ABSTRACT

Collecting Greek and Roman Antiquities: Remarkable Individuals and Acquisitions in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the J. Paul Getty Museum

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The United States of America is distant both geographically and chronologically from the classical culture of the Greek and Roman civilizations. For these reasons, classical antiquities were not widely available to the American public. In the era after the Civil War and in the early years of the twentieth century, however, American museums made huge strides toward acquiring classical collections of great significance. This thesis will recount the development of the classical collections of three major American museums: the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the J. Paul Getty Museum. I will examine the major board members, directors, curators, and donors who led these museums to prominence, and identify key acquisitions that have been, and often still are, among the finest available. In particular I will show that the development of a major classical collection requires both wealthy, discerning donors and an educated, professional staff.

Collecting Greek and Roman Antiquities: Remarkable Individuals and Antiquities
in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
and the J. Paul Getty Museum

by

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

There are two models for the exhibition of art, according to Stephen Greenblatt, a former professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley. The first displays the resonance of the art: the power of the object to represent the complex culture which created it. The other displays the wonder of the object: the power to stop a viewer in their tracks with an arresting sense of uniqueness. Greenblatt wrote an essay on the subject for Donna Kurtz's book "The Reception of Classical Art".[1] Greek and Roman antiquities have the power of both resonance and wonder; both symbolic of the great civilizations which created them, and beautiful and mysterious in their own right. They have long entranced private collectors and captured the imaginations of the general public. The Greek and Roman collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the J. Paul Getty Museum were formed by individuals who recognized the resonance and wonder of their antiquities and sought to share these with the rest of the populace. Recognizing the resonance and wonder of an item is not enough to build up a collection, however. The development of a major classical collection requires both wealthy, discerning donors and an educated, professional staff.

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[1] Donna C. Kurtz, *Reception of Classical Art: An Introduction* (Oxford, England: Archaeopress, 2004), 89.

Art collecting has been a phenomenon since at least the third century B.C., when King Attalus I of Pergamum amassed a collection of Greek art.[2] Other wealthy members of Greek society began to show off their riches by displaying beautiful bronzes and stunning marbles commissioned by the greatest sculptors of their time. Subject matter ranged from depictions of the gods and goddesses of the Greek pantheon to scenes from mythology to personal portraits. Household goods, such as vessels and mirrors, were elaborately painted or decorated and have since become objects of art in their own right. When the Romans enveloped Greek culture they made numerous copies and casts of their favorite Greek masterpieces, or imported Greek sculptors to create new works for them.[3] The wealthy members of society also displayed Greek originals in their homes, to remind the public of the power of the state which had acquired them from the once great civilization.[4]

More modern enthusiasm for ancient art reached its peak in the mid eighteenth century, when the field of archaeology was just beginning to become more or less systematic. Excavations in Greece, Rome, and Asia Minor unearthed a flood of antiquities: pottery, sculptures, statuettes, jewelry, etc.[5] These items found their way into private collections and early museums. Plaster casts were made of the more remarkable sculptures, and these were in turn sent to art schools and the like so that they could be

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[2] Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and its Linked Phenomena Wherever these have Appeared*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 691.

[3] ibid.

[4] Kurtz, *Reception of Classical Art : An Introduction*, 89

[5] Joseph Coscia, Elizabeth Johnston Milleker and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.), *Light on Stone: Greek and Roman Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: A Photographic Essay* (New York; New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Yale University Press, 2003), 100, http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip049/2003021842.html; Materials specified: Table of contents http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip049/2003021842.html.

studied by members of society who did not have the means to travel and see the originals. Those in private collections oftentimes were guaranteed fame more for their location or the reputation of the collector rather than individual artistic merit.[6]

Superficially, the appeal of antiquities was and is that there is a definite limited supply of such objects.[7] Euphronius will not paint any more vases; Praxiteles will not create any more sculptures, and so on. There is something more, though, that attracts people to ancient art. Because classical sculpture has become so iconic of the Greek and Roman civilizations and art, it is worthwhile to explore how it has withstood the test of time. Classical sculpture is at once familiar, recognized for the pristine white marble from which it was carved and the grace and realism of the subjects. At the same time, however, it seems remote- the men and women, gods and goddesses seem distant. To penetrate the barrier between viewer and art, the Metropolitan's new sculpture gallery utilizes natural light when at all possible. The light animates the marble, and recalls the setting in which the sculptures were originally intended to be viewed. The Greeks seem to have sought a lifelike impression of their art, which museum curators must do their best to cultivate.[8] After all, the three dimensional sculptures have the ability to create a personal interaction with the viewer that no mere canvas can achieve.[9]

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[6] Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 376.

[7] Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and its Linked Phenomena Wherever these have Appeared*, 691

[8] Coscia, Milleker and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, N.Y.), *Light on Stone: Greek and Roman Sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: A Photographic Essay*, 100

[9] J. Paul Getty Museum, *Masterpieces of the J. Paul Getty Museum. Antiquities* (Los Angeles, Calif: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1997), 127, http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0638/96022653-d.html; Materials specified: Publisher description http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0638/96022653-d.html.

Our understanding of these sculptures is incomplete, however. We have headless statues, disjointed heads, and every phase in between complete and fragmentary. These broken statues have contributed to the disconnection between the original appearance of the statue and the 'museum quality' pieces. There are many who do not even realize that ancient sculptures were painted, often in colors which would be considered garish by today's standards. Indeed, when John Gibson, a Victorian sculptor, crafted a classical-style Venus, then painted her in a nude color (the *Tinted Venus*) there were some protests from more conservative members of society.[10] This illustrates the need for museums to educate the public about the cultures that created this art, and the original intentions of said art. There are also some pieces which still exist only by accident. Bronzes in particular were often torn from their bases and melted down for scrap metal, especially during times of war. The J. Paul Getty Museum's famous bronze *Statue of a Victorious Youth* was likely en route for just such a purpose, but by chance the ship wrecked leaving the bronze to be rediscovered centuries later by fishermen in the Adriatic Sea.[11]

Classical art in America was at first only known by plaster casts. The 'great' pieces were in Europe, until either wealthy donors provided an American museum with antiquities or the museum had a purchasing fund to rival the more established institutions abroad. In this vein, it should be noted that museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and later the J. Paul Getty Museum, were largely created to exhibit the art collections of their wealthy benefactors. The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, however, was founded to be a functional place where art would be put to service, rather

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[10] Kurtz, *Reception of Classical Art: An Introduction*, 89

[11] Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and its Linked Phenomena Wherever these have Appeared*, 691

than a palace of fine art. These differing missions shaped the way the museums developed their collections. These three museums have the greatest collections of Greek and Roman Art in America, and they were all shaped largely by individual donors, directors, and curators.

These donors, directors, and curators collected antiquities for a variety of reasons, which applies to the world of art collecting at large. Collectors are drawn to specific pieces because of their purported financial value- how much the piece is worth on the market, and thus as an investment; the aesthetic appeal of the piece- if it is considered "beautiful"; the rarity of the object- the number of examples of this artist/form/etc extant; the excellence of the object- if it is particularly well made or preserved; the associated artist or subject matter; and the individual collectors personal interests. There are perhaps some more specific reasons to collect objects, particularly antiquities, but the above serve as a basic list of motives. The motivations of the collectors mentioned in this paper, at least, fall into one or more of the above categories; they are best assessed by the foremost pieces which they collected.

It should first be noted, however, that although the monetary value of a piece is perhaps important to private collectors, none of the following pieces were collected solely for their financial value. It may be that those who worked for and with the museums possessed the unique quality of collecting things for a "greater good", that is, to serve and educate the public, rather than for the purpose of having an investment. Those who purchased the collections for these museums were certainly aware of their relative value, but it does not seem to have been a primary concern.

In addition to the above motivations for collecting individual pieces of art, the cultivators of the Greek and Roman collections in each of the three museums had a broader goal in mind: to capture some of the classical era majesty and splendor. Just as the ancient Romans used Greek art to illustrate their power as an empire, these initiators were attempting to use the classical art to demonstrate their wealth and dominance in American society. For J. Paul Getty and the wealthy businessmen and politicians who supported the Metropolitan, the Classical art represented the power and prestige of the Greek and Roman civilizations. Out of the Greek culture came democracy, the cornerstone of American society; the Roman Empire is known for both its political power and the decadent lifestyles led by its upper class citizens. These men wanted to exhibit their relationships and America's relationships with the ancient cultures. J. Paul Getty, with his modern business empire, thought of himself as emulating the Roman emperor Hadrian; he was an intellectual, a patron of the arts, and a builder of monuments. The wealthy and prestigious benefactors of the Metropolitan were creating a museum in fast-paced New York City, which was on its way to becoming a world capital, and they did not waste an opportunity to be connected to the politically and culturally iconic civilizations.

The Museum of Fine Art in Boston, although developed at the same time as the Metropolitan Museum in New York, took a different approach to its Classical collections. Boston was already a cultural Mecca in the late nineteenth century, and the Museum of Fine Art further developed this role. The Classical collection was largely developed by an archeologist and an art dealer, both of whom were familiar with the ancient cultures for more than their power and prestige. They built the museum's collection out of the

finest available examples of Greek and Roman art. These pieces were carefully displayed, with the purpose of teaching visitors about aspects of ancient culture beyond the outward show of supremacy.

