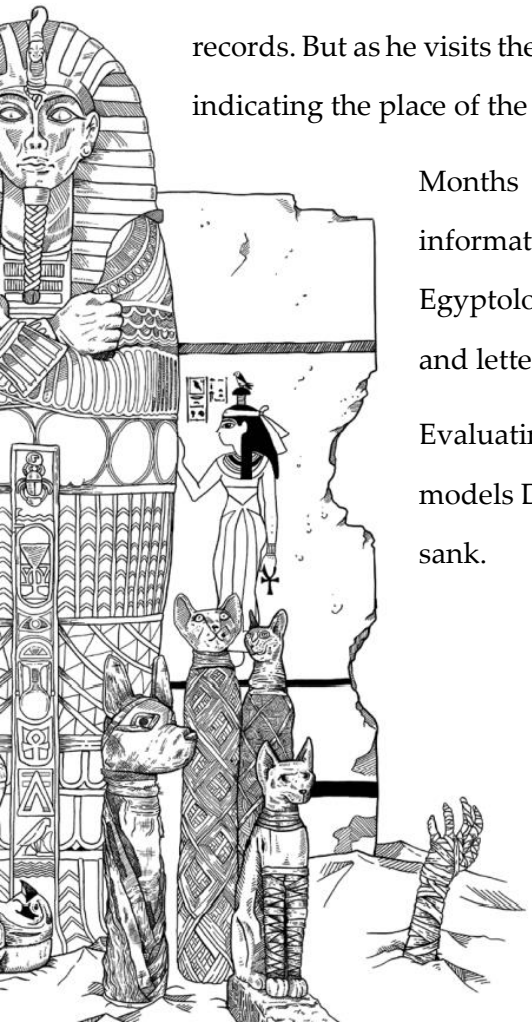
ArchaeoExploration

Pharaohs of the North Sea

The night of a hundred year storm that sank boats throughout the North Sea, March 11, 1822: towering waves, the sea white with flying spray, wind force 12. A dire situation for any ship that did not reach a safe harbor in time. In the midst of this tempest, 200 years ago, a small cargo vessel, fighting for survival in the delta of the Elbe. On board: the most valuable collection of Egyptian antiquities.

Forgotten for two centuries

Over the decades, the ship and its cargo were forgotten. It was not until 2002 that the first evidence is found again. A lock of hair from a mummy in the Egyptian department of Hamburg's Museum for Arts and Crafts points to the accident at the mouth of the Elbe. During the pandemic, Dr. Gino Caspari spends weeks and months scouring the libraries and archives of Europe for small shreds of information about the wreck. He collects dozens of maps and identifies the pilot records. But as he visits the archives in northern Germany, he finds that the most valuable sources indicating the place of the accident have been stolen.



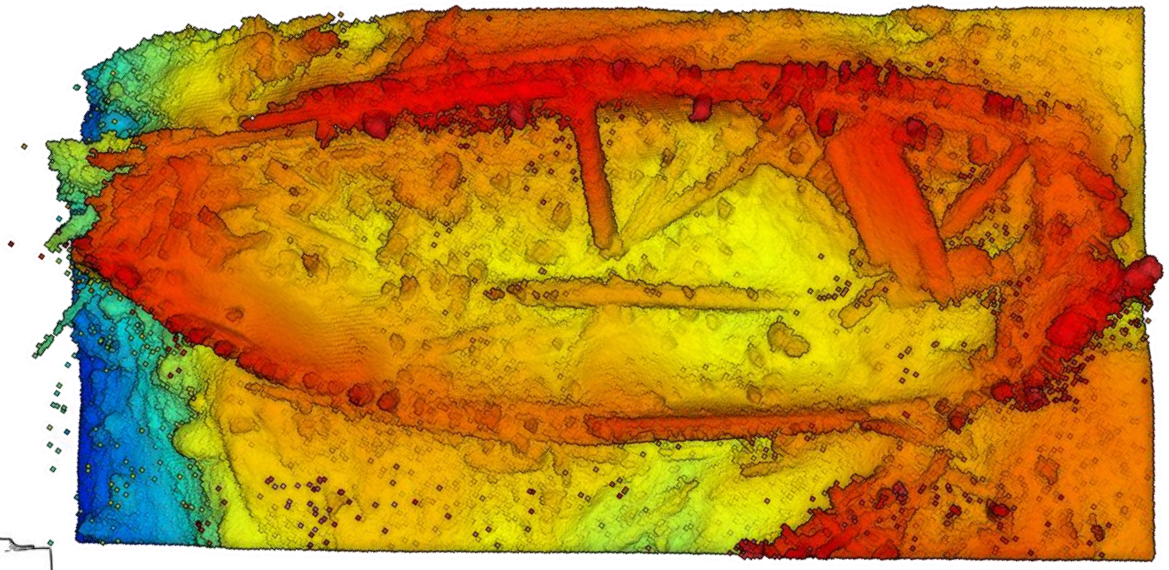
Months of research follow, putting together even the tiniest piece of information, when unexpectedly, the contact with an over 90 year old Egyptologist in Berlin leads to the discovery of hitherto unknown documents and letter.

