

# The Department of Greek and Roman Art: Triumphs and Tribulations

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THE YEAR 1906 marked the beginning of a new era for the Department of Greek and Roman Art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Before then the collection consisted principally of the large assembly of Cypriot antiquities acquired by General L. P. di Cesnola in 1865–1876, while he was the American consul in Cyprus, the first installment of which was transferred in 1873 to the Metropolitan Museum—of which Cesnola became first the secretary and then the director (1879–1904). Though formed at a time when collecting rather than scientific excavation was the norm, this collection of Cypriot art—especially strong in sculpture and pottery—is still the largest and most important of its kind outside Cyprus.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the Museum possessed a few outstanding objects, such as the Etruscan chariot from Monteleone, acquired in 1903 (Figure 1);<sup>2</sup> the frescoes from a villa at Boscoreale, also acquired in 1903 (Figure 2);<sup>3</sup> the bronze statue perhaps representing the emperor Trebonianus Gallus, acquired in 1905 (Figure 3);<sup>4</sup> the Ward collection of Greek coins presented by J. Pierpont Morgan in 1905;<sup>5</sup> and the Charvet Collection of ancient glass given by Henry G. Marquand in 1881.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, an extensive collection of architectural and sculptural casts had been added in the period from 1883 to 1895 through the interest of several donors who realized their importance for the study of Greek and Roman art.

Late in 1905 Edward Robinson, previously director of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, was appointed assistant director of the Metropolitan Museum, under Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke. Mr. Robinson was an archae-

ologist of high standing and was therefore equipped to build up the Greek and Roman collection in New York. During the next decades, this modest collection was in fact transformed into one of the most representative and artistically most important in Europe or America.

It is instructive to recall the steps that resulted in such an achievement. One of the principal early factors

1. See L. P. di Cesnola, *A Descriptive Atlas of the Cesnola Collection of Cypriote Antiquities in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 3 vols. (New York, 1885–1903); J. L. Myres, *Handbook of the Cesnola Collection of Antiquities from Cyprus* (New York, 1914).

2. Acc. no. 03.23.1. A. Furtwängler, "Bronzewagen von Monteleone," in H. Brunn and F. Bruckmann, *Denkmäler griechischer und römischer Skulptur* (Munich, 1897) pls. 586, 587, reprinted in *Kleine Schriften*, II (Munich, 1913) pp. 314 ff.; A. Furtwängler, *Neue Denkmäler antiker Kunst*, III (Munich, 1905) p. 262, reprinted in *Kleine Schriften*, II (Munich, 1913) p. 501; E. Robinson, "The Bronze Chariot," *BMMA* 1 (1906) pp. 82 ff.; G. H. Chase, "Three Bronze Tripods belonging to James Loeb, Esq.," *American Journal of Archaeology* 12 (1908) pp. 287 ff., esp. pp. 312 ff.; Richter, *Bronzes*, no. 40; G. M. A. Richter, *Handbook of the Etruscan Collection* (New York, 1940) pp. 26 ff.

3. Acc. nos. 03.14.1–13. Richter, *Classical Handbook* (1930) pp. 218 ff.; B. F. Cook, "The Boscoreale Cubiculum: A New Installation," *BMMA* n.s. 22 (1963–1964) pp. 166–183, figs. 1–26.

4. Acc. no. 05.30. Richter, *Bronzes*, no. 350 (where its curious history is given, namely, that it is said to have been found early in the nineteenth century near the Lateran, later taken to Russia, and then sold to Rollin and Feuardent in Paris, where it was repaired by M. André).

5. Acc. nos. 05.44.1–936. G. F. Hill, *Greek Coins and their Parent Cities* (London, 1902).

6. W. Froehner, *La Verrerie antique, Description de la Collection Charvet* (Le Pecq, 1879).



**FIGURE 1**  
Bronze chariot from Monteleone, Italy. Etruscan. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 03.23.1



**FIGURE 2**  
Wall painting from Boscoreale, woman with a kithara. Roman. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 03.14.5

was the appointment of John Marshall as European purchasing agent—with a generous sum allocated by the trustees for acquisitions. Mr. Marshall, an Englishman of vast experience in the field of Greek and Roman art, had been the purchasing agent for the Boston Museum, and it was partly due to him that Boston had built up an outstanding collection. He was, moreover, a close friend of the famous collector Mr. Edward P. Warren<sup>7</sup> (brother of the president of the Boston Museum) and so was constantly in touch with important new material.