CHAPTER TWO

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

History of the Museum and the Department of Classical Archeology

The Museum of Fine Arts, in Boston, Massachusetts, received its initial charter from the State Legislature in 1870. Its creation was the joint effort of owners of private collections, who wanted to share their art with the general public in a centralized place. Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Boston Athenaeum, and the City of Boston contributed to the initial holdings of the museum. The institution began to collect, organize exhibitions, and raise money in 1870 though the doors of the building on Copley Square did not open until July 4th, 1876. Twenty two years after the initial opening, plans for a larger, grander museum were made. In November, 1909, the new building, with a Classical style of architecture, was opened to the public.[1] The museum trustees had hired architect Guy Lowell to create a master plan for the museum, which would have to be built section by section as funds became available. The first section, completed in 1909, featured a 500-foot neo-classical façade of cut granite on Huntington Avenue; the façade included Ionic columns and a triangular pediment. This section was financed entirely by individual donations.[2] Visitors entered through a Greek portal, and the interior featured sweeping vistas, ceremonial stairways, dramatic domes, and more columns. The ancient Greek and Roman art was to the right of the main entrance, accessed through the gallery of Egyptian art. The downstairs gallery likely

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[1] Adolph S. Cavallo, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.* (New York: Newsweek, 1969), 171.

[2] "MFA Boston: Home," http://www.mfa.org/ (accessed 5/31/2008, 2008).

housed the heavy marble pieces, while an upstairs gallery exhibited the other classical antiquities.[3] In 1911 Mrs. Robert Dawson Evans funded the entire cost of building the next section of the museum, which featured a row of Ionic style columns along the façade. This section was completed in 1915, at a cost of over $1 million, and enlarged the museum by forty percent.[4] Robert Dawson Evans was a Bostonian who made his money in the rubber and mining industries. Mr. and Mrs. Evans were art collectors, as well, and Mr. Evans served as a trustee for the Museum of Fine Arts.[5]

In 1916, the trustees commissioned John Singer Sargent, a very successful portrait painter, to create three paintings to decorate the rotunda. Sargent instead convinced the trustees to utilize painting, sculpture, and architectural ornamentation in the rotunda and an adjacent colonnade. The rotunda was completed in 1921, and the colonnade was unveiled in 1925, just before Sargent's death.[6]

As Perry Townsend Rathbone, director of the museum in its centennial year of 1970, describes it, the museum and its collections are a legacy to passionate collectors and discerning curators, rather than to the whims of wealthy patrons.[7]

The first objects of classical art were a set of classical heads from Cyprus, purchased from General Luigi Palma di Cesnola, an Italian soldier who had been made an

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[3] Cavallo, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*, 171

[4] *MFA Boston: Home*

[5] Samuel A. Eliot, *Biographical History of Massachusetts; Biographies and Autobiographies of the Leading Men in the State;* (Boston: Mass., Massachusetts biographical Society, 1909).

[6] *MFA Boston: Home*

[7] Cavallo, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*, 171

American consul, in 1872.[8] Cesnola later became the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, which received much of his collection of Cypriot art, and he is further discussed in the next chapter. In 1884 some sculptures, inscriptions, and works of minor art were gifted to the museum by the Archeological Institute of America at Assos in the Troad. In 1885 Edward Robinson was appointed the Curator of Classical Archaeology.[9] Robinson was a Harvard graduate, who studied for five years in Europe, including eighteen months in Greece and three years at the University of Berlin. He set high standards as an administrator and as a curator.[10] In 1887 the Department of Classical Archaeology was officially created, with Robinson as Curator. He urged the board of trustees to acquire original works of art- rather than the plaster casts which were popular in museums at the time-especially sculptures and vases, to add to the Classical collection.[11] The next year, 1888, with the help of Professor Rodolfo Lanciani, marble heads and portrait busts, selected terra-cottas, bronzes, vases, and coins were purchased from Italy for the museum.[12] Lanciani was an Italian archeologist and a professor at the University of Rome.[13]

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[8] ibid.

[9] Mary B. Comstock, Cornelius Clarkson Vermeule and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Sculpture in Stone: The Greek, Roman and Etruscan Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston: The Museum, 1976), 296.

[10] American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1928), http://www.galenet.com; http://www.galenet.com.

[11] Comstock, Vermeule and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Sculpture in Stone: The Greek, Roman and Etruscan Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 296

[12] Walter Muir Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; A Centennial History* (Cambridge: Mass., Belknap Press, 1970).

[13] Columbia University, Press and Inc Bartleby.com, "Columbia Encyclopedia," New York: Columbia University Press: Bartleby.com, http://www.bartleby.com/65/; http://www.bartleby.com/65/

The biggest donors in these early years, from 1870 to 1890, were Francis Amory, Thomas G. Appleton, Edward Austin, Henry J. Bigelow, Martin Brimmer, Benjamin W. Crowningshield, John James Dixwell, Alfred Greenough, Henry P. Kidder, Charles C. Perkins, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel D. Warren, and C. Granville Way (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 1963) These men were prominent in Boston, and many were members of the museum board: Martin Brimmer was the son of a Boston Mayor and the first president of the museum board, serving from 1870 to 1895; Henry P. Kidder was the head of an investment firm and served as treasurer of the board from 1870 to 1886; and Samuel D. Warren, father of Edward Perry Warren, was a successful lawyer in Boston and a trustee from 1883 to 1888.[14]

Thomas G. Appleton was an essayist, poet, and artist in Boston, and the son of a wealthy merchant. He graduated from Harvard and was actively interested in the growth and improvement of Boston; he served as a trustee for the Athenaeum, the Public Library, and the Museum of Fine Arts. In addition to donating art to the museum, he was also one of the three largest subscribers to the fund for the museum building, when it was clear that the collections would outgrow the building at Copley square. Henry J. Bigelow was a Harvard Medical School graduate, and a noted surgeon. Charles C. Perkins was a Boston art critic, and the son of a wealthy and philanthropic merchant. Prior to 1850 he had proposed an art museum for Boston, but the idea was premature; he enthusiastically supported the Museum of Fine Arts and was second among the incorporators. Perkins secured a gift of Egyptian antiquities for the museum opening, and made valuable

[14] Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; A Centennial History*

suggestions as to the arrangement of exhibits; he advocated showing contemporary works as well as ancient art.[15]

From 1890 to 1910 the museum experienced a 'great age' in the development of the department. Edward Perry Warren, a wealthy Bostonian, had earlier given numerous gifts and loans to the museum. In this period, however, he, with the help of his friend John Marshall, acquired important objects directly from collectors in Europe and local Greek excavators. These items he offered to the trustees of the museum for sale, or bequeathed them.[16] Warren was a graduate of Harvard, and had also attended Oxford, where he met John Marshall, an archeologist. The two lived at Lewes House, in East Sussex, where they fraternized with other men interested in arts and antiquities.[17] Warren's own large monetary resources were supplemented by funds from the museum, namely the Catherine Page Perkins Fund, established in 1895, the Henry Lillie Pierce Fund, established in 1898, and the Francis Bartlett Fund, of 1900.[18] Henri Lillie Pierce was a cocoa manufacturer, mayor of Boston in 1872 and 1877, and a congressman from 1873 to 1877. He left more than half of his estate to various charitable, educational, and religious institutions, including the museum.[19] Francis Bartlett was a Boston lawyer and a trustee of the museum.[20] His initial gift was $100,000, and in 1912 he gave the

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[15] American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography*

[16] Cavallo, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*, 171

[17] David Sox, *Bachelors of Art: Edward Perry Warren & the Lewes House Brotherhood* (London: Fourth Estate, 1991), 289.

[18] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Greek, Etruscan, & Roman Art; the Classical Collections*, Rev. with additions by Cornelius C. Vermeule III ed. (Boston, 1963).

[19] American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography*

[20] Sox, *Bachelors of Art: Edward Perry Warren & the Lewes House Brotherhood*, 289

museum a further $1,350,000.[21] The museum's arrangement with Warren was that he would purchase items using his funds subsidized by the museum's funds. Anything that the museum decided it did not want or need, would go into Warren's private collection.[22]

Warren established for Boston one of the greatest collections of bronzes in America and a Greek vase collection rivaled only by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.[23] The 1911 director's report show that 4,096 objects were added to the Classical Collection from 1895 to 1904 alone- this includes 96 sculptures, over 1300 Greek coins, and many vases, bronzes, terra-cottas, and gems. Many of these items were purchased.[24] In 1905 Robinson resigned as Curator of the Department of Classical Archaeology to become Assistant Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His successor, Dr. Arthur Fairbanks, was elected as both Director of the Museum of Fine Arts and the Curator of the Department of Classical Archaeology. The next year Dr. Lacey D. Caskey was chosen to be Assistant Curator of the growing department, and in 1912 Dr. Caskey was named Head Curator until his death in 1944. The arrangement of the collection in the museum essentially followed his chronological arrangement, rather than arrangement by type or material, for many decades. His chief interests lay in sculptures and vases.[25] After Dr. Caskey's untimely death, George H. Chase served as Curator of the department from 1945-1952.[26] When Mr. Chase died suddenly in 1952, Miss Hazel Palmer, who

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[21] Cavallo, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*, 171

[22] Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; a Centennial History*

[23] Cavallo, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*, 171

[24] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Greek, Etruscan, & Roman Art; the Classical Collections*

[25] ibid.

