australia in Canberra clocks 50,000 visitors*. <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/art-and-design/history-of-the-world-in-100-objects-at-national-museum-of-australian-in-canberra-clocks-50000-visitors-20161020-gs6kaz.html>

Thomas, F. W. L. (1863). Notes on the Lewis chessmen. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, (4), 411-413.

Thomas, F. W. L. (1866-1868). On the primitive dwellings and hypogaea of the Outer Hebrides. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, (7), 153-195.

Thompson, F. (1968). *Harris and Lewis: Outer Hebrides*. Clark, Doble, and Brendon, Ltd.

- Thompson, R. H. (n.d.). *Interview with Rosemary Sutcliffe*. University of Rochester.
Retrieved 17 May 2018, from <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/interview-with-rosemary-sutcliff>
- Tilley, C. (2006). Introduction: Identity, place, landscape and heritage. *Journal of Material Culture*, 11(7), 7-32.
- Toepler, S. & Kirckburg, V. (2007). Museums and merchandising. In R. Rentschler & A. M. Hede (Eds.), *Museum Marketing* (pp. 163-164). Elsevier Ltd.
- Tripathi, L. B. (2001). Culture as a psychological construct. *Psychology and Developing Societies*, 13(2), 129-140.
- Tylor, E. B. (1871). *Primitive cultures: Researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art and custom, volume 1*. John Murray.
- UK Legislation. (1963). *British Museum Act 1963, Section 5*. Retrieved 05 December 2016, from <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1963/24/section/5>
- UK Legislation. (1963). *British Museum Act 1963, Section 9*. Retrieved 05 December 2016, from UK legislation: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1963/24/section/9>
- University of Pennsylvania. (2015, December 31). *The model dog that became a cat*. The Nimrud Project. <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/nimrud/livesofobjects/catordog/index.html>
- Visit Outer Hebrides. (n.d.). *Our islands*. Retrieved 30 December 2018, from <https://www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk/our-islands>

- Visit Outer Hebrides. (n.d.). *Peter May trilogy - Whistler's house Ardoil*. Retrieved 21 May 2018, from <https://www.visitouterhebrides.co.uk/see-and-do/peter-may-trilogy-whistlers-house-ardroil-p543561>
- VisitScotland. (n.d.). *DisneyPixar's Brave*. Retrieved 11 October 2014, from <http://www.visitscotland.com/brave/travel-experiences/national-museums-of-scotland>
- VisitScotland. (6 March 2017). *Formal opening of Lews Castle, museum and archive*. <http://mediacentre.visitscotland.org/pressreleases/formal-opening-of-lewis-castle-museum-and-archive-1845321>
- VisitScotland. (n.d.). *Scotland's themed years*. Retrieved 16 January 2018, from <https://www.visitscotland.com/about/themed-years>
- VisitScotland. (2017.). *Scotland's themed years: Year of history, heritage and archaeology 2017*. Retrieved 12 May 2018, from <https://www.visitscotland.com/about/themed-years/history-heritage-archaeology>
- Vogel, C. (2011, October 30). *Stuff that defines us*. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/30/arts/design/history-of-the-world-in-100-objects-from-british-museum.html>
- Wallace, H. (2012, January 4). *26 Treasures: The mobile experience*. National Museum of Scotland. <https://blog.nms.ac.uk/2012/01/04/26-treasures-the-mobile-experience/>
- Waterson, C. D. (1997). *Collections in context: The Museum of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the inception of a national museum for Scotland*. NMS Publishing.
- Wegner, E. (2012, January 4). *Let the games begin: The game of kings exhibition blog*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. <https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2011/>

the-game-of-kings-medieval-ivory-chessmen-from-the-isle-of-lewis/exhibition-blog#!?page=3

Wilde, L. J. (1887). Edain the queen. *Ancient legends, mystic charms, and superstitions of Ireland* (pp. 179-181). Ticknor and Co.

Wilkinson, C. (2014). The facial analysis of the Lewis chess pieces. In D. H. Caldwell & M. A. Hall (Eds.), *The Lewis chessmen: New perspectives*. (pp. 1-10). NMS Enterprises Limited.

Wilkinson, M. (2015, April 16). *What is the Barnett formula?* The Telegraph. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scotland/1580787/How-the-Barnett-formula-works.html>

Williams, R. (1998). *Keywords*. Fontana.

Wilson, D. (1863). Chapter IV: Amusements. *Prehistoric annals of Scotland volume II*. MacMillan and Co.

Woodward, I. (2007). *Understanding material culture*. Sage Publishers.

Yalom, M. (2004). *Birth of the chess queen. A history*. Harper Collins.

Yukinobu, H. (2011). *Professor Munakata's British Museum adventure*. British Museum Press.