

# HIDDEN TREASURES

## OF THE LIÈGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

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ARCHAEOLOGY  
SCULPTURE  
PAINTING  
GLASS  
CERAMICS  
GOLDSMITHING  
ETHNOGRAPHY



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# Summary

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction   | 3  |
| The Liège Archaeological Institute   | 4  |
| 175 years of the Liège Archaeological Institute<br>celebrated at the Grand Curtius | 8  |
| The IAL, a key player in acquisitions<br>at the Grand Curtius                      | 12 |
| The Grand Curtius  | 17 |
| Organisation and acknowledgements  | 18 |
| Publications   | 19 |
| Events   | 20 |
| Practical information  | 22 |
| Contact  | 23 |

Today, nearly six hundred pieces belonging to the Liège Archaeological Institute are on display in the permanent exhibition at the Grand Curtius, with thousands more in storage. A selection of around two hundred and fifty pieces from these reserves are on display, some for the first time, in the exhibition *Hidden Treasures of the Liège Archaeological Institute*, organised by the Grand Curtius in close collaboration with the Liège Archaeological Institute in autumn 2025, to mark the 175th anniversary of the IAL.

The primary objective of this exhibition is to showcase the diversity of the collections that have been developed over time thanks to friends of Liège's past who were keen to preserve evidence of this past.

*In tribute to all the generous donors of yesterday and today who have contributed to the enrichment of the collections of Liège's museums.*

## THE LIEGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

### Birth of the IAL

On 4 April 1850, sixteen 'friends of the past' gathered at the premises of the Société d'Émulation in Liège to lay the foundations for a learned society whose primary objective was to research, collect and preserve works of art and archaeological monuments bearing witness to Liège's past. This mission is still enshrined in Article 1 of the statutes of the Liège Archaeological Institute (IAL), the name given to the new association.

Among these scholars, amateurs and professionals passionate about local history, were the historian Adolphe Borgnet, Rector of the University, provincial architect Jean-Charles Delsaux, Baron Albert d'Otreppe de Bouvette, patron and first president of the new association, historian Mathieu-Lambert Polain, Abbé Charles du Vivier de Streel, scholar Ulysse Capitaine, and others.

This foundation, initially supported by the public authorities, was part of the nationalist wave inherent in the establishment of a Belgian state seeking its multiple roots. Thus, in the nascent kingdom, many historical and archaeological circles were created, including the one founded in Liège that year, a few years after similar initiatives had been taken in Tournai, Namur and Arlon.

The need for a journal to disseminate knowledge about the local past was quickly felt. Barely two years after the Institute was created, the first issue of the Bulletin de l'Institut archéologique liégeois (Bulletin of the Liège Archaeological Institute), better known by its acronym BIAL, was published.

The initial collections were built up from donations from the first members. Most of the pieces were donated by the founding president, Albert d'Otreppe de Bouvette. There is an interesting collection of Egyptian pieces, reflecting the taste of the time for antiquity and Egypt in particular.

In the second half of the 19th century, the antiques trade was particularly flourishing in Tongeren, which enabled the young Institute to significantly expand its collections. Between November 1864 and January 1867, several hundred antiquities, mostly Roman and originating from Tongeren (south-western necropolis of Paspoel) or its surroundings



*Stele of Ankh, Middle Kingdom (1991-1785 BC), limestone, 35 x 22.5 x 5 cm.*



*Cartonnage (with mummy) of «Isistamen», Third Intermediate Period (1069-664 BC); end of the 22nd dynasty or beginning of the 25th dynasty, canvas and plaster, L. 170 cm, W. 44 cm. Donated by Baron Albert d'Otreppe de Bouvette in 1865*

(Koninksem, Lauw), were acquired by the Institute for its museum, which had been inaugurated a few years earlier, in 1857, in the former Palace of the Prince-Bishops – part of the lapidary is still there today.

Initially, the association's main objective was to establish a provincial museum whose collections would explain the specific characteristics of the 'Liège race' – the principality's identity remained strong. However, the entire historical past of the Liège region soon became the focus of the learned society's work. The Institute attempted to offer its collections to the Province of Liège, which declined. The City of Liège did the same. Since the IAL was a de facto association, the thousands of items in its collections still belong jointly to the fifty full members of the society.

The collections continued to grow, but it was not until 1909 that the founding fathers' wish was fulfilled, when the City of Liège transformed the former Maison Curtius into a museum. Under the terms of an agreement that is still in force today, the City and the IAL brought their respective collections together there, but the scientific management was initially entrusted to the Institute. It should be noted that nearly six hundred of these pieces are still on display in the permanent exhibition at the Grand Curtius. Several have even recently been designated as Treasures of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation: the Virgin of Dom Rupert, the Prometheus by Guillaume Évrard and the Mithraic bronzes by Angleur.

The IAL continues to regularly add to the Museum's collections, either through generous donations or through selective and judicious purchases aimed at adequately completing the collections. Over the last twenty years, the Institute has benefited from various donations of decorative art pieces, including those from the late Simone David-Constant, Mlle Flore Régnier and Professor Roger Lemaire, which is particularly rich in more than four hundred pewter pieces, mainly hallmarked in Belgian and French cities. As far as acquisitions are concerned, the favourable art market in recent years, with prices for antiques often underestimated, has enabled the Institute to acquire interesting pieces (silverware, manuscripts, paintings, sculptures, etc.).