[26] ibid.

held a PhD in Archaeology from Johns Hopkins University, continued as acting curator, organizing the files and cataloging old gift collections.[27]

Important Acquisitions

It was under these early curators that the core items of the department were acquired. The intent of the collectors was always to strive for fine artistic quality rather than archaeological interest. The collection of marbles, though small, is remarkable for the large proportion of Greek originals in the collection compared to those of other American museums, which are largely made up of Roman copies or modern casts. Similarly, the bronzes, gems, and coins are genuine works of Greek art, many from the 6th to the 4th centuries B.C. The pottery collection has pieces from as early as the Minoan age, but it is especially noted for its Athenian red-figure vases from early in the 5th century B.C. [28]

One of the earliest important pieces acquired by the museum is a marble fragment given, with an assortment of other sculptural fragments, by Charles C. Perkins in 1876. The fragment, accession number 76.740, is a Greco-Roman copy in marble of the shield of Pheidias' Athena Parthenos, which sat in the Parthenon during Athens' Golden Age.[29] This piece was an important accession because of its association with the great ancient

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[27] Comstock, Vermeule and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Sculpture in Stone: The Greek, Roman and Etruscan Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 296

[28] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Handbook of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 25th ed. (Boston. 1940), 206.

[29] Comstock, Vermeule and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Sculpture in Stone: The Greek, Roman and Etruscan Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 296

sculptor, Pheidias, and its rarity. The original chryselephantine sculpture has long since been destroyed, and there are not many good copies in existence.[30]

Some of the singular pieces of Greek art which came to the museum through the important collector Edward Perry Warren are the *Gold Earring of the Winged Nike,* the so-called *Boston Throne*, the *Bartlett Head of Aphrodite* and the *Head of a Goddess*. The *Gold Earring*, accession number 98.788, is one of the largest and most perfect examples of three-dimensional jewelry from the classical period; the motives for collecting this piece, then, were for its aesthetic value and the excellence of its craftsmanship and preservation. The earring may have been a votive offering or a decoration on an over life-sized statue. This piece was stolen from the museum in 1963, which at the time was the greatest art theft from a major American museum. It was recovered the next year. The *Boston Throne*, actually a three-sided relief titled *A Divine Contest and Attendants,* accession number 08.205, is one of the major sculptural monuments in a style between the Archaic Period and the Golden Age of the Parthenon. With its counterpart, which is in the National Museum of Rome, the pieces may have been part of a balustrade around an altar. The two heads are considered some of the most beautiful surviving from antiquity, and both date from the 4th century B.C.[31]

The *Bartlett Aphrodite*, accession number 03.743, is associated with the same Francis Bartlett of above, who gave funds to the museum. His funds covered 290 of Warren's purchases. The most important of these, the head of Aphrodite, was named

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[30] Mary B. Comstock, Cornelius Clarkson Vermeule and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Greek, Etruscan, & Roman Bronzes in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* (Boston: distributed by New York Graphic Society, Greenwich, Conn, 1971), 511.

[31] Cavallo, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*, 171

after him.[32] The head is one of the few extant sculptures from the workshop of Praxiteles, who created the Greek ideal of classic female beauty.[33] This piece was collected for its aesthetic appeal, its rarity, the fineness of its craftsmanship and preservation, and also for its association with Praxiteles. Warren's taste led him to acquire Roman copies of Greek originals, male figures of the type from the Acropolis, and sculptures influenced by the Praxitelean age. Praxiteles' sculptures are notable for the softness of their forms.[34]

Warren's legacy is also seen in his unequaled ancient gem collection, acquired by the museum in the years 1921-1927,[35] and in the acquisition of the first century B.C. Roman terra-cotta *Portrait of a Roman*. The bust, accession number 1.80008, is one of the few surviving Roman terra-cotta portraits, collected in part for its rarity as an example. The piece was made by placing wet plaster directly on the subject's face, allowing for extraordinary accuracy.[36] Warren also gave a collection of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman art of an erotic nature which was received quietly in 1908, but not accessioned until the early 1950's, by Hazel Palmer, the acting curator.

One of the more remarkable acquisitions allegedly happened entirely by chance. Oral tradition has it that a Cretan peasant approached a friend of the museum on a ship bound from Piraeus, Greece, to Boston in 1913. The man had with him a cigar box filled with ivory and gold fragments, which eventually made its way to the museum. William

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[32] Sox, *Bachelors of Art: Edward Perry Warren & the Lewes House Brotherhood*, 289

[33] Cavallo, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*, 171

[34] Comstock, Vermeule and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Sculpture in Stone: The Greek, Roman and Etruscan Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 296

[35] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Greek, Etruscan, & Roman Art; the Classical Collections*

[36] Cavallo, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*, 171

J. Young, head of the museum's research laboratory, restored the fragments which make up a beautiful chryselephantine statuette known as the Minoan *Snake Goddess*, accession number 14.863.[37] The museum's website states that recent research by Kenneth Lapatin, however, concludes that the piece was in fact brought by Richard Seager from Europe on behalf of an unnamed person, and then sent to the museum through Richard Hodge Hill, a former Assistant Curator at the museum.[38] The piece was purchased with funds provided by Mrs. Scott Fitz.[39] Richard Seager was an archeologist, specializing in the Minoan culture on Crete. He collected gems and small artifacts during his life, which he bequeathed to many different museums.[40] Regardless of how it was acquired, the piece remains one of the most precious objects from the Minoan civilization.[41] It was collected due to its rarity as an example of a Minoan chryselephantine statuette, its aesthetic quality, and the "snake goddess" subject matter. The statuette's authenticity has come into question, citing the "modern" look of her face and the narrowness of her hips in relation to other depictions of Minoan women, but scientific testing has proven inconclusive.[42]

The *Boston Throne* and the *Snake Goddess* were both acquired under Dr. Caskey's curatorial direction. He was influential in the acquisitions of many other

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[37] ibid.

[38] *MFA Boston: Home*

[39] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Greek, Etruscan, & Roman Art; the Classical Collections*

[40] John Stewart Bowman, *The Cambridge Dictionary of American Biography* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 903, http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/cam026/94005057.html; Materials specified: Publisher description http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/cam026/94005057.html.

[41] Cavallo, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*, 171

[42] *MFA Boston: Home*

important objects for the Classical collection. From 1908 to 1913 more than 100 coins were purchased from the bequest of Mrs. John Warren James. In 1910 the head of a goddess from Chios was given by Nathanial Thayer.[43] Thayer was a financier and philanthropist in Boston.[44] The head, accession number 10.70, is the other beautiful marble associated with Edward Perry Warren. The sculptor of this fine piece was influenced by the great Praxiteles, just as the *Bartlett Aphrodite* was, and similarly collected for its association with the sculptor and for its aesthetic quality.[45]

From 1916-1931 Caskey obtained the M. Elizabeth Carter collection of ancient glass, and in 1933, eleven specimens of Roman fresco from Boscotrecase, near Pompeii. In 1934 the museum purchased a fine piece of Attic pottery, a red-figured pelike by the Lykaon painter, accession number 34.79. From 1934 to 1944 the museum received an anonymous gift of 336 coins in memory of Zoë Wilbour (1864-1885). In 1935 a ten-drachma piece, the *Syracusan Demareteion*, accession number 35.21, was acquired. It was issued by Gelon, the King of Syracuse to commemorate his victory over the Carthaginians in 480 B.C. This coin is the best preserved of the few which have survived, and was collected for this rarity and for the excellence of its workmanship and preservation. One of the final great acquisitions under Caskey was in 1940, when the museum obtained its finest piece of Archaic Greek sculpture, the *Upper part of a grave stele: seated sphinx,* accession number 40.576.[46]

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[43] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Greek, Etruscan, & Roman Art; the Classical Collections*

[44] American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography*

[45] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Greek, Etruscan, & Roman Art; the Classical Collections*

[46] ibid.

Caskey's successor, George H. Chase, purchased the famous, often published head of *Alexander the Great as Herakles*, accession number 52.1741. The head is shown with Herakles' identifying lion's skin, and was long thought to be merely a young Herakles. T. L. Comparette, and later E. Sjöqvist, concluded that the head was in fact a portrait of a young Alexander the Great, circa 330 B.C. This representation is perhaps one of only two extant likenesses of Alexander the Great created in his lifetime.[47] This fact makes the piece collectible due to its rarity and its association with Alexander the Great.

An important addition to the collection in 1962 was a portrait head from the late Roman imperial period. The head, accession number 62.465, bridges the artistic gap between portraits of philosophers and early church fathers. In fact, comparing the features of the head to 4th century A.D. Roman sarcophagi depicting New Testament scenes has led to the tentative conclusion that the portrait is of St. Paul. St. Paul was an important missionary to Greece, especially in Athens.[48] If this conclusion is taken as factual, then the piece is collectible not only for its rarity in bridging the artistic gap but for its association with the early missionary.