The plan for the building up of the collection of Greek and Roman art in New York was, in the words of Edward Robinson, “to develop it along systematic lines, strengthening it where it was weak, rounding it out as a whole, and maintaining a high standard of artistic excellence.”<sup>8</sup> Each year, therefore, during the next two decades, there arrived at the Museum a consignment of a variety of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman antiquities, purchased all over Europe. Sometimes the emphasis was on marbles and bronzes, at other times on terracottas, pottery, and jewelry; and so gradually, year by year, the collection was “systematically” enriched. Moreover, the time was favorable for the acquisition of such works of art, because the available supply was larger than it was to be at a later date.

7. J. D. Beazley, “Warren as Collector,” chap. 16 in O. Burdett and E. H. Goddard, *Edward Perry Warren* (London, 1941) pp. 331 ff.

8. E. Robinson, “New Greek and Roman Acquisitions,” *BMMA* 2 (1907) p. 5.

9. Acc. no. 11.185. E. Robinson, “An Archaic Greek Grave Monument,” *BMMA* 8 (1913) pp. 94 ff.; Richter, *Greek Sculptures*, no. 15; G. M. A. Richter, *The Archaic Gravestones of Attica* (London, 1961) p. 27, no. 37, figs. 96–109, 190, 204.

10. Acc. no. 25.78.56. G. M. A. Richter, “A Statue of the Diadoumenos,” *BMMA* 28 (1933) pp. 214 ff.; Richter, *Greek Sculptures*, no. 38; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) pp. 137 ff.

11. Acc. no. 09.221.3. John Marshall, “The Accessions of 1909: Sculptures in Marble,” *BMMA* 5 (1910) pp. 210, 212–213; Richter, *Greek Sculptures*, no. 72; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) p. 139.

12. Acc. no. 11.90. E. Robinson, “A Head of Epicurus,” *BMMA* 6 (1911) pp. 150 ff.; Richter, *Greek Sculptures*, no. 186; G. M. A. Richter, *The Portraits of the Greeks* (London, 1965) p. 197, no. 28, figs. 1200–1203.

13. Acc. no. 09.39. E. Robinson, “The Old Market Woman,” *BMMA* 4 (1909) pp. 201, 204 ff.; Richter, *Greek Sculptures*, no. 211; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) pp. 143 ff.

14. Acc. no. 07.286.87. E. Robinson, “The Diskos Thrower,” *BMMA* 3 (1908) pp. 31 ff.; Richter, *Bronzes*, no. 78; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) p. 66.

15. Acc. nos. 14.130.14, 15. G. M. A. Richter, “Geometric

The present writer well remembers when these precious consignments of European purchases arrived at the Museum and the excitement aroused by some of the masterpieces they contained—for instance, the archaic “Megakles” stele (Figure 4),<sup>9</sup> the head and other fragments of a Roman copy of the Diadoumenos by Polykleitos (Figure 5),<sup>10</sup> the Greek fourth-century lion (Figure 6),<sup>11</sup> the portrait of Epikouros (Figure 7),<sup>12</sup> the Hellenistic old market woman (Figure 8),<sup>13</sup> the bronze statuette of a discus thrower (Figure 9),<sup>14</sup> the colossal geometric vases (Figure 10),<sup>15</sup> the white-ground pyxis with the judgment of Paris (Figure 11),<sup>16</sup> the white-ground bobbin with a rare representation of Zephyros and Hyakinthos, and Nike and a boy victor (Figure 12),<sup>17</sup> and the two large red-figured Athenian kraters (Figure 13),<sup>18</sup> as well as a number of specially fine Roman portraits—ranging from the Republican to the Constantinian period<sup>19</sup>—and several Roman sarcophagi, including one with a representation of the musical contest between Sirens and Muses (Figure 14),<sup>20</sup> the most complete example with this subject extant, and another specially fine one, with the story of Endymion (Figure 15).<sup>21</sup> The coming of each of these newcomers was an unforgettable experience.