Evaluating old nautical charts and calculating sophisticated wind and current models Dr. Gino Caspari has narrowed down the search area in which the ship sank.

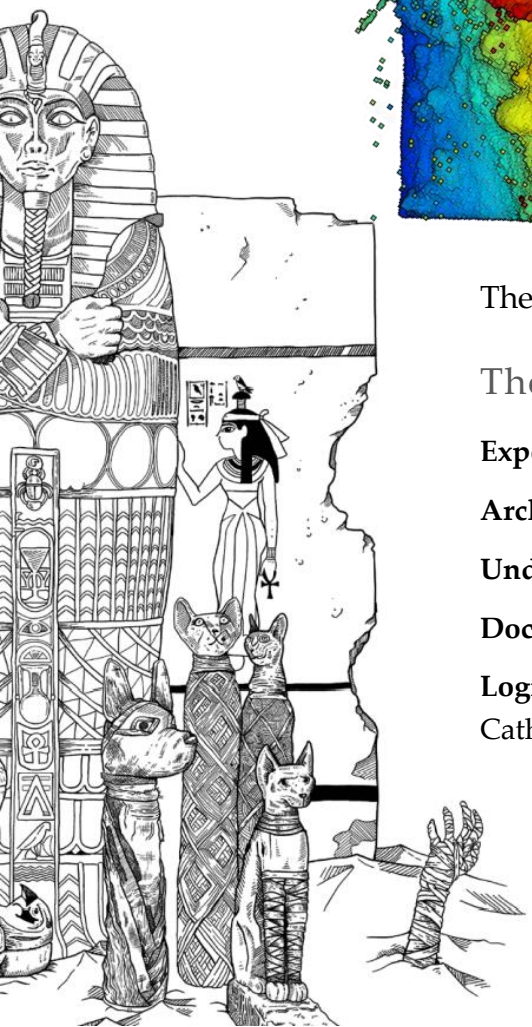
We proudly fly the Explorers Club Flag #69 on our expedition.
The flag has been approved for the second time now.

ArchaeoExploration

The Explorers Club steps in and funds a first expedition through its most prestigious Impact Grant. Over the past survey season, our activities have helped us refine targets, document key areas, and build a stronger foundation for the project's wider research goals. The work has been a roaring success as we are the first team to ever recover tangible evidence of the location of the famous wreck in the form of a wreck which we know sank on the same sandbank. All evidence points towards us being close to a great discovery of a wealth of ancient Egyptian items in the most unusual of locations.



The discovered wooden shipwreck – location undisclosed.



The Team

Expedition Lead: Dr. Gino Caspari

Archival Consulting: Dr. Joachim Karig

Underwater Archaeology Consulting: David Mearns OBE

Documentation and Film: Trevor Wallace

Logistics and Support: Kevin Carrigan, Joe Watson, Michal Tokarz, Catharina Frostad, Mark Langevin

The Cargo

Throughout the archival research Dr. Gino Caspari chanced upon a list of the lost cargo, written in German, portraying a one-of-a-kind collection of Egyptian antiquities. Among many other items including mummified human remains, statues, and sarcophagi, the cargo of the Gottfried contained:

1. About a hundred canopic and other ornamental vases, made of alabaster, marble and other stone
2. Greek painted vases
3. A large sarcophagus of granite, covered inside and out with large relief figures
4. Several statues of stone;
5. The so-called Isis tablets with hieroglyphs, of granite and alabaster
6. Eight excellent mummy caskets with their well-preserved mummies
7. Animal mummies of cats, crocodiles, ichneumons, jackals, ibis, uraeus snakes, etc.
8. Large reliefs from various periods of Egyptian art
9. An entire doorway with all its decorations from the entrance to a catacomb
10. Several larger paintings and wall pieces
11. About a hundred tombstones and memorial stones of a rare kind
12. Several inscriptions
13. Samples of stone from all the quarries of the ancient Egyptians and of very many monolithic columns
14. A small pyramid with hieroglyphs
15. Smaller idols of all materials and genera
16. A sacrificial altar of basalt decorated with exquisite hieroglyphs
17. Clothes of various kinds and embroidered and other decorated remnants of ancient Egyptian suits and garments
18. Amulets of stone
19. All minerals and plants from the Libyan desert.