To further strengthen the department's collection of late antique sculpture, the museum accepted a gift of a statue head from Jerome M. Eisenberg and Richard Titelman in 1971. The head is of a municipal magistrate from a statue erected in about A.D. 475, accession number 1971.18. The portrait is an example of the proto-Ephesus style, determined by the hair style and the method of carving and drilling used. Another

[47] Comstock, Vermeule and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, *Sculpture in Stone: The Greek, Roman and Etruscan Collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 296

[48] ibid.

important addition to the department was the collection of Professor Benjamin Rowland Jr. and his wife Lucy. The Rowlands had already established a fund for the museum, and Professor Rowland bequeathed a number of statues and heads in 1974. Mrs. Rowland supplemented the bequest with still more pieces. As a whole, the objects associated with the Rowlands complemented the holdings beautifully.[49] Professor Rowland studied South Asian art history, and taught at Harvard University. He built his reputation as a scholar on the influence of Greco-Roman art on Buddhist sculpture.[50]

The greatest period of growth for the museum was from about 1885 to 1910. Edward Robinson, as curator from 1885 to 1905, initially began the process of collecting fine original pieces; many museums in this era were filled with plaster casts of sculptures, as institutions did not generally have the funding to compete with well established European museums for originals. Edward Perry Warren was also instrumental in this great age- he donated pieces of art, purchase pieces on behalf of the museum, donated money to buy pieces from other individuals, and similarly helped the museum acquire an enviable collection of antiquities.

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[49] ibid

[50] Lee Sorenson and others, “Dictionary of Art Historians: A Biographical Dictionary of Historians, Museum Directors and Scholars of Art”, Duke University libraries, http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/; http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/

CHAPTER THREE

Metropolitan Museum of Art

History of the Museum and the Department of Greek and Roman Art

On July 4th, 1866, a group of wealthy New Yorkers gathered to celebrate Independence Day. John Jay, a prominent lawyer and the grandson of the first chief justice, remarked that it was time for the American people to lay the foundations of a "National Institution and Gallery of Art." This idea was enthusiastically supported and over the next few years some of the wealthiest art collectors and philanthropists began planning the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. J. Pierpont Morgan, H. O. Havemeyer, the Lehman brothers, Benjamin Altman, many of the Rockefellers, and Cornelius Vanderbilt gave their support with money, books, and works of art.[1]

J. Pierpont Morgan is discussed in some detail later in this chapter; H. O. Havemeyer was a sugar refiner and a capitalist, and director of the American Sugar Refining Company based in New York. He was a collector of European art later in his life, and his widow's bequest left the museum nearly 100 paintings in 1929. The Lehman brothers were prominent bankers and financiers in New York City. Benjamin Altman, who was a businessman, a philanthropist and an art collector, left his entire art collection-appraised at $20,000,000- to the museum when he died in 1913. The Rockefellers were a

[1] Danny Danziger, *Museum: Behind the Scenes at the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, New York: Viking, 2007), 277, http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0742/2007298978-d.html; Materials specified: Publisher descriptionhttp://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0742/2007298978-d.html; Materials specified: Contributor biographical information http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0742/2007298978-b.html; Materials specified: Table of contents http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/fy0801/2007298978.html.

prominent philanthropic family in New York City. Cornelius Vanderbilt, whose grandfather of the same name founded the family fortune by promoting steamships and railroads, was a financier and a philanthropist. He was chairman of the executive board at the museum the last twelve years of his life, from 1887 to 1899.[2]

In January of 1870, twenty seven trustees were elected for the museum in New York. The institution had to compete with growing personal collections and the New York Historical Society, which had an incomparable library of local history, an Egyptian collection, several American portraits, and around 250 other paintings. Joseph H. Choate drew up the charter for the new Metropolitan Museum of Art, citing a need to encourage and develop the study of fine arts and their related aspects and to furnish popular instruction and recreation.[3] Choate was a prominent lawyer in New York; he served as a trustee of the museum for forty seven years, including serving as vice president, chairman of the law committee, and a member of the executive committee.[4] In the spring of 1871, the institution and its sister, the American Museum of National History, applied for funds from a prominent political boss, William Marcy Tweed- better known as Boss Tweed[5]. Boss Tweed and his political allies held many of the prominent political positions in New York; he himself served jointly as state senator, New York County democratic chairman, New York City school commissioner, assistant street commissioner, and president of the

[2] American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography*

[3] Licia Ragghianti Collobi and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York* (New York: Newsweek, 1978), 171.

[4] American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography*

[5] Ragghianti Collobi and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, 171

board of supervisors.[6] He hoped to use the building program to acquire some respectability for his political ring, and to profit from the construction of costly buildings. It was decided that the city of New York would provide the building and the upkeep, but the trustees would keep ownership of the actual collection. This compromise ensured that the museum would have to annually prove its worth to the community in order to receive the necessary funds from the city.[7]

The first gift to the fledgling museum was a Roman sarcophagus, accession number 70.1, given by Abdullah (Abdo) Debbas, the local American consul of Tarsus. A public subscription that same year acquired 174 European paintings from Paris. This first collection was displayed for the public in the rented attic of a dance studio on Fifth Avenue and 54th street. In 1874 the Museum outgrew the attic when it purchased a massive collection of Cypriot antiquities from General Cesnola.[8] Luigi Palma di Cesnola was the second son of an Italian count, and a military man. He moved to New York in 1860 and enlisted in the Union army. President Lincoln offered him the consulship of Cyprus in 1865, provided Cesnola became an American citizen. He accepted, and used his authority and personal ties to begin excavating on the island. He allowed the Metropolitan to purchase his first collection for less than one quarter of what it would have fetched at auction.[9] The collection was displayed in a large house on 14th street, and Cesnola himself came to help the museum unpack and display the pieces. Cesnola used the money from this purchase to conduct a second archaeological dig on Cyprus, the

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[6] American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography*

[7] Ragghianti Collobi and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, 171

[8] ibid.

[9] American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography*

results of which were sold to the Museum in 1876.[10] In 1877 Cesnola became the secretary of the Metropolitan, and in 1879 was made director until his death in 1904.[11] Under Cesnola the museum added a collection of ancient glass, many Etruscan bronzes, and some rare Roman frescoes, preserved by the eruption of Vesuvius. In 1880 the Museum's collections were moved into their permanent home in a building on Central Park.[12]

The original building in Central Park was designed by Calvert Vaux and Jacob Wrey Mold. It was a red-brick neo-Gothic building. The present façade and entrance, in the neo-Classical style, were completed in 1926. It features ornate Corinthian columns and elaborate carvings, including a motif of crowned heads around the top and decorative moldings. The museum has grown enormously over the years, and now contains nearly two million square feet of space.[13]

The museum continued to grow, spurred on especially by the bequest of Jacob S. Rogers in 1901. Rogers was the president of a steam locomotive manufacturing company, and he left nearly $5 million to the museum as a general purchasing fund, giving the institution the ability to compete with other great museums of the time. Another period of growth at the museum was under the presidency of the great financier J. P. Morgan, who served from 1904 to 1913.

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[10] Ragghianti Collobi and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, 171

[11] American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography*

[12] Ragghianti Collobi and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, 171

[13] "The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: Metmuseum.Org," http://www.metmuseum.org/ (accessed 5/31/2008, 2008).

J. P. Morgan (1837-1913) was a financier and a banker, a self-made businessman. In his university years he began to buy ancient panes of stained glass, but it was not until he was fifty-three years old that he began to make major art purchases. His first major purchases were portraits and European paintings, but over the course of his life he bought almost every type of art, except modern and American: jewelry, porcelains, reliquaries, Chinese screens, furniture, oriental carpets, bronze and ivory statues, dress armor, Egyptian sculptures, gold medallions, and on and on.[14]

Morgan became a trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1888, and in 1904 was named chairman of the board. He assumed virtual control of the staff, as well as the board, and expanded the collections in almost every artistic area.[15] Morgan assembled some of the wealthiest men in America on the Metropolitan board, making it one of the richest and most exclusive clubs in the city.[16]

At first, Morgan acquired antiquities in his personal collection as an afterthought; he bought up whole collections from others, which occasionally included ancient objects. Near the end of his life, however, he began to turn more toward the ancient past. He gave many of his own objects to the museum, and loaned many others; upon his death his son, J. Pierpont Morgan, Jr. saw to it that the items on loan from his father were permanently given to the museum. J. P. Morgan was motivated by the desire to bring the glory of Europe and ancient civilizations to America; he didn't collect American art, likely

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[14] Louis Auchincloss, *J.P. Morgan: The Financier as Collector* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1990), 144.

[15] ibid.