After their arrival, the objects had to be accessioned (also a newly introduced practice), repaired when nec-

Vases,” *BMMA* 10 (1915) pp. 70 ff.; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) p. 24.

16. Acc. no. 07.286.36. G. M. A. Richter, “White Athenian Pyxis,” *BMMA* 3 (1908) pp. 154 ff.; G. M. A. Richter and L. F. Hall, *Red-figured Athenian Vases in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New Haven, 1936) no. 73; Beazley, *ARV<sup>2</sup>*, p. 890, no. 173; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) pp. 84 ff.

17. Acc. no. 28.167. G. M. A. Richter, “A Greek Bobbin,” *BMMA* 23 (1928) pp. 303 ff.; Richter and Hall, *Red-figured Athenian Vases*, no. 74; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) p. 85; Beazley, *ARV<sup>2</sup>*, p. 890, no. 175.

18. Acc. nos. 07.286.84, 86. Richter and Hall, *Red-figured Athenian Vases*, nos. 98, 99; Beazley, *ARV<sup>2</sup>*, p. 163, no. 1, p. 616, no. 3; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) p. 86.

19. Richter, *Classical Handbook* (1930) pp. 288–306; G. M. A. Richter, *Roman Portraits* (New York, 1948).

20. Acc. no. 10.104. Antonio Francesco Gori, *Inscriptiones Antiquae Graecae et Romanae in Etruriae urbibus extantes*, III (Florence, 1744) pl. xxxii, p. cxx; E. Robinson, “Two Ancient Marbles,” *BMMA* 5 (1910) pp. 278 ff.; C. C. Vermeule, “The Dal Pozzo-Albani Drawings of Classical Art in the British Museum,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 50 (1960) p. 9, fol. 2, no. 2, figs. 2–3.

21. Acc. no. 24.97.13. G. M. A. Richter, “A Roman Sarcophagus,” *BMMA* 20 (1925) pp. 77 ff.; Richter, *Classical Handbook* (1930) p. 312.