ArchaeoExploration

Selected Previous Achievements

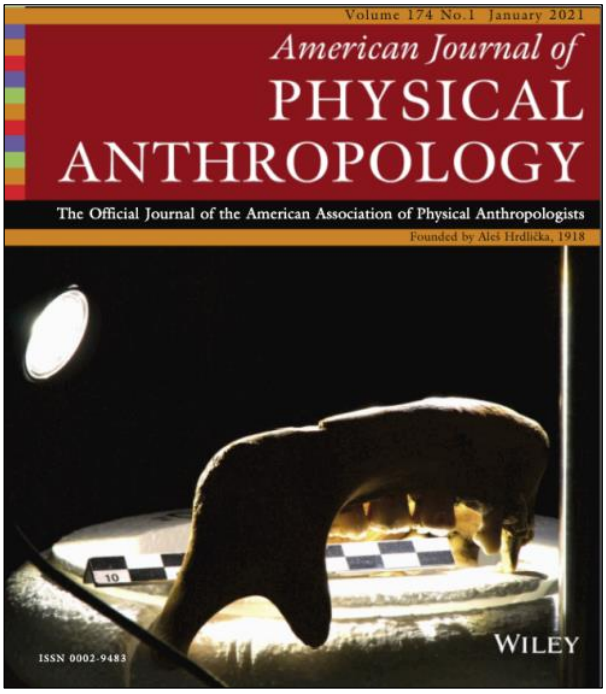

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Research coverage in National Geographic on ancient tattoos.

ArchaeoExploration

Recent research coverage in Newsweek

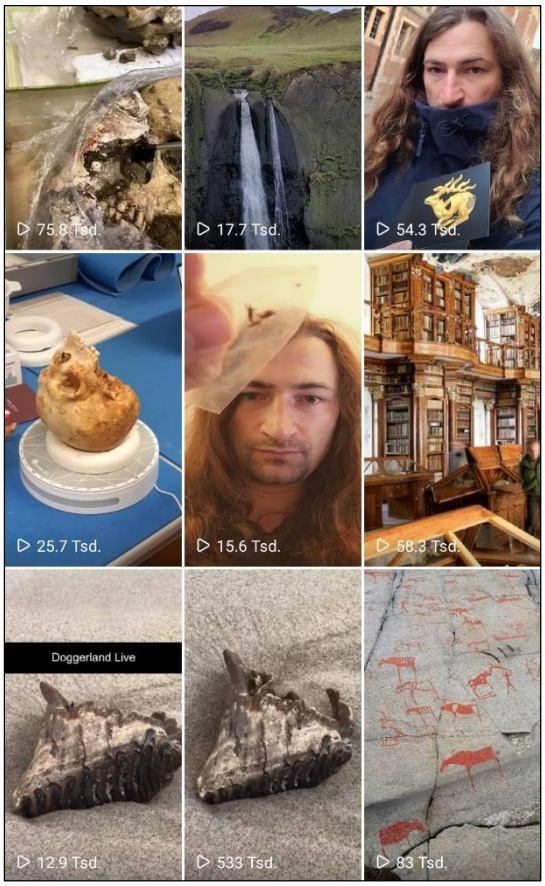

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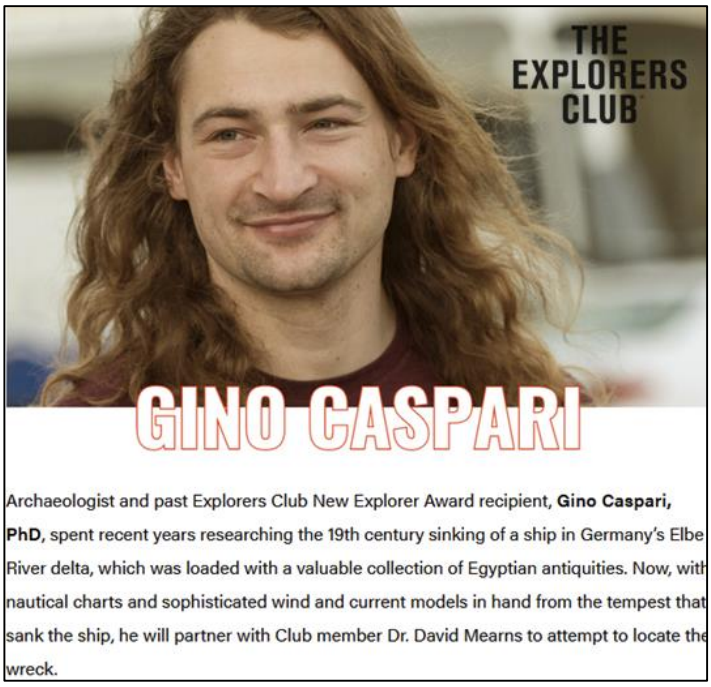
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Archaeologist and past Explorers Club New Explorer Award recipient, **Gino Caspari, PhD**, spent recent years researching the 19th century sinking of a ship in Germany's Elbe River delta, which was loaded with a valuable collection of Egyptian antiquities. Now, with nautical charts and sophisticated wind and current models in hand from the tempest that sank the ship, he will partner with Club member Dr. David Mearns to attempt to locate the wreck.

Project supported by The Explorers Club Impact Grant