The Institute has initiated numerous projects throughout its history. In addition to its purchasing

policy and the management of the Ansembourg Museum requested by the City in 1923, it has played a pioneering role in archaeology, even founding the famous Liège School of Prehistory. The fundamental mission set by the founders was to preserve material evidence of the local past. Originally, excavations were the main objective of the Liège Archaeological Institute, as reflected in its name, which has remained unchanged since its creation.

The Institute's initial missions remain as relevant as ever: developing and managing collections, publishing an annual reference journal, and organising cultural activities such as visits to sites, monuments and exhibitions linked to Liège's rich past.

[www.ialg.be](http://www.ialg.be)

<https://www.facebook.com/institutarcheologiqueliageois>



Adrien de Witte, Portrait of Eugénie Zeyen, pastel on canvas, 75 x 59 cm, signed and dated lower right, A. de Witte, 1892.



## The growth of the IAL collections

In accordance with the 1909 agreement, the Liège Archaeological Institute is responsible for the scientific management not only of the pieces it owns, but also of objects belonging to the City of Liège. Since 1950, the Museums of Liège have seen their collections grow significantly thanks to a number of individuals and institutions. However, while the expansion of these collections through bequests, purchases and donations is mainly due to the City of Liège, the Institute, through the non-profit organisation 'Les Amis des Musées de l'Institut archéologique liégeois' (AMIAL), has also played an important role in this endeavour.

In 2004, for example, Baroness Simone David-Constant, widow of Baron Jean Constant, former Attorney General at the Court of Appeal of Liège, bequeathed a large number of items to AMIAL, as well as a sum of money that enabled the Institute to enrich its museum collections.

More recently, significant donations have been made by Roger Lemaire, an honorary member of the Institute: 83 pieces of pewter from Liège and Wallonia (2018), with an additional donation of 179 items the following year. In 2020, in addition to 39 pewter items, Roger Lemaire also donated archaeological material from the vicus of Vervoz – thus completing the artefacts already present in the museum collections – a set of engravings depicting Liège and the Principality, and a series of works on medicine and science. The donation will increase further in 2022 and 2024, bringing the total to 379 pewter items to date. This is the largest collection donated by a patron to the IAL in the first quarter of the 21st century.

## The growth of the IAL's collections thanks to archaeological excavations

When it was founded in April 1850, one of the Institute's main goals was to search for the archaeological treasures of the Province of Liège still buried in the ground.

The first excavation campaign, carried out in 1851 in Juslenville (Theux), at a place called «Sur les Minières», led to the discovery of burials belonging to a Roman cremation necropolis in use from the second half of the 1st century to the beginning of the 3rd century AD; This was confirmed by excavations carried out at the same site in 1868 and 1869.

In the early 1870s, Count Georges de Looz excavated the burial mounds of Villers-le-Peuplier, Braives (1873) and Blehen (1874) on behalf of the Institute. In 1872 and 1874, the Institute's research focused on Place Git-le-Coq in Jupille, on the eastern outskirts of the city of Liège. A building with mosaic floors was unearthed, as well as archaeological artefacts including some ritual ceramics (bust vases, incense burners, etc.). In 1891, it was the turn of the Hodeige burial mound to be explored by Georges de Looz.

Excavations carried out in August 1905 in Vervoz (Clavier) led to the discovery of an exceptional funerary complex from the Flavian period (69-96 AD), consisting of six tombs distributed around a Norroy stone funerary monument. Those carried out in 1907 in Bois-et-Borsu led to the discovery of a rich burial dating from the last third of the 2nd century AD.



*Fragment of a mosaic with geometric decoration, 2nd-3rd century AD, black marble, red terracotta and white limestone, 103.5 x 130.5 x 12 cm (with frame). Restored in 2014 thanks to the intervention of the David-Constant Fund managed by the King Baudouin Foundation.*

In September 1907, at the request of the City of Liège, the Institute intervened at Place Saint-Lambert in Liège, following the chance discovery of archaeological remains from various periods (from modern times to prehistory) unearthed during the installation of a gas pipe.

The Institute's last archaeological excavations took place in Jupille in 1916 and 1922. They uncovered a large cremation necropolis in use from the 1st to the 3rd century AD at a place called Les Trixhes.

### **175 years of the Liège Archaeological Institute: a history shared with the Museum of Walloon Life**

Since the creation of the Museum of Walloon Life (MVW) in 1913, the IAL has played an active role. Several of its members – Jean Servais, Joseph Brassinne, Florent Pholien – participated in the foundation of the museum, designed to house everyday Walloon objects: modest, commonplace, often too simple for traditional art or archaeology museums.

At that time, the MVW was housed in part of the attic of the Maison Curtius, where the Archaeological Museum founded by the IAL and the City of Liège had been located for four years. This neighbourhood arrangement lasted 57 years and gave rise to close cooperation: exchanges of objects, joint organisation of training courses, shared projects... An understanding that went beyond the simple sharing of space.