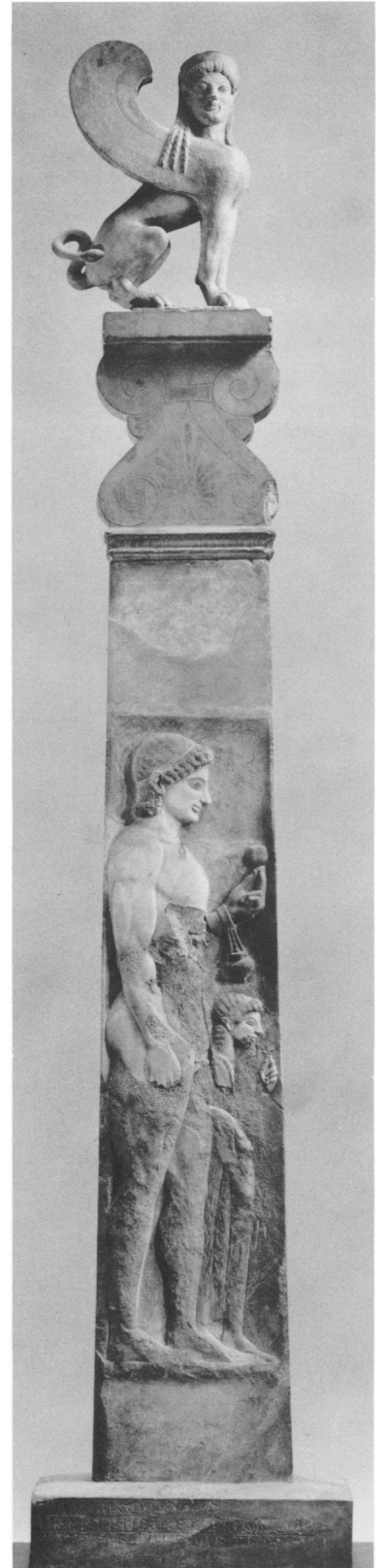
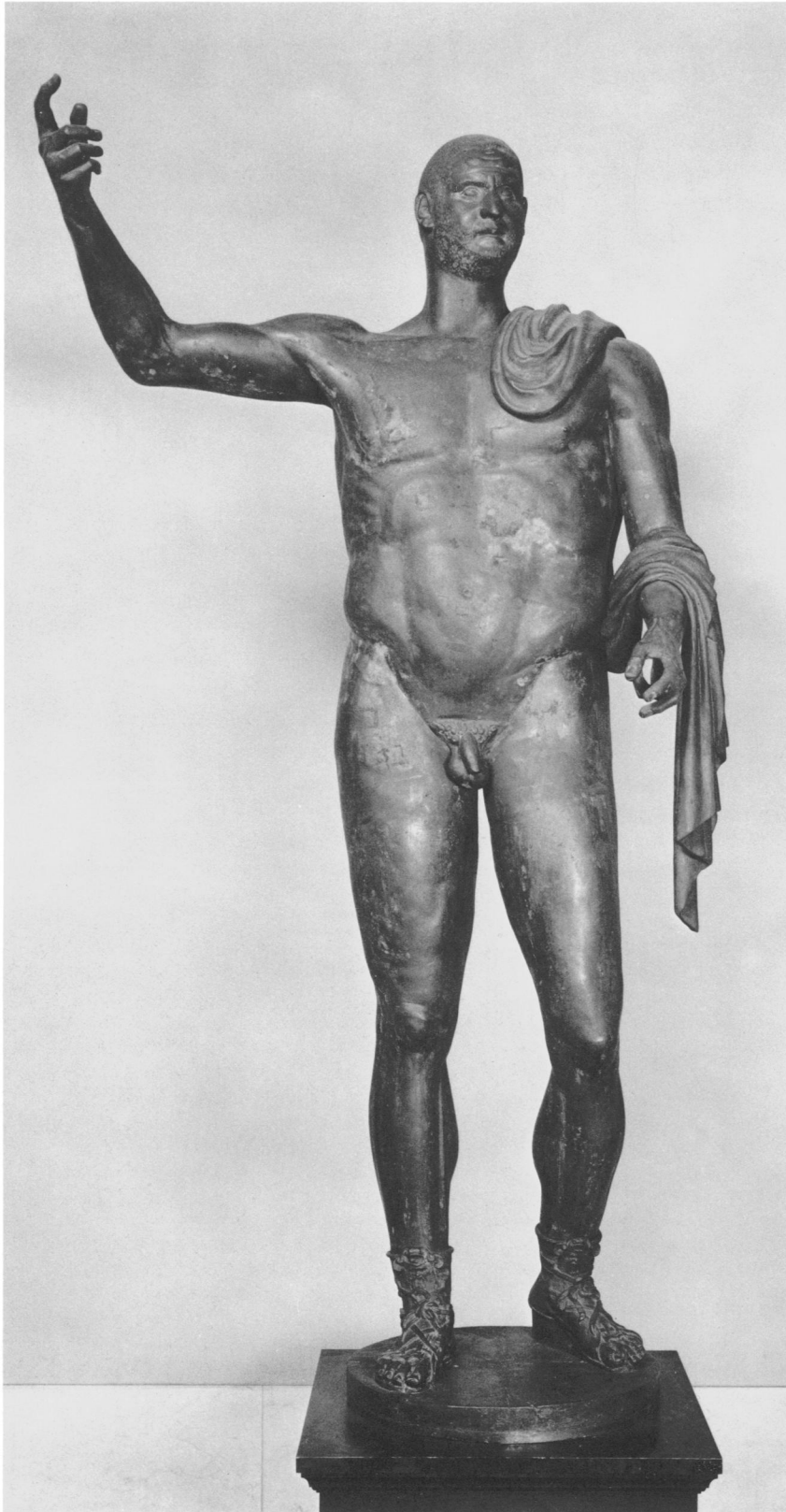