[16] Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 305, http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/uchi052/98016850.html; Materials specified: Publisher description http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/uchi052/98016850.html; Materials specified: Table of contents http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/uchi052/98016850.html.

because it was already here and readily available.[17] Some of the ancient Greek and Roman objects to come to the museum from Morgan, or his son, include a Roman couch and footstool, gems, coins, vessels, statuettes, jewelry, statues, and other objects.[18]

During Morgan's presidency Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke, former director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, became director of the Metropolitan; he served from 1905-1910. Clarke was an architect, an archeologist, and an art connoisseur, as well as a museum administrator.[19] Also under Morgan, Edward Robinson came to the museum from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Robinson was the only well-trained American archeologist, and served as assistant director from 1905 to 1910, then director from 1910 to 1931. He instituted the systematic purchasing of antiquities for the Museum's collection. In 1925 Gisela Richter became the Curator of Greek and Roman art at the museum; she remained until 1948 and wrote several books about the Metropolitan's antiquities collections. Richter's books about Greek and Roman art are still a valuable resource today. Robinson was succeeded as director by Herbert Winlock, an Egyptologist, who served from 1932 to 1939.[20] Herbert Winlock graduated from Harvard in archeology and anthropology, and joined the Metropolitan in 1906. He spent the majority of his time excavating in Egypt on behalf of the museum, until he was named

[17] Auchincloss, *J.P. Morgan: The Financier as Collector*, 144

[18] Carlos A. Picón, Richard Daniel De Puma and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *Art of the Classical World in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Greece, Cyprus, Etruria, Rome* (New York; New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art; Yale University Press, 2007), 508, http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip077/2006102706.html; Materials specified: Table of contents only http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip077/2006102706.html; Materials specified: Contributor biographical information http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0735/2006102706-b.html; Materials specified: Publisher description http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0735/2006102706-d.html.

[19] American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography*

[20] Ragghianti Collobi and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, 171

director in 1932.[21] These three early directors- Cesnola, Robinson, and Winlock- contributed greatly to the archaeological collections, due to each of their personal interests and expertise.[22]

Before 1905, when Robinson served as assistant director and curator of the department, the Museum's collection contained only a few items of importance. These included the King Collection of gems, given by John Taylor Johnston in 1881; the Chervat Collection of ancient glass, given by Henry G. Marquand; a number of bronzes, also given by Marquand, in 1897; and a bronze Etruscan chariot purchased in 1903. The other objects in the collection were mainly vases and pottery pieces. The Rogers Fund and the Fletcher Fund, another general museum fund, were used to purchase new pieces for the collection. These purchases were sometimes supplemented by gifts and loans, including Greek bronzes and the Gréau Collection of Roman glass and pottery given by J. Pierpont Morgan, Jr., a Greek marble Head given by James Loeb, and a bequest by Richard B. Seager of a collection of Cretan sealstones and other antiquities.[23] Some other important donors to the museum were Walter C. Baker, who bequeathed his personal art collection, Christos G. Baistos, Bill Blass, Albert Gallatin, and Norbert Schimmel.[24]

Henry G. Marquand was a capitalist and a philanthropist, and one of the museum's ablest and most generous supporters. He was on the committee elected to raise an endowment for the museum in 1869, the treasurer from 1882 to 1889, and

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[21] American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography*

[22] Ragghianti Collobi and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York.), *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, 171

[23] Gisela Marie Augusta Richter and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *Handbook of the Classical Collection*, New and enl. ed. (New York:, 1930), 380.

[24] Picón, De Puma and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *Art of the Classical World in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Greece, Cyprus, Etruria, Rome*, 508

president of the board from 1889 to his death in 1902. His gifts included $10,000 in 1886 to purchase a collection of sculptural casts, $30,000 for the endowment fund of the museum art school, the collection of antique glass mentioned above, and many other objects for other departments of the museum. John Taylor Johnston was a railroad executive and an art collector; he also served as the first president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Before the Metropolitan was established, Johnston had acquired an art collection unparalleled in New York, and probably in the whole of the United States. Wanting to share his art with the public, he constructed two gallery additions to his home, and opened them once a week for visitors. He served as president of the board from 1870 until 1889, when he resigned due to poor health. James Loeb was a banker, humanist, and philanthropist in New York. He was particularly drawn to the art and culture of ancient Greece and Rome.[25]

Originally the classical collections were displayed according to the material of the object; bronzes were displayed together, marbles were together, etc. regardless of provenance or time period. Eventually the museum shifted to a set of rooms divided by period surrounding a central sculptural hall. This arrangement was favored because it allowed visitors to see classical history develop chronologically, and to establish connections between, say, an ancient helmet and a vase painting of a warrior wearing a similar helmet.[26]

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[25] American Council of Learned Societies, *Dictionary of American Biography*

[26] Richter and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *Handbook of the Classical Collection*, 380

Important Acquisitions

Possibly the most important acquisition by the museum was of the Cesnola Collection of Cypriot objects. This massive purchase put the Museum on the map, so to speak, drawing international attention. The three most important purchases made by Cesnola, in his years as Director, were made in 1903 using the Rogers Fund. These were the collection of ancient glass, Etruscan bronzes (including the chariot) and the Roman frescoes, all mentioned above.[27] The *Chariot*, accession number 03.23.1, is one of the only intact chariots of the Etruscan period, collected in part for this rarity. It is crafted of bronze, depicting scenes from the life of Achilles, and inlaid with elephant and hippopotamus ivory. The frescoes are from the walls of a bedroom, depicting architecture and fantasy gardens.[28] The frescoes are desirable as a collection because of their rarity and the state of their preservation.

When Robinson joined the Museum a great era for the department began. One of the first remarkable purchases was in 1908: a Hellenistic marble of an *Old Market Woman*, accession number 09.39. The piece illustrates the difference between earlier Greek art, with its simple nobility and grandeur, and the Hellenistic art which portrayed the person more realistically, yet sympathetically. It was collected both for its aesthetic value and for the magnificent craftsmanship and preservation of the piece. The old woman bends to carry her load, the effort apparent on her face.[29] In 1925, a Roman copy of the head of a statue of a Diadoumenos was acquired. A Diadoumenos is a statue of a

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[27] Ragghianti Collobi and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, 171

[28] *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: Metmuseum.Org*

[29] Ragghianti Collobi and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, 171

male youth tying a victory fillet around his head after an athletic contest. The Greek original was a bronze by Polykleitos, crafted around 440 B.C., and according to the ancient author Lucian was famed for its beauty. The Roman marble head, accession number 25.78.56, is one of the best preserved; the surface is in good condition and even the nose is unbroken.[30] It was collected for this state of preservation, its aesthetic quality, and for its association with the sculptor Polykleitos.

A large bronze statuette of a horse, acquired in 1923, was considered by Gisela Richter to be one of the most important pieces in the Greek collection. The Late Archaic horse, accession number 23.69, was termed an 'elegant summation' of the Greek sculpture of the period. In 1926, as part of the Richard B. Seager Bequest, the museum acquired a bronze dagger blade, which Richter also considered to be important to the Greek collection. The blade, accession number 26.31.499, has an engraved scene on each side: a man spearing a boar, and a fight between bulls. The dagger blade is from the Middle Minoan period, a predecessor of the ornamented Mycenaean blades.[31]

In 1927 a Classical Period *Grave Stele* was purchased, depicting a girl holding two doves. The piece, accession number 27.45, is poignant in that the body is of a young girl who died prematurely, while the head is of the young woman the child never grew up to be. It is well preserved, and reflects the style of the sculptor Polykleitos.[32] In 1932, under Herbert Winlock, an Archaic *Kouros* was purchased. The statue, accession number 32.11.1, is one of the oldest surviving marble sculptures from the Attic region of Greece,

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[30] Gisela Marie Augusta Richter and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *Handbook of the Greek Collection* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954), 322.

[31] ibid.

[32] Ragghianti Collobi and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, 171

thus collected in part for its rarity. It is an early example of Greek sculptures' break from their Egyptian counterparts: the statue shares the form and stance of typical Egyptian sculptures from the time, but the figure is entirely free-standing, has individually modeled limbs, and articulated bones and muscles, resulting in a clear departure from Egyptian prototypes.[33]

A large bronze statuette of Aphrodite was given by Mr. and Mrs. Francis Nielson in 1935. The statuette, accession number 35.122, is sensitively crafted to depict the goddess, as she seems to lift a necklace to her neck, with soft flesh and a gentle expression.[34] In 1943 the bronze *Sleeping Eros* was acquired, accession number 43.11.4. The chubby child, known to be Eros only by his wings, sleeps heavily on a rock. The piece is beautifully rendered, showing a naturalism that is engaging to the viewer.[35] A version of the Aphrodite of the Medici type was acquired in 1952. The female stands nude, as if she had just arisen from a bath. The *Aphrodite*, accession number 52.11.5, is a Roman copy based on the same original as the Medici Venus. The original, by Praxiteles, was the first representation of a goddess in the nude.[36] This statue was collected for its aesthetic quality, and for its association with Praxiteles' original.

One of the greatest acquisitions, and certainly one of the most contested, came under Thomas Hoving, Director of the Museum from 1967 to 1977. He is known for pursuing what he termed "world class" pieces, opting to spend the Museum's acquisition

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[33] ibid.