Between 1914 and 1966, the IAL deposited no fewer than 87 objects or archive collections at the MVW. This deposit policy, which was flexible and informal at the time, was based on a pragmatic approach: to make some of the less 'prestigious' items in the Institute's collections available in a place more suited to their ethnographic nature. The deposited objects are extremely diverse: tools, popular religious statues, tableware, costume elements, commercial signs, etc.

The two institutions shared much more than collections. They shared a vision: to preserve, transmit and promote the history and heritage of Liège in all its forms, from precious works of art to simple everyday objects. The Second World War, successive relocations and changes in status gradually eroded this initial complicity, and the transfer of objects ceased after the MVW moved

permanently to the former convent of the Friars Minor in 1970. The exhibition Hidden Treasures of the Liège Archaeological Institute is therefore a wonderful opportunity to renew scientific collaborations.

Eight items deposited by the IAL at the Museum of Walloon Life will be presented in the exhibition.



Anonymous, *Ossogne Brewery Sign*, 19th century, assembled wood, carved in half relief, painted and gilded, 130 × 76 × 13 cm. Donated by the Huskin family in 1920, deposited at the Museum of Walloon Life in 1925.

## 175 YEARS OF THE LIÈGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE CELEBRATED AT THE GRAND CURTIUS

**The exhibition *Hidden Treasures of the Liège Archaeological Institute*, showcasing the diversity of the IAL's collections**

Very early in its history and thanks to generous donors, the IAL was able to assemble a large number of objects relating mainly to the past of the Liège region. The catalogue of the Museum of the Liège Archaeological Institute, published in 1864, barely fourteen years after the association was founded, contained no fewer than 441 items. Some major works were already included, such as the mausoleum of Prince-Bishop Velbruck, now on display in the cloister of the cathedral, and the bas-relief of the Virgin of Dom Rupert, one of the masterpieces of the Grand Curtius collections.

**Today, nearly six hundred pieces belonging to the Liège Archaeological Institute (IAL) are on display in the permanent exhibition at the Grand Curtius, with thousands more in storage. A sample of around 250 pieces from these reserves will be presented, sometimes for the first time, in the exhibition *Hidden Treasures of the Liège Archaeological Institute*, organised by the Grand Curtius in autumn 2025 to mark the 175th anniversary of the IAL.**

This exhibition, designed in close collaboration between the IAL and the curators of the Grand Curtius, aims primarily to showcase the diversity of the collections that have been developed over time thanks to friends of Liège's past who were keen to preserve evidence of this heritage.

Through a representative selection of archaeological, artistic and historical objects, it illustrates the richness, diversity and scientific importance of the heritage built up since the Institute's creation. Recent acquisitions, often featuring previously unseen items, demonstrate how active the IAL remains in enriching the Museums of Liège.

The preparation of the exhibition also provided an opportunity to re-evaluate the many objects on display, and the exhibition catalogue will reveal

more than one pleasant surprise in terms of its scientific contribution to our knowledge of the collections.

This anniversary exhibition features several major pieces from the Egyptological collections that the IAL received from its first President, Baron d'Otreppe de Bouvette, in 1865. It is the largest collection of its kind in Wallonia.

The oldest piece on display in the exhibition is an **Acheulean biface**, a kind of multi-purpose tool used to cut wood, meat or even scrape skins. This object dates back nearly 300,000 years and comes from the Sainte-Walburge district. It was donated to the IAL by its discoverer, **Marcel De Puydt** (1855-1940), a pillar of the Institute who was one of the main founders of the famous Liège school of prehistory.



*Biface*, Middle Palaeolithic, 250,000-200,000 BC, flint, 11.5 x 7.5 x 2 cm, donated by Mr Marcel De Puydt in 1925.



Due to the prominent role played by the IAL in archaeological excavations in the Province of Liège in the 19th century, its collections in this field are extremely rich and help us to understand the cultural characteristics of our distant ancestors. The exhibition features not only prehistoric artefacts, but also Gallo-Roman and Merovingian pieces illustrating daily life in our regions during Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages. These objects remind us of the importance of several archaeological sites that were excavated in the 19th century, such as Place Gît-le Coq in Jupille and the Merovingian necropolises of Mont-Saint-Sauveur in Fallais and Pré des Princes in Seraing.

Some of the great names in princely sculpture are featured, foremost among them the famous Baroque **sculptor Jean Del Cour**, but also 18th-century furniture from Liège, representative of the Rococo style at its peak.

In **painting**, we will explore a summary of the history of Liège painting from the late 16th to the late 18th century, with names such as Jean Ramey (pupil of Lambert Lombard), Gérard Douffet (founder of the 17th-century Liège school), François Walschartz (a great Caravaggio-style painter who is now almost completely forgotten), as well as Walthère Damery, Jean-Guillaume Carlier, Louis Counet, Léonard Defrance and Pierre-Michel de Lovinfosse. There are also engraved topographical views of monuments in Liège and a drawing by Remacle Le Loup from Spa, preparatory to one of the engravings in the famous «Délices du pays de Liège» (Delights of the Land of Liège).