FIGURE 3

Bronze statue, perhaps of the emperor Trebonianus Gallus. Roman. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 05.30

FIGURE 4

Marble grave stele. Greek. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Frederick C. Hewitt Fund, 11.185

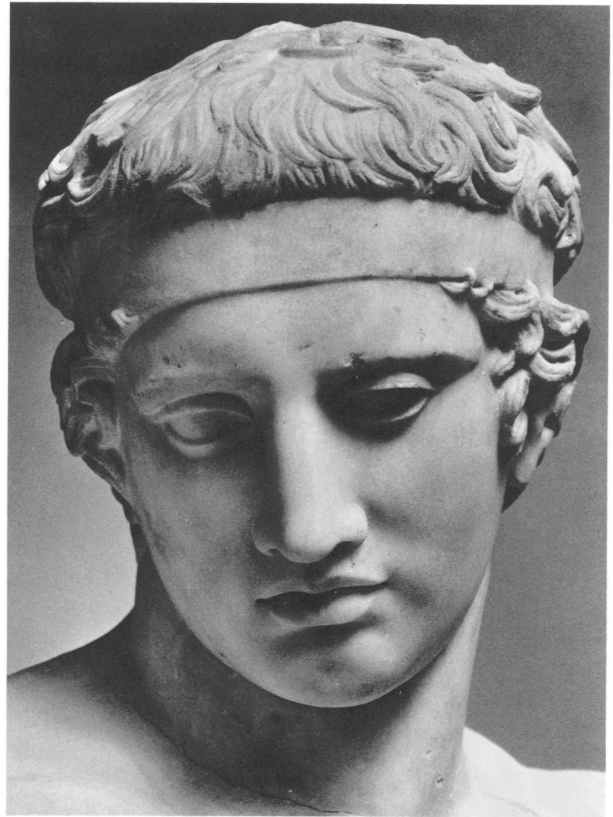
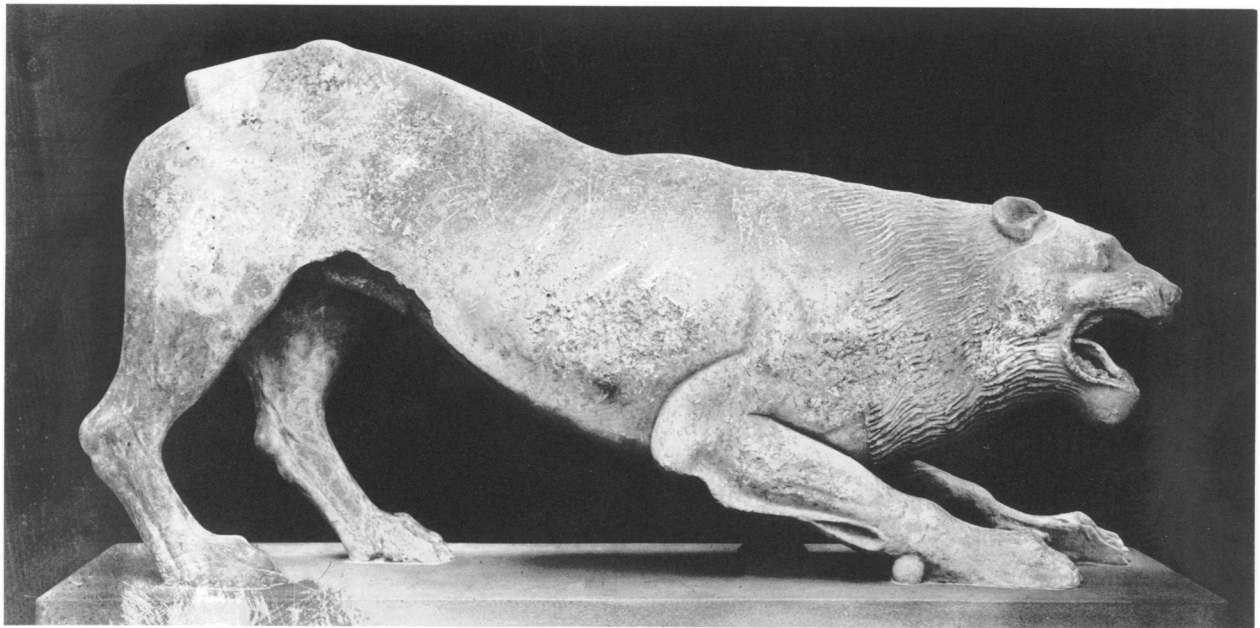