[34] Richter and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *Handbook of the Greek Collection*, 322

[35] Ragghianti Collobi and Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, New York), *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*, 171

[36] ibid.

budget-which he often exceeded- on singular pieces rather than larger collections of less impressive works. In 1972 Hoving went after a calyx krater designed by Euxitheos, the potter, and decorated by Euphronius, the painter. Only roughly 25 vases painted by Euphronius exist, making the krater, accession number 1972.11.10, very desirable. The vase depicts a scene from Homer: the warrior Sarpedon is being carried by the twins Sleep and Death on the front of the vase, and on the back a group of young warriors, each identified by name, is shown putting on armor. Hoving was struck by the shape of the vase, the painted decoration, and the subject matter. He purchased it for the record sum of $1 million.[37] This piece was collected because of its aesthetic quality, the magnificence of its craftsmanship, Hoving's personal interest in it, its association with Euphronius, and the extreme rarity of this association.

Shortly after the acquisition, however, concerns about where the krater had come from began to surface. There were suspicions that it had been illegally excavated north of Rome, then smuggled out of the country, where it was sold by an antiquities dealer to the Museum, complete with fabricated provenance papers. The krater remained contested until 1976. Eventually the museum and those involved were able to accumulate enough 'evidence' to prove that the piece was legitimate and had been legally exported and purchased.[38] Early in 2008, however, after a renewed interest in its legitimacy, the museum agreed to return the piece to Italy.[39]

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[37] Thomas Hoving, *Making the Mummies Dance: Inside the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993).

[38] ibid.

[39] *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: Metmuseum.Org*

Recently the Museum initiated a grand reconstruction for the Greek and Roman galleries, which opened in April of 2007. Essentially building a 'museum within a museum', the new large, airy galleries incorporate natural light whenever possible, showcasing more than 5,300 works of art. The centerpiece is the Shelby White and Leon Levy Court, which is a monumental peristyle court with a two-story atrium. Shelby White and Leon Levy have committed millions of dollars to the Museum, as well as giving many works of ancient art from their own private collection. The new galleries finally give the Museum's fantastic collection the setting it deserves.[40]

Shelby White and Leon Levy began collecting ancient art about twenty years ago, when they purchased a Roman head of a philosopher at an auction. The ancient sculpture marked the beginning of a grand collection of art from ancient civilizations before Greece to the nomadic tribes of Franks and Goths, from as far west as the Celtic lands to almost as far east as China. Their passion and fascination lay not only in the joy of possessing such beauty, but in discovering the objects' places in history and ancient culture. Some of the objects in their collection intrigued them by their rarity; others by their beauty. The objects collected by the couple were important to them for their aesthetic value, their associations with ancient culture, and because the objects interested them. Shelby White and Leon Levy were also close friends of Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman, who gave so generously to the J. Paul Getty Museum.[41]

The Metropolitan built a great collection of antiquities in the years following the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston-from about 1905 to 1915. This 'golden age' is also

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[40] *The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: Metmuseum.Org*

[41] Dietrich Von Bothmer and Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Glories of the Past: Ancient Art from the Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art: Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1990), 280.

associated with curator Edward Robinson who began working at the Metropolitan in 1905, under the influence of J.P. Morgan. Morgan's business acumen and personal connections enabled him to assemble a board of wealthy, philanthropic trustees. His personal and financial resources, combined with Robinson's artistic expertise, added a quality foundation of antiquities to the museum's collection.

CHAPTER FOUR

The J. Paul Getty Museum

J. Paul Getty

J. Paul Getty (1892-1976) was the son of George F. Getty, who was a successful attorney and wealthy already when he entered the oil business. J. Paul was expected to take over the family business, and began working summers in the oil fields at the age of sixteen.[1] Paul was independently wealthy from oil at the young age of twenty-four, and continued to excel in his professional life. After WWII he purchased land in the Neutral Zone in the Middle East, confident that there was oil beneath the sand. In 1953 his crews finally found what they had been looking for, making Getty an extremely wealthy man. According to *Fortune* magazine in 1957, Getty was worth between $700 million and $1 billion, making him the wealthiest living American.[2]

Getty's first significant art purchase, made in 1930, was a seventeenth-century landscape by a Dutch artist. He had no intention of building an important collection; he simply purchased what suited his taste and budget.[3] Getty made the decision to keep his collection small, purchasing only items which he liked best, and having high artistic quality and merit. He further limited himself to only a selection of certain schools, including Greek and Roman marbles and bronzes, Renaissance paintings, sixteenth-

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[1] J. Paul Getty Museum, *The J. Paul Getty Museum Handbook of the Collections* (Los Angeles: The Museum, 1997), 309, http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0636/96029947-d.html; Materials specified: Publisher description http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0636/96029947-d.html.

[2] J. Paul Getty Museum, John Walsh and Deborah Ann Gribbon, *The J. Paul Getty Museum and its Collections: A Museum for the New Century* (Los Angeles: The Museum, 1997), 288.

[3] ibid.

century Persian carpets, Savonnerie carpets and eighteenth-century French furniture and tapestries. He made exceptions only for pieces which he found truly exceptional.[4] Everything he collected was for its interest to him personally and for its aesthetic quality.

Getty's first 'antiquity' purchase was on July 24, 1939 when he acquired a small terra-cotta group at a Sotheby's auction in London. The piece, accession number 78.AK.38, features a female reclining on a couch with Erotes, small winged attendants. The piece was later discovered to be a nineteenth-century reproduction of an ancient statuette, but it sparked Getty's interest in ancient art.[5] He traveled to Rome soon after, visiting the Vatican Museum which is said to have fueled his interest in antiquities. An associate once commented that a particular Roman bust caused Getty to stop in his tracks- apparently it bore a striking resemblance to a rival in the oil industry, W. G. Skelly.[6] Shortly after, Getty purchased two marble portraits: *Portrait Head of Agrippina the Younger*, accession number 70.AA.101, and *Portrait Bust of Sabine*, accession number 70.AA.100. Over the next thirty years, Getty continued adding to his collection.[7]

Getty made four generalizations about collecting art: firstly, anyone can be a collector; secondly, few activities are more gratifying than art collecting; thirdly, the true worth of a collection is not monetary; and lastly, that true collectors want to share their art with the public. In Getty's book *The Joys of Collecting*, he also wrote that dedicated

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[4] J. Getty, *The Joys of Collecting* (London: Country Life, 1966), 166.

[5] J. Paul Getty Museum, *The J. Paul Getty Museum Handbook of the Antiquities Collection* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2002), 237, http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0638/2001006121-d.html; Materials specified: Publisher description http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0638/2001006121-d.html; Materials specified: Contributor biographical information http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0725/2001006121-b.html.

[6] J. Paul Getty Museum, Walsh and Gribbon, *The J. Paul Getty Museum and its Collections: A Museum for the New Century*, 288

[7] J. Paul Getty Museum, *The J. Paul Getty Museum Handbook of the Antiquities Collection*, 237

art collectors must learn about the art they are collecting in order to recognize what they are looking for. This studying also led to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the culture from which the art was being collected. Learning about Greek and Roman art naturally led to learning about the Greek and Roman cultures, and the people producing the art. This not only broadened the individual's intellectual awareness, but understanding the ancient cultures would aid the individual in knowing and understanding his own culture and time.[8]

History of the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Department of Antiquities

In 1946 Getty purchased 64 acres of ranchland, complete with ranch house, in Malibu, California, christening it Getty Ranch. He and his family used it as a weekend home until Getty moved from California in 1951. Having previously given some great works to other museums, Getty was convinced by some colleagues, including his trusted assistant Norris Bramlettt, to open his own small museum. He would thus keep his grand collection together, rather than donating it in pieces to other institutions. Getty established a trust "for the diffusion of artistic and general knowledge", had the ranch house renovated to hold the new museum, and in 1954 the J. Paul Getty Museum welcomed its first visitors.[9]

Under the brief directorship of W. R. Valentiner (January 1954 to March 1955) and the curatorship of Paul Wescher (1954 to 1959) the museum outgrew the patio, five galleries, and several hallways in which it had begun. A large gallery was added in 1957 for statues, but still the collection was growing. The museum was run by a small full-

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[8] Getty, *The Joys of Collecting*, 166

[9] J. Paul Getty Museum, Walsh and Gribbon, *The J. Paul Getty Museum and its Collections: A Museum for the New Century*, 288

time staff, with all expenses approved ad hoc by Getty. Until 1968, the museum remained a small, peaceful setting which was visited by no more than a few thousand people a year. One year after celebrating his seventy-fifth birthday, however, Getty announced that he was building a bigger museum.[10]

Having previously worked within only the confines of the ranch house, Getty now decided to build a new structure solely for museum use. After rejecting many architectural plans, he decided the new building would be a re-creation of an ancient villa- the Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum, which was buried along with Pompeii in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Getty wanted to show the visitors to the museum what an attractive Roman building would have looked like, complete with gardens and fountains. The Villa dei Papiri was one of the grandest in Herculaneum, known for its extensive collection of Greek and Roman sculpture, and a center of learning- its private library of papyrus rolls was perhaps the only of its kind at the time. The Getty Museum in Malibu would not be a reconstruction, per se, but a building based architecturally on the ancient Villa and modified for museum use.[11]

The new building opened in January, 1974 at a cost slightly more than $18 million. Getty kept the title of director, and Stephen Garrett was deputy director. Getty put a $40 million endowment in place and approved a $2 million operating budget. He also continued to purchase more great works of art to fill the new space. After his death in 1976 Getty bequeathed much of his estate to the museum- providing it with a larger endowment than all major American museums combined. Stephen Garrett became deputy director, retiring in 1982. After this the museum was run by Stephen Rountree,

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[10] ibid.