Jean Del Cour (Hamoir, 1631-Liège, 1707), *Saint Roch*, 1675, Terracotta, H. 57 cm



Anonymous, Japan, Beard dish, first half of the 18th century, Hard porcelain with Imari decoration (blue underglaze and red and gold enamels), Ø 27.2 cm, donated by Miss LÉONIE JAMAR IN 1941.



After Cornelis Pronk (Amsterdam, 1691-Amsterdam, 1759), Flat plate, circa 1736-1738, Hard porcelain with underglaze blue decoration and red iron and gold enamels, Ø 23.2 cm..

**Glassware** and **ceramics** constitute two major sections of the exhibition in terms of the number and quality of the items selected.

**Stoneware**, **earthenware** and **porcelain** are not to be outdone; on display are some of the rare 18th-century pieces from Liège produced by the Saint-Léonard factory, as well as pieces from the factories in Meissen, Strasbourg, Septfontaines, Raeren, Tournai, Andenne, Brussels, Lunéville, Delft, and finally pieces commissioned by Liège residents in China and Japan.

Some beautiful glass pieces confirm that the Grand Curtius has one of the most substantial collections of antique glass in Europe. It should be noted that the Curtius Museum was behind the creation of the International Association for the History of Glass. The pieces on display range from 17th and 18th century glassware from the Meuse region, including magnificent examples in the Venetian style, to Art Nouveau pieces by Gallé, Lalique and Val Saint-Lambert.

A large number of pieces of civil **silverware** from Liège have been acquired in recent years to fill gaps in the collection, including pieces by local silversmiths who were not yet represented. Most of these are on display for the first time. A few pewter pieces, especially from Liège and Huy, evoke the important donation of more than four hundred pewter pieces that Professor Roger Lemaire recently made to the IAL.

This collection is complemented by a few handwritten documents, such as a 17th-century book of medical recipes, an illustrated genealogy of the Curtius family, correspondence from a Liège printer from the late 18th century, and even excavation notebooks from the pioneers of archaeology in the Liège region.

Finally, an **ethnographic section** displays a few objects selected from among the hundred or so that the IAL has long since placed on deposit at the Museum of Walloon Life, the most appropriate institution for preserving items of this type. The exhibition includes a 17th-century tap, an 18th-century dog collar, a cake mould and a 19th-century brewery sign.

*This exhibition has been organised by the Grand Curtius in close collaboration with the Liège Archaeological Institute.*

*Exhibition curator: Jean-Luc Schütz, Curator of the Archaeology Department at the Grand Curtius and Assistant Curator at the Liège Archaeological Institute*



*Aryballos lekythos, 400-375 BC, terracotta, H. 17.5 cm, Ø body 10.8 cm, Ø base 9.2 cm*

Eros, with outstretched wings, is seated on a low wall in front of a stylised tree. He is clapping his left knee, which is raised, with both hands. A decorative motif composed of a palmette and volutes extends beneath the attachment of the handle of this small oil or ointment jar from southern Italy. Lucanian style with red figures.

### The master key of Couvin

*An exceptional piece from the principality for the Grand Curtius collections and a highlight of the exhibition*

On 29 August 2025, the Liège Archaeological Institute acquired a document of great historical significance for the Principality of Liège from a private collector: the master key to the town of Couvin (1752).



Master keys are the symbol of judicial power originally granted by the Holy Roman Emperor to the burgomasters of Liège and some of the good towns of the former Episcopal Principality, i.e. the towns that had the right to be represented in the States. These keys gave authority to the officers of justice representing the burgomasters to carry out house searches; they were the equivalent of today's search warrants. Of the twenty-two good towns in the principality (mostly Flemish), only seven had this privilege: Ciney, Dinant, Fosses, Huy, Thuin, Visé and finally Couvin. It is worth noting that all the good towns concerned were Walloon and had once had a mint. Until now, the only other examples of this kind known were the keys of Huy from 1699 (kept in the local municipal museum) and Liège, dated 1726 and 1791 (kept in the Grand Curtius). This shows the importance of the reappearance of the key of Couvin, which until now had only been attested to in the archives. This reappearance is all the more welcome given that the rather exceptional circumstances surrounding its creation are well known.

In 1751, a lawsuit pitted the Prince-Bishop's administration against the town of Couvin, which claimed to have long held the privilege of the master key but could not provide proof of this. Couvin therefore appealed to the Prince-Bishop of the time, Jean-Théodore de Bavière. Against the advice of the three States, the Prince granted

this privilege to the Mayors of Couvin by a decree published on 21 August 1752. This favour resulted in the key being made in Liège, which has just been purchased by the Liège Archaeological Institute and will soon be added to the collections of the Grand Curtius Museum. It is a historically important piece that illustrates the principality's past.

This silver key bears the hallmarks of Liège, confirming its date of 1752, with the imperial eagle above the date 1744 (the beginning of the princely reign), the arms of Jean-Théodore and the letter H, which marks objects presented for inspection between 10 March 1752 and 31 December 1753. The maker, whose initials are GB, is most likely Gilles Berryer the Elder, born around 1692 and died in 1768. Berryer was one of the finest goldsmiths working in Liège in the mid-18th century. One side of the key's paneton is decorated with the Prince's coat of arms and the other with the crowned double-headed imperial eagle holding a sword and sceptre in its talons. The whole is engraved with remarkable finesse. The key also bears an engraved inscription: Clef Magistralle de Couvin - le 21 aoust 1752 (Magistral Key of Couvin - 21 August 1752). It therefore symbolically refers to the date of the Prince-Bishop's mandate. This purchase, at a price of €15,000, testifies to the dynamism of the IAL, the oldest archaeological society in the Province of Liège.