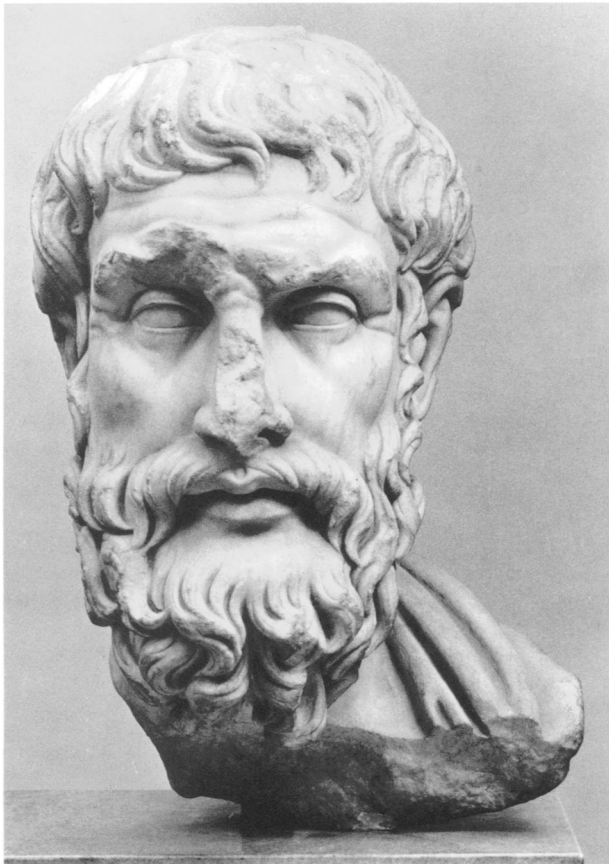
FIGURE 5

Head of a marble statue of the Diadoumenos. Roman copy after a Greek original by Polykleitos. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 25.78.56

FIGURE 6

Marble statue of a lion. Greek. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund and Funds from Various Donors, 09.221.3





**FIGURE 7**  
Marble portrait of Epikouros. Roman copy after  
a Greek original. The Metropolitan Museum of  
Art, Rogers Fund, 11.90



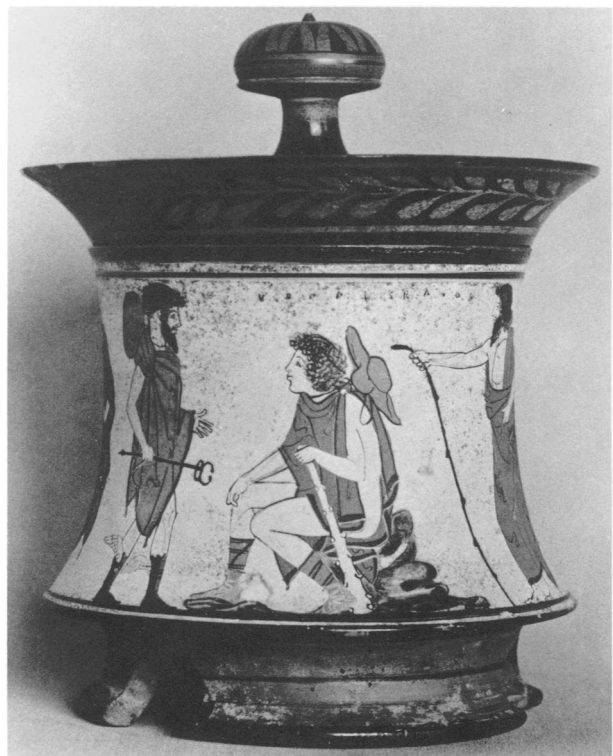
**FIGURE 8**  
Marble statue of an old market woman. Greek.  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund,  
09.39



