

VI. Activities of Various Academic Gatherings Related to the History of Archaeology

Richard B. Woodbury (University of Massachusetts-Amherst) and Nathalie F.S. Woodbury (*Anthropology Newsletter*) presented a paper on "William Duncan Strong's Archaeological Legacy" for the session Long Shadows from the Past: Some Early Figures in American Anthropology during the 1991 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Chicago.

Symposium Report

"A Taste for Antiquities: Collecting Through the Ages" Report on a Symposium

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"A Taste for Antiquities: Collecting Through the Ages," was the topic of a one-day symposium held on Saturday, October 26, 1991 at Loyola University, Chicago, and organized by Drs. Joan T. Haldenstein and Paul Rehak. The seven papers, ranging in focus from Roman collecting in the time of the Emperor Augustus (late 1st century B.C. to early 1st century A.D.) to the collection of Etruscan antiquities by the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago between 1890 and 1910, explored attitudes about the collection of antiquities and the influence of some of the major collections on the contemporary arts and cultures of different periods.

In his paper on "Roman Collecting at the Time of Augustus," Dr. Paul Rehak of Loyola University (Chicago), outlined the chief Roman mechanisms for the acquisition of antiquities--chiefly Greek--including systematic conquest and plunder of major Greek cities resulting in a stream of original ancient works flooding into Rome; purchase by private collectors, usually of copies of original works, to decorate the homes and villas of the wealthy; imitation or copying of "old master's by the several schools of copyists that sprang up to fill demands, and new commissions of specific pieces intended for placement in specific locations. Roman taste was eclectic, and a wealthy domicile, such as the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum (on which the Getty Museum in Malibu is modeled),

could contain large and small sculpture, small objects and what we might even call "kitsch" in styles ranging from that of the 5th century B.C. through those of the late 1st century B.C. with no attempt to impose stylistic or thematic unity. Furthermore, as demonstrated in Cicero's *Letters to Atticus*, our chief literary source of this question, the Roman patrons seemed to be more interested in acquiring ancient art as decoration to embellish particular public and private architectural settings rather than for its intrinsic artistic merit.

Dr. Ingrid Rowland, University of Chicago, discussed "The Early Italian Collectors," demonstrating that some of the earliest Italian Renaissance collectors were Tuscans who identified with the ancient Etruscans of their region, making collections of antiquities believed to be Etruscan and attempting to decipher and interpret Etruscan inscriptions (even the point of occasionally forging them, the better later to "translate" them). Some works of early Renaissance artists, such as Botticelli's Mars and Venus can even be shown to have been directly influenced by the poses and proportions of Etruscan funerary figures.

Dr. Michael Vickers, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, spoke on "The Wife of Pygmalion among the Arundel Marbles at Oxford: A Classical Model and Her Influence," showing how a single piece of ancient sculpture, the so-called "Oxford Bust," originally in the collection of Thomas Howard, second Earl of Arundel, was used as a model for numerous works of painting and sculpture from the 17th through the 19th century.

"Collectors in 18th Century England: Charles Townley and Sir William Hamilton," was the subject of a paper by Dr. Joan G. Wagner of Chicago. In it she described two major 18th century collections—the Hamilton collection of Greek vases (considered at the time to be Etruscan) and the Townley collection of Roman sculpture (then believed to be Greek). Hamilton, as an aristocratic but impecunious diplomat stationed in Naples, became interested in collecting Greek vases and other small objects, largely because they were cheaper than sculpture. He took part in the "excavation" of tombs and also purchased antiquities from the vicinity of Naples. In the course of his work he observed that the vases in question were Greek, not Etruscan, since they often carried Greek inscriptions, and since they were found in southern Italy, an area settled by Greeks, rather than in Etruria. Through the publication of handsome books illustrating

his collection, Greek pottery and other antiquities became fashionable and were used as models for contemporary decorative arts such as Wedgwood china. Eventually he sold his collection, including hundreds of vases, terracottas, glass objects, small bronzes, gems, coins, and jewelry, to the British Museum, thus forming the core of its holdings in Classical decorative arts.