As demonstrated by this significant purchase made to mark its 175th anniversary, the IAL remains more active than ever in serving Liège's public collections.

The piece is being presented to the public for the first time as part of the exhibition. It is one of the highlights of the exhibition.



## THE IAL, A KEY PLAYER IN ACQUISITIONS FOR THE GRAND CURTIUS

### FROM THE COLLECTION TO THE EXHIBITION

#### Albert d'Otreppe de Bouvette's donations to the IAL in 1865 and 1874

On 7 December 1865, in a deed of donation to 14 full members of the Liège Archaeological Institute (IAL), Baron Albert d'Otreppe de Bouvette (1787-1875), Honorary Advisor to the Court of Appeal of Liège and First President of the IAL (1850-1865), declared that he was offering them all the art and archaeological objects belonging to him, which had until then been on deposit at the museum.

The non-exhaustive list of donated objects, compiled by Dr Joseph Alexandre (1825-1910), Curator of the Liège Archaeological Museum, contains more than 350 items. It includes furniture (chairs, armchairs, chests, cupboards, tables, shelves, jewellery boxes), paintings, sculptures, ceramics, brassware and various archaeological objects (Egyptian antiquities, Italo-Greek ceramics, Roman ceramics and glassware, a Merovingian carinated cup and some medieval ceramics).

The fifty or so Egyptian antiquities included in this donation consist of two mummies in their sarcophagi, limestone steles, alabaster canopic jars, terracotta, wooden and bronze statuettes, a wooden falcon and a crocodile mummy. All the important Egyptological pieces in the Otreppe de Bouvette collection were probably purchased by him at the sale of the Antoine Schayes (1808-1859) collection, which took place in Brussels from 6 to 8 December 1859. Schayes, who was curator of the Royal Museum of Artillery, Armour and Antiquities in Brussels from 1842 until his death, had acquired these objects at the third auction of the Giovanni d'Anastasi collection in Paris in 1857.

In 1874, Baron Albert d'Otreppe de Bouvette made a second significant donation to expand the Institute's collections. These included furniture, copper and pewter objects, paintings and busts, sculptures, coloured stained glass windows, embossed copperware, weapons and armour, modern objects and Gallo-Roman, Italo-Greek and Egyptian archaeological objects.

Fifteen objects selected for the exhibition *Hidden Treasures of the Liège Archaeological Institute* come from these two donations.

#### Glass

The Glass Department of the Grand Curtius Museum brings together more than 10,000 pieces tracing 3,000 years of glass history. While the City of Liège is the main contributor, the Liège Archaeological Institute also plays an important role. The acquisition of the Baar collection, comprising more than 1,800 antique glasses, is a unique example: after the death of Armand Baar (1875-1942), his wife and three children signed an agreement with the IAL on 1 May 1946, to protect the collection's location in Liège, with the aim of enabling the City of Liège to acquire the exceptional collection in 1952, which would form the basis of the Glass Museum created in 1959.

Over the past 175 years, the IAL has added some 900 pieces, both ancient and modern, to this vast and rich section. Many specimens illustrate local production from furnaces active during the



ANONYMOUS, VENICE OR VENETIAN STYLE, CEREMONIAL GLASS, 17TH CENTURY, BLOWN AND HOT-WORKED GLASS, H. 18.3 CM.



Ancien Régime (Bonhomme, Nizet) or produced by manufacturers in the 19th and 20th centuries (Chênée and especially Val Saint-Lambert).

As glass occupies a prominent place in the history of decorative arts and industries in Liège, several specimens had already been shown at the exhibition *L'art ancien au Pays de Liège* (Ancient Art in the Land of Liège) in 1881. Glassware has always occupied a prominent place at other jubilee or notable events.

If we had to choose one patron of the IAL who resonated with the historical and heritage spirit of the 1881 exhibition, it would be Antonin Terme, a native of Lyon who settled in Liège and whose



Anonymous, Zoomorphic dropper (mouse), 18th century, blown and hot-worked glass, H. 7 cm

curious mind was passionate about the decorative arts of Liège and the region. A member (from 1877) and then President of the IAL (1885), he donated a series of works from his personal collection to the association in 1885. Among them were numerous ceramics and several glassworks attributed to local workshops: the mention «all these objects are made in Liège or Andenne» concludes the donor's list.

The constantly expanding collection invites enthusiasts to discover creations from all horizons and all periods. Thanks to its sophisticated and incredibly fine glassware, which has always been admired, Venice has been a leading force in glassmaking since the Renaissance. Its production, based on the «Venetian style» of glassmaking, forms a favourite collection at the Grand Curtius. In 1981, the Institute received a bequest from Mrs Simone Anspach, including some fifty Venetian and Spanish glasses from the 16th and 17th centuries. Several of these are included in the exhibition.