[11] ibid.

deputy director, and Otto Wittmann, a trustee serving as acting chief curator and as chairman of the acquisitions committee. They decided to maintain the museum's established nature as being one of mainly European art.[12]

By this time, however, the collection had already outgrown the Getty Villa. The trustees made the decision to build a new museum elsewhere, maintaining the Villa to house to Greek and Roman collections. In 1983, 742 acres were purchased in the foothills of Santa Monica as the site for the new building. Finally, in 1997, the new Getty Museum was opened to the public. The Greek and Roman collection needed to be expanded to merit being a separate branch of the museum, however. Getty had collected marble portraits and images of gods and heroes, but the collection was weak in bronzes, vases, goldsmith's work, and terra-cotta pieces.[13] The first curator of the collection, Jiří Frel, who was hired by Getty in 1973, remarked that Getty seemed to purchase objects based on their aesthetic appeal and how they would fit into the existing collections.[14]

The Villa was closed in 1997 for renovations, to expand the facilities for the Antiquities collection and for related scholarly and scientific research.[15] The Villa reopened in 2006 and houses approximately 44,000 works of ancient Greek, Roman, and Etruscan art, of which about 1,200 are on display.[16]

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[12] ibid.

[13] ibid.

[14] J. Paul Getty Museum, *The J. Paul Getty Museum Handbook of the Antiquities Collection*, 237

[15] ibid.

[16] "The Getty," http://www.getty.edu/ (accessed 5/31/2008, 2008).

Important Acquisitions

Getty himself selected and purchased many of the most important components of the collection. Many of these he happened upon by chance, such as the famous *Lansdowne Herakles*, accession number 70.AA.109. The large sculpture was possibly a favorite of the Roman Emperor Hadrian, a first-century B.C. - first-century A.D. Roman replica. The piece was found in 1790, and purchased in 1792 by the Marquis of Lansdowne. It quickly gained fame as perhaps one of the greatest classical statues outside of Greece and Italy. The statue was passed down in the family, along with many other great sculptures and classical works.[17]

In 1951, the year after purchasing the Roman portraits of Agrippina and Sabine, Getty had lunch with the manager of Christie's Auction House. The man informed Getty, confidentially, that he had heard rumors of the availability of some of the pieces from the Lansdowne collection. Getty immediately began negotiating with the family through their art dealers. At last the family decided that not only would they sell the *Herakles*, for an astoundingly low price, but they let him purchase a Pentelic marble group of *Leda and the Swan*, accession number 70.AA.110, as well. Getty was not focused on how the statue would rank among American collections; he was proud to have the piece on view for all to see in his museum.[18] The piece is now one of the most famous single pieces in the collection. Getty's admiration of it was related to both the subject-Herakles was a virtuous demigod- and the previous owner- Hadrian was an intellectual, an art patron, and a builder of monuments. In his diaries, Getty wrote that he saw himself carrying on the

[17] Getty, *The Joys of Collecting*, 166

[18] ibid.

practices of great collectors of the past.[19] This piece was collected by him not only for its aesthetic value and its craftsmanship, but for the association with Herakles and Hadrian.

Another remarkable purchase made by Getty was from the estate of the infamous Lord Elgin, of England. Lord Elgin is best known for having removed many of the sculptural elements from the Acropolis in Athens, and transporting them to the British Museum. He maintained a private collection, as well, and while on a trip to Italy Getty was informed, again in confidence, that the descendants of Lord Elgin *might* be willing to part with three of the family's Elgin Marbles. Getty was able to successfully negotiate for the three pieces in question: the *Gravestone of Myttion*; an archaic *Kore*, or female figure; and the *Gravestone of Theogenis*. After lengthy negotiations with the family, and after obtaining export permits and other documentation, Getty was able to add the three Elgin Marbles to his collection.[20] He collected these pieces for their rarity, coming from the Parthenon of Athens, their association with Lord Elgin, and for his personal interest in the pieces, as well as for their aesthetic quality and their fine craftsmanship.

The *Gravestone of Myttion*, accession number 78.AA.57, features the figure of a young girl with short, curly hair. Some traces of the original paint remain on the piece. The *Kore*, accession number 70.AA.114, is just the torso of a draped woman, the rest of the statue having been lost. The statue may have been offered as a gift to the gods or may have been part of a pedimental sculpture set on a temple. The *Gravestone of Theogenis*, accession number 78.AA.58, depicts the young woman, Theogenis, with two other figures, most likely surviving family members. The two figures are of an older woman,

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[19] J. Paul Getty Museum, Walsh and Gribbon, *The J. Paul Getty Museum and its Collections : A Museum for the New Century*, 288

[20] Getty, *The Joys of Collecting*, 166

labeled Nikomache, who is shaking hands with Theogenis, and a young boy labeled Nikodemos, son of Polyllos, who stands between the two women.[21] Jean Charbonneaux, a former Keeper of Antiquities in the Louvre, Paris, theorized that the Elgin Marbles were Getty's favorite: every true lover of Greek art would prefer an original, such as the Elgin Marbles, to even a fine Roman copy, such as the *Herakles.*[22]

The last piece that Getty had a hand in acquiring was the monumental Greek bronze, *Statue of a Victorious Youth*. He died shortly before the piece was purchased in 1977.[23] The piece, accession number 77.AB.30, was found at the bottom of the Adriatic Sea, encrusted with barnacles, in 1964. Once cleaned it was obvious that the beautiful sculpture was one of the best Greek bronzes to ever appear. It was offered to Getty, but he initially thought the price was too high. After his death, the Museum bought the bronze for a lesser price. The purchase came thirteen years after the initial discovery, but there were still some who accused the Museum of being party to a smuggling ring to get the piece out of Italy. The suspicions were unfounded, but an unfavorable impression had already been made in the press. The piece is now one of the key pieces in the Antiquities collection.[24]

Jiří Frel, the first curator of Antiquities, added much to the department in the years after Getty's death. The museum slowly built up a fine collection of Romano-Egyptian mummy portraits, which complemented the existing collection of stone and bronze portraits. Some more specialized collections, including carved ambers, Greek and

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[21] *The Getty*

[22] Getty, *The Joys of Collecting*, 166

[23] J. Paul Getty Museum, *The J. Paul Getty Museum Handbook of the Antiquities Collection*, 237

[24] J. Paul Getty Museum, Walsh and Gribbon, *The J. Paul Getty Museum and its Collections : A Museum for the New Century*, 288

Latin stone inscriptions, engraved gems and cameos, and gold and silver curse tablets were also added.[25] In 1985 the Molly and Walter Bareiss Collection of Greek vases was purchased. The collection contained 479 complete and fragmentary examples, the finest private holding of Greek vases at the time.[26] Another important acquisition under Frel was of a painted sculptural group with two griffins attacking a fallen doe, accession number 85.AA.106. The marble group still has traces of the blues and reds originally used to paint it.[27] It was collected in part for this rarity.

In 1986 Marion True, a vase specialist, took over as Curator of Antiquities.[28] The museum was still weak in material from the Bronze Age, so the Museum purchased Paul and Marianne Steiner's group of large idols and related stone vessels when it became available in 1988. The collection included a beautiful Cycladic marble female figure, accession number 88.AA.80.[29] One of the most important discoveries of a Greek statue in recent history was also purchased in 1988. The over life-sized cult figure of a goddess, likely Aphrodite, accession number 88.AA.76, was probably made for a temple in the Greek colonies of Southern Italy. This monumental sculpture is the most complete example of its kind, reminiscent of the Parthenon pediment sculptures crafted by

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[25] J. Paul Getty Museum, *The J. Paul Getty Museum Handbook of the Antiquities Collection*, 237

[26] J. Paul Getty Museum, Walsh and Gribbon, *The J. Paul Getty Museum and its Collections: A Museum for the New Century*, 288

[27] J. Paul Getty Museum, *The J. Paul Getty Museum Handbook of the Collections*, 309

[28] J. Paul Getty Museum, *Masterpieces of the J. Paul Getty Museum. Antiquities*, 127

[29] J. Paul Getty Museum, *The J. Paul Getty Museum Handbook of the Antiquities Collection*, 237

Phidias.[30] The rarity of this preservation combined with its craftsmanship make this piece an important collectible.