Townley, richer but less socially established than Hamilton, attempted to make his sculpture collection accessible to the viewing public and made catalogues of his holdings room by room. Together, the two collections helped to establish taste for "Classical" art, a taste that resulted ultimately in the dominance of the Neo-Classical style in the late 18th century.

Dr. William H. Peck, Detroit Institute of Arts, discussed "Napoleon's Campaign in Egypt: The Antiquities," showing how the scientific component of Napoleon's otherwise disastrous expedition to Egypt, through the publication of monumental *Description de l'Egypte*, changed the way Europe and America looked at Egypt. For the first time, Egyptian monuments were mapped and illustrated in a series of fairly accurate drawings. Architectural details depicted in the *Description* and other related books were used as patterns by early 19th century architects, sculptors and practitioners of the decorative arts, who employed them to embellish everything from cemeteries to prisons to table services. Soon after Napoleon's campaign, travelers and tourists began visiting Egypt in significant numbers, and at the same time the major European museums built their Egyptian collections (with the approval and even cooperation of the Egyptian government).

Collecting in America was the focus of the last two papers. Dr. Joan T. Haldenstein of Chicago talked on "The American Collectors: E.P. Warren, Lewes House and the Boston Collection." She outlined American interest in Classical antiquities from the time of Thomas Jefferson, showing that until the late 19th century casts of famous antiquities were the fashion in America, being regarded as more useful for study than originals. E.P. Warren, scion of a wealthy Boston family, and benefactor of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, was instrumental in changing that situation and developing American taste for original works of ancient art. Warren, who settled at Lewes House in Oxford after graduating from Harvard, became an avid collector of Greek antiquities, acquiring marbles, bronzes, vases and gems from the highest quality, many of which

were shipped back to build the growing Boston collection. (He collected erotica as well, though this was less prominently displayed at Boston until the 1950s.) In addition to the Boston Museum, Warren was actively involved, through gifts, purchases and recommendations, in building the collections of the Rhode Island School of Design, Bowdoin College, the Louvre and the British Museum. He was, in his time, the foremost American collector of Antiquities.

Finally, Dr. Richard De Puma, University of Iowa, presented a paper on "'Etruscomania' at the Field Museum, 1890-1910," reminding the audience that the Field Museum, while known primarily as a natural history museum, was also a major collector of antiquities. The Etruscan collection, built chiefly in the 20 year span from 1890-1910, was largely the result of the efforts of Edward Everett Ayre or Kenosha, Wisconsin, one of the richest midwestern businessmen and philanthropists of the late 19th century. He supplied Indian artifacts to the Columbian Exposition of 1893, and convinced Marshall Field to found a museum. He toured Europe, Africa, and the Near East, visited archaeological sites, and purchased antiquities (with funds donated by his friends) to be sent back to the Field Museum. His Etruscan acquisitions were either purchased directly from dealers or through an archaeological "middleman," Arthur L. Frothingham. Frothingham was a wealthy Bostonian scholar, professor at Johns Hopkins University, founder of the *American Journal of Archaeology* and of the American Academy in Rome. He believed that objects in museums should be displayed in their original archaeological contexts or tomb groups and not simply as isolated objects. He was commissioned by the Field Museum, the Loewy Museum in Berkeley and other museums to acquire whole tomb groups for their collections. About fourteen tombs groups, comprising some 300 objects, are now in the Field Museum, (although it is not certain whether all the tomb groups are "clean"). After about 1912, little was added to the Field collection of Etruscan antiquities and today, for a variety of reasons, it cannot be displayed, though scholars may get permission to study it.

On the whole, the symposium comprised an interesting and informative set of papers. While they did not directly tackle the moral and ethical issues that confront would-be antiquities collectors today, the presentations served to illustrate the various roles played by collecting and collectors through the ages and their influence on the arts, archaeology and general culture.