As in the other departments, the variety of artefacts characterises the Institute's collections. The patron



Val-Saint-Lambert, Seraing, Candy dish, 1930-1950, Blown and cut crystal, H. 6.6 cm, Ø 12.5 cm, bequeathed by Mr Isidore Michel in 1973.

association has received or acquired utilitarian pieces (drinking glasses, spa water bottles, toiletries, etc.), unusual objects (leech perches, zoomorphic bottles), ceremonial glassware (snake glasses, engraved hanaps, etc.) and artistic creations (vases by Gallé and Lalique, vintage Val Saint-Lambert bowls, etc.). The exhibition showcases around forty of these items.

One wish among many: that the City of Liège and the Liège Archaeological Institute continue to share a common path aimed at enriching, researching, developing and promoting the collections of the Grand Curtius.

## Ceramics

The pieces selected for the IAL's 175th anniversary exhibition are mainly donations made in the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century.

The objects, mostly earthenware, are mainly from the Liège earthenware factory.

While the Coronmeuse faience factory is given pride of place among the objects on display, the production centres of Huy and Andenne are not forgotten, nor are those of Septfontaines (Luxembourg) and Attert.

Sandstone was also popular with families in Liège, and the IAL has examples in its collections. They mainly come from Raeren, in the east of the province of Liège, which became part of Belgium in 1919, and from the Rhineland.

On the other hand, porcelain pieces are relatively few in number in the IAL's collections. This can be explained by the institution's statutes, which



primarily advocated collecting items produced in the Liège region, as there were no porcelain factories in the area. Nevertheless, this exhibition has enabled two identifications to be made: a painter who created a rare religious subject on a Meissen hard porcelain tea bottle and the owner of the coat of arms appearing on a Chinese hard porcelain tea cup.



Anonymous, Jingdezhen, China, Tea cup and saucer bearing the arms and cipher of Laurent Levoz, Commissioner of the City of Liège (1739-1773), Hard-paste polychrome porcelain, cup: H. 4.5 cm, Ø 8.5 cm; saucer: Ø 13.5 cm. Donated by Mr Henri Delattre in 1948.

## Metal arts

The selection made for the Institute's 175th anniversary exhibition focused mainly on recent acquisitions and illustrates the two methods of acquisition used to enrich its collections.

The donation of nearly 400 pewter items by Professor Roger Lemaire has opportunely complemented an old collection dating back to the very beginnings of the IAL. This acquisition now enables the Grand Curtius to hold the most complete and, above all, the most diverse collection in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. The pieces of Mosan origin, which represent a quarter of this donation, also constitute an excellent springboard for the resumption of scientific studies initiated in 1985 by Maurice Lorenzi, former President of the IAL.

Among the purchases made in recent years, particular emphasis has been placed on 18th and 19th century Liège silverware with a view to redeploying the decorative art collections both within the Grand Curtius and in the ambitious renovation project of the Ansembourg Museum. The choice of these pieces was guided by the quality of their provenance, their uniqueness or the absence of similar forms in the Grand Curtius collections.



Noël Dechamps (Liège, 1741-Liège, 1804), Large pewter soup tureen, Hallmark on the reverse of the base: crowned rose with the initials ND in the crown, property mark engraved with a stylus J. Haroys, pewter, H. 28.5 cm.



Jean-Baptiste Godenne, Pair of silver candlesticks that belonged to Lambert van den Steen de Jehay 1759, hallmarks: Master IG alone by Jean-Baptiste Godenne, silver, H. 21,3 cm.

### The engraving

In addition to the considerable collection of antique pewter and rare or reference works, Roger Lemaire donated a collection of 25 antique prints dating from the 16th to the 18th centuries to the IAL. These include the renowned first view of Liège by Guichardin and two copies depicting the Cité ardente by the equally famous Mathieu Merian from the *Topographia Westphaliae* collection.

There are also a few copies of the *Collection des Prospects*, optical views that were highly prized during the Age of Enlightenment and were meant to be viewed through a lantern, creating the illusion of a three-dimensional image. These views covered the whole of Europe and listed the emblematic civil and religious monuments of the cities featured. For Liège, the Prince-Bishop's residence, the town hall and market fountains, Saint Lambert's Cathedral and Saint James' Abbey are presented here. These prints glorifying famous cities were printed in Augsburg, a major centre for engraving in the 18th century that excelled in the production of these optical views. The donation also includes several engraved maps, highly prized by enthusiasts, showing the extent of the City of Liège, its diocese and its state, as it was then called, throughout the Modern Era.

**Discover the collection of the Liège Archaeological Institute in the permanent exhibition at the Grand Curtius**

To mark the 175th anniversary of the Liège Archaeological Institute and to showcase more pieces from its rich collection, stickers bearing the IAL logo and the dates 1850-2025 have been placed at the back of the display cases or on the labels of some 600 pieces belonging to the Institute and exhibited in the museum's permanent exhibition.



Jean Riga the Younger, Allegory of the appointment of the burgomasters of Liège Michel de Lohier and Louis Lambert de Liverlo, canvas, 118 x 147 cm, 1717-1718.

This painting is on display in the room dedicated to 'Power Players' at the Grand Curtius.