One of the most beautiful Greek works in the collection is a small bronze statuette. The piece, less than six inches long, is of a dead warrior, accession number 86.AB.530. The fifth century piece, with its arched pose, personifies the Greek ideal of 'beauty in death'. One of the most troublesome acquisitions is of a *Kouros*, or male figure, accession number 85.AA.40. Its authenticity has been contested since it was obtained by the Museum- it is either one of the most important recent discoveries or a highly skilled forgery. The weight of evidence supports its authenticity, but we may perhaps never know.[31]

The most important acquisition of antiquities the museum has made, since the gift of Getty's own collection, is of more than three hundred pieces from the Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman collection.[32] As a combination of donation and purchase, in 1996 the Museum acquired numerous Greek and Roman statues, terra-cottas, bronzes, and more.[33] It includes the *Cycladic Head of an Idol*, accession number 96.AA.27, which is rare in that it is nearly life-size. It also has remnants of the original colored paint which adorned it; these rarities are part of the reason it was collected. Another important piece from the Fleischmans' collection is a bronze *Lebes*, accession number 96.AC.51. The cauldron shaped piece features a half-length figure of a young satyr, a companion of

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[30] J. Paul Getty Museum, Walsh and Gribbon, *The J. Paul Getty Museum and its Collections: A Museum for the New Century*, 288

[31] ibid.

[32] J. Paul Getty Museum, *The J. Paul Getty Museum Handbook of the Antiquities Collection*, 237

[33] ibid.

Dionysos the god of wine, and is in a remarkable state of preservation.[34] The piece was collected in part, then, for its rare state of preservation.

Also acquired by the Museum, in 1996, was a storage jar from the mid-sixth century B.C., the finest known of its type. The jar, accession number 96.AE.1, features the Greek heroes Odysseus and Diomedes infiltrating a Thracian camp, a story recounted in Homer's *Iliad*. This vase is the only depiction of the murder of Rhesos, the Thracian king, and the details are remarkably similar to the depiction painted by Homer.[35] The rarity of its subject, and the actual subject matter, plus the fine craftsmanship led this piece to be collected.

Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman

Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman's interest in antiquities began before they were married; each already had a fascination with visual arts and history. Lawrence's attraction to antiquity began when he was a soldier during WWII, as a soldier stationed in France. He was so mesmerized by the Roman ruins of the Besançon that a French doctor stopped to ask him what he found so absorbing. Impressed with the young man's answer, the doctor, who was well educated in the classics, developed a lasting friendship with Lawrence. His company fostered Lawrence's interest in ancient history. Lawrence was also entranced with the objects on display in the British Museum- particularly the

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[34] J. Paul Getty Museum, *The J. Paul Getty Museum Handbook of the Collections*, 309

[35] *The Getty*

everyday objects which had been so beautifully created. He visited also with his new bride, Barbara, who was equally entranced with ancient art.[36]

Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman were particularly interested in everyday objects from antiquity; as Barbara says, they felt strong and immediate connections with the people who had used the items in daily life. They collected things based upon their associations with the ancient culture, their aesthetic quality, and the personal interest they had in the piece. Their first purchase was a Roman bronze lamp in the shape of a thyrsos (a plant associated with Dionysos) in 1951. They loved it for its elegant shape and color as well as for its practical aspects. Barbara's personal passion for the theater affected their collection as well. Many of the objects in their collection relate to ancient theater and theatrical subjects.[37] These pieces are especially relevant for the renovated Getty Villa, as the new grounds include a recreation of an ancient theater with the intention of holding performances of Greek and Roman plays.[38]

The human element was a guiding principle for all of their antiquities purchases. Barbara and Lawrence collected objects based on their initial emotional response to the item, and its historic interest. They later decided if the object would fit into the context of their existing collection. Their collecting was always supported by scholarship, as

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[36] J. Paul Getty Museum and Cleveland Museum of Art, *A Passion for Antiquities: Ancient Art from the Collection of Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman* (Malibu, California: J. Paul Getty Museum in association with the Cleveland Museum of Art, 1994), 358, http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0636/94002552-d.html; Materials specified: Publisher description http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0636/94002552-d.html.

[37] ibid.

[38] J. Paul Getty Museum, Walsh and Gribbon, *The J. Paul Getty Museum and its Collections : A Museum for the New Century*, 288

they sought to know everything they could about their objects, the subjects and stories associated with them, and the culture and people who created them.[39]

The Getty Museum's antiquities collection is unique in that its greatest period of growth occurred before the museum existed, and much of the collection was established by one great individual; Getty's personal collecting from 1939 until his death in 1976 is the foundation for the department. After J. Paul Getty's death, the trustees have added some superior pieces to the collection, especially when they absorbed the Fleischman's personal collection of antiquities, but nothing has of yet compared to the body of work carefully selected by Getty himself.

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[39] J. Paul Getty Museum and Cleveland Museum of Art, *A Passion for Antiquities: Ancient Art from the Collections of Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman,* 358

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions

These three great museums each have comparable collections of Greek and Roman antiquities. They each have marble masterpieces: the Museum of Fine Arts has the *Boston Throne* and the *Bartlett Aphrodite*, the Metropolitan has the *Kouros* and the Medici *Aphrodite*, the Getty has the *Lansdowne Herakles* and the *Cycladic Head of an Idol*, among countless other great marble pieces in each of the museums. Each museum has a selection of ancient bronze works: the Metropolitan's *Sleeping Eros* and Archaic horse statuette, and the Getty's *Victorious Youth* and *Lebes* were mentioned here. The institutions each have a selection of Greek and Roman jewelry and other gold decorative objects, including the Museum of Fine Art's noted *Gold Earring of Winged Nike*.

The three museums have vast selections of ancient pottery, both whole examples and multitudes of pieces; the Museum of Fine Arts boasts a grand collection of Athenian red-figure vases, and the Getty owns, among others, the storage jar with the scene from the *Iliad*, mentioned above. And, of course, each museum has at least one piece of ancient art that is known worldwide for its beauty, craftsmanship, rarity, and relationship to the culture which created it. The Museum of Fine Arts has the *Minoan Snake Goddess*, the Metropolitan has its *Euphronius Krater*, and the Getty has the *Victorious Youth.*

Interestingly, each museum's prize piece was acquired under dubious circumstances. The goddess statuette was given to the museum by an unknown entity,

the krater has questionable paperwork regarding its purchase and provenance, and the bronze statue of a youth has a similarly murky history. The ethics of museum collecting have been developed relatively recently, and each institution has taken steps to ensure that their objects are legally purchased or otherwise acquired. When the Metropolitan and the Museum of Fine Arts were just beginning, it was much easier to accept items from donors or purchase artifacts at auctions. All three museums, however, have recognized the importance of behaving ethically, as they hold the public's trust.

The museums have each utilized some of the best art collectors, dealers, curators, and directors. The Metropolitan and the Museum of Fine Arts both employed some of the same people, such as Edward Robinson. The three museums have also all been the beneficiaries of generous donors of money and art. Their collections have gained from people like Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman, Shelby White and Leon Levy, J. P. Morgan, and Edward Perry Warren, and the countless other individuals who have given funds and objects. Some donors have given to more than one of the museums, such as General Cesnola and Edward Perry Warren. These great institutions are all similar in that they have served as public forums for the exhibition of Greek and Roman art, and they have all furthered the understanding of Greek and Roman history and culture through these exhibitions.

Given all of these similarities, however, the museums still have their own unique collections and histories, which have given them individual characters. The Museum of Fine Art was developed initially by wealthy, art-minded individuals, and immediately had a sizeable collection to work with, from Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Boston Athenaeum, and the City of Boston. It was well

supported by Bostonians, especially graduates of Harvard who wanted to make the city a more cultured place. The funds given to the museum by these wealthy individuals allowed the museum to hire educated men like Edward Robinson, and to procure art through connoisseurs such as Edward Perry Warren. The Museum of Fine Art has been developed by intelligent curators and passionate collectors, and thus has a scholastic character.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, though established at about the same time as the Museum of Fine Arts, had to rely on wealthy businessmen who did not necessarily have backgrounds in art collecting. These donors have given millions and millions of dollars to the museum, however, in order to make it a world class organization. The institution had to compete with the well established New York Historical Society, and with the personal collections held by many New Yorkers. The museum also has to rely on city funds for the building and the property, which puts pressure on it to maintain relevance for the people of New York. Under J. P. Morgan the board became more of a badge of honor for wealthy businessmen in society than a group of business-minded art connoisseurs, and the power these men had translated into the volumes of art purchased or otherwise obtained by the museum. The leaders wanted their museum to be the biggest and the best, just as their businesses were. Under the directorship of Thomas Hoving the museum realized its full potential and started an era of blockbuster exhibits-costly endeavors involving only the finest art pieces. These factors have given the museum an audacious character: boldness in its purchases and exhibits.

The Getty Museum evolved quite uniquely, shaped almost solely by the whims and desires of one very wealthy collector. J. Paul Getty had the means to purchase

almost any piece of art he desired, and he did. His collections, and thus his museum, were built based upon his personal tastes and interests. He could have easily donated his items to another museum, but he had the luxury of keeping his collection together and under his control. As a result his collection developed with clear strengths and weaknesses, in terms of having a variety of items from each time period and culture. When Getty died and left his museum its enormous purchasing fund, the director and curators were able to begin rounding out the collection, so to speak. The Getty is still very much a testament to J. Paul Getty's tastes, but he was a thoughtful collector.

The three museums have all collected similar examples of Greek and Roman antiquities, but their differences in development have affected the purchases made, the exhibits shown, and ultimately the experiences of the visitors. They have all developed fine Greek and Roman collections, but each has something unique to offer everyone from the casual museum visitor to the more discerning art critic.

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