Mithraic bronzes, late 2nd century or early 3rd century, discovered in Angleur (Liège) in 1882. Work classified as a Treasure of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation

The four zoomorphic appliquéés correspond to the zodiac signs of Aries, Leo, Scorpio and Pisces. A fifth sign, Libra, is represented by a statuette of a naked young man with outstretched arms, who would originally have held the weighing instrument. The three male heads in profile, two of which have retained their feather-trimmed wings, are those of the Winds. The two female statuettes in motion are thought to be personifications of the Seasons.

Such motifs – with the exception of the Gorgon Medusa, rarely depicted in Mithraic contexts – are found in the sculpted decoration of Rhenish Mithraic stone bas-reliefs, where they frame a central composition depicting Mithras slaying the bull.

This collection can be viewed in the Grand Curtius archaeological collection.

## THE GRAND CURTIUS

### **The Museums of the City of Liège The Grand Curtius**

The Museums of the City of Liège include the Grand Curtius, La Boverie, the Museum of Lighting (Mulum), the Grétry Museum, the Ansembourg Museum, currently undergoing renovation, and the Heritage Funds.

The Grand Curtius is an art and history museum with over 5,000 m<sup>2</sup> of collections divided into five departments: Archaeology, Religious Art and Mosan Art, Weapons, Glass and Decorative Arts. The Glass department is currently in storage.

Its collections include more than 5,000 exhibits, drawn from a total collection of over 200,000 items.

Thanks to the richness of its collections and the rigour of its heritage management, the Grand Curtius has established itself as a leading institution in the field of museums and heritage in Belgium.

Visitors can discover more than 7,000 years of Liège's history within its walls, in a remarkable architectural setting. The Palais Curtius (early 17th century), the museum's iconic building, houses the weapons collection, which is world-renowned for both the quantity and quality of the items on display.

[www.grandcurtius.be](http://www.grandcurtius.be)

With the support of the City of Liège and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.



## ORGANISATION

**The exhibition *Hidden Treasures of the Liège Archaeological Institute* is on display at the Grand Curtius Museum from 26 September 2025 to 11 January 2026.**

It is organised in partnership with the Grand Curtius and its curators and the Liège Archaeological Institute.

### **On the initiative of**

- Mr Willy DEMEYER, Mayor of the City of Liège
- Ms Elisabeth FRAIPONT, Deputy Mayor for Culture, Public Reading and the Duty of Remembrance
- Ms Pauline BOVY, Administrative Director of the Department of Culture and Tourism

### **Exhibition Curator**

Mr Jean-Luc SCHUTZ, Curator of the Archaeology Department at the Grand Curtius and Assistant Curator at the Liège Archaeological Institute

### ***With the collaboration of***

- Mr Pierre-Yves KAIRIS, President of the Liège Archaeological Institute
- The Members of the Board of the Liège Archaeological Institute
- The Curators of the Grand Curtius
- The restorers of the museums of the City of Liège
- The editors of the catalogue entries and panel texts
- The administrative, technical, graphic design, events and communications departments of the Museums of the City of Liège

### ***Acknowledgements***

- Our deepest thanks and tribute to all the generous donors, past and present, who have contributed to enriching the collections of the museums of Liège.
- The Wallonia-Brussels Federation
- The Department of Culture of the City of Liège



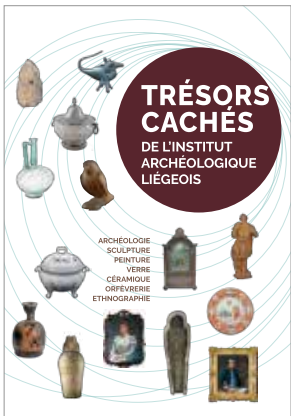
## PUBLICATIONS

The exhibition is accompanied by publications created for the occasion, available at the Grand Curtius shop.

**Catalogue *Hidden Treasures of the Liège*  
Archaeological Institute**

To mark the Institute's 175th anniversary, a committee was set up at the end of 2023 to plan a programme of commemorative activities to mark this important milestone.

Very quickly, the idea emerged for a temporary exhibition at the Grand Curtius focusing on some of the IAL's hidden treasures kept in storage. Nearly 250 works showcasing the richness and diversity of the association's collections were selected by members of the Institute's Board, in close collaboration with the museum's curators. They are highlighted in this exhibition, scheduled to run at the Grand Curtius from 26 September 2025 to 11 January 2026, and are the subject of this richly illustrated book.



An initiative of the City of Liège in collaboration with the Liège Archaeological Institute.

Layout: Museums of the City of Liège  
Printed in September 2025 by Snel grafics  
(Vottem), 244 pages.  
ISBN: 978-2-930968-06-3  
Legal deposit: D/2025/13855/7

On sale at the Grand Curtius and La Boverie museum shops.

## Visitor's guide

## Essentials of the exhibition *Hidden Treasures of the Liège Archaeological Institute*

Produced by the Museum Events Department, the Exhibition Highlights focuses on fifteen works and artefacts from the collection of the Liège Archaeological Institute and provides key information and historical and scientific details about them.

This visitor's guide is published in French, English, Dutch and German.

Price: €2



**Activity book *Hidden Treasures of the Liège*  
Archaeological Institute**

Ages 6 and up, come and discover the hidden treasures of the Liège Archaeological Institute!

Published in French, English, Dutch and German..



## EVENTS CALENDAR

As part of the exhibition, the Events Department of the Museums of the City of Liège invites you to a variety of events for young and old alike.

### Créamusée: Our ancestors' little pots



Creation of small pots from raw clay using modelling techniques for children aged 6 to 12, accompanied by an adult.

Every first Sunday of the month, admission to the Museums is free! This is the perfect opportunity to discover the Museum's permanent collections and take part in creative workshops offered by the Museum Events Department with your family. Painting, sculpture, collage... let your imagination run wild and reveal the artist within you.

*Sunday, 5 October 2025 (2pm to 5pm)*

*Free*

### Lecture: «From the master key of Couvin to the IAL's collection of gold and silverware»



**Luc Engen**, historian and member of the IAL, will give a lecture tracing the IAL's acquisitions from the master key of Couvin to the collection of gold and silverware.

*Saturday, 11 October 2025 at 11 a.m. Grand Curtius Auditorium - Price: €5*

### «Little Hidden Treasure Hunters» workshop

For children aged 6 to 12



Ready for an extraordinary adventure? The Grand Curtius is organising an exciting workshop where you can become real treasure hunters from 27 to 31 October 2025.

Set off on an adventure in the heart of the Grand Curtius and become real treasure hunters! During the workshop, you will discover the collections assembled by the Liège Archaeological Institute and preserved in the Museum. You will observe the treasures of ancient Egypt, admire Gallo-Roman mosaics and works by the greatest painters and sculptors of Liège from the 17th to the 19th century, and many other treasures. Each discovery is an opportunity to meet the people who bring this heritage to life and protect it. The treasures you see during the course will inspire you to imagine and create your own works, giving free rein to your imagination. A fun and exciting dive into history, where curiosity, wonder and a spirit of adventure are your best allies in becoming true treasure hunters.

*From Monday 27 to Friday 31 October 2025 From 9:00 to 16:30 (childcare available from 8:30 to 17:00) Price: €70/child (insurance and equipment included) Information and booking: [animationsdesmusees@liege.be](mailto:animationsdesmusees@liege.be) - +32 (0)4 221 68 32 - 68 37*

**Lecture: «The sign collection of the Liège Archaeological Institute»**



**Nadine de Rassenfosse**, Objects and Reserves Assistant at the Museum of Walloon Life, will give a lecture on the collection of signs at the Liège Archaeological Institute.

Since the Middle Ages, signs have brought streets to life and told the story of how cities have evolved. Carved in stone or wood and suspended from the façades by a gallows, they were once used as landmarks, long before house numbering came into use.

Between 1915 and 1949, the Liège Archaeological Institute deposited a dozen of these treasures of folk art at the Museum of Walloon Life, with which it shared premises at the time. Unique witnesses to an often forgotten urban heritage, these rare pieces now reveal their history.

*Saturday 22 November 2025 at 11 a.m.  
Auditorium of the Grand Curtius  
Price: €5*

**Lecture: 'Building the IAL's archaeological heritage: from donations and purchases of antiques to funding excavation campaigns (Jupille, Vervoz, etc.)'**



**Jean-Luc Schütz**, Curator of the Archaeology Department at the Grand Curtius, Curator of the exhibition 'Hidden Treasures of the Liège Archaeological Institute' and Assistant Curator of the Liège Archaeological Institute, will give a lecture on the Roman and Egyptian archaeological pieces in the IAL collection.

The purchase of Roman antiquities from antique dealers in Tongeren and the donation by Otreppe de Bouvette in 1865 (Egyptian antiquities, etc.) enabled the IAL to rapidly enrich its archaeological heritage, as did various excavation campaigns carried out mainly in the Province of Liège (tumuli in Hesbaye, Jupille, Vervoz, etc.).

*Saturday 13 December 2025 at 11 a.m.  
Grand Curtius Auditorium  
Price: €5*

**Register for events at**  
**[www.grandcurtius.be/fr/votre-visite/billetterie](http://www.grandcurtius.be/fr/votre-visite/billetterie)**

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### **Exhibition: Hidden Treasures of the Liège Archaeological Institute**

**From 26 September 2025 to 11 January 2026**

#### **Grand Curtius**

Féronstrée, 136 – 4000 Liège

+32 (0)4 221 68 17

[www.grandcurtius.be](http://www.grandcurtius.be)

facebook : Legrandcurtius

#### **Opening hours**

Monday to Sunday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., closed on Tuesdays  
Closed on 1 January, 1 May, 1 November, 2 November, 11 November and 25 December.

**Prices include admission to the exhibition *Hidden Treasures of the Liège Archaeological Institute* and the permanent collection of the Grand Curtius.**

Adults: €10

Seniors (over 65), groups: €6

Article 27: €1.25

Free admission:

For under 26s.

For MuseumPassMusée holders.

On the first Sunday of the month for everyone.

For accompanied school groups based in the City of Liège and for students from the Saint-Luc schools and the Académie de Liège.



The Grand Curtius is accessible to people with reduced mobility.

Shop

Cafeteria with terraces (closed on Mondays and Tuesdays)



## CONTACTS

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