**FIGURE 9**  
Bronze statue of a discus thrower. Greek. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 07.286.87



**FIGURE 10**  
Terracotta vase. Greek, Geometric period. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 14.130.14



**FIGURE 11**  
Terracotta pyxis (box), judgment of Paris. Attic, attributed to the Penthesileia Painter. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 07.286.36

FIGURE 12

Terracotta bobbin, Nike crowning a youth. Attic, attributed to the Penthesileia Painter. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 28.167



essary, photographed, mounted, and installed; in addition, each object had not only to be labeled, but published as rapidly as possible in the *Museum Bulletin* (started in 1905) and in the handbooks of the collection, in order to make information about them available to the interested public and to archaeologists; and ultimately, they had to be published at greater length in catalogues and various periodicals. So each new acquisition kept everybody busy.

The installation of the various objects went through several phases. First the newcomers were shown in the "Room of Recent Accessions," then in the rapidly growing Museum galleries. The arrangement in these galleries was at first according to materials; later the plan to exhibit them chronologically was initiated, in order to show the development of Greek art, an arrangement now current in many museums. These Greek galleries occupied the whole of wing J (the galleries to either side of the hall leading from the Great Hall to the area currently occupied by the restaurant). The Roman collection was then shown in the newly built wing K, south of wing J, with its "Roman Court" built in

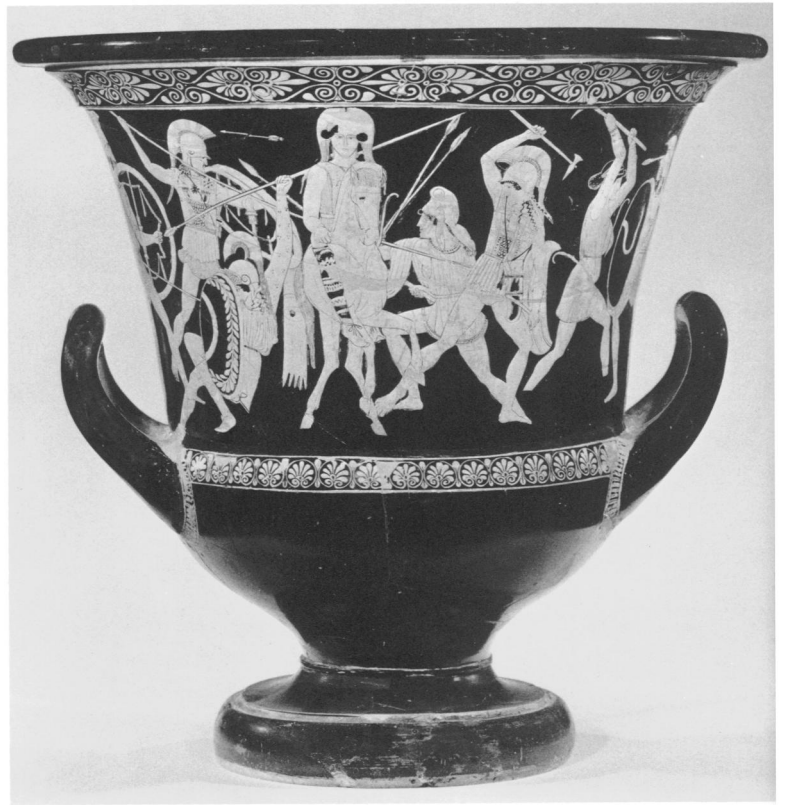


FIGURE 13

Red-figured calyx-krater (bowl for mixing wine and water), amazonomachy. Attic. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 07.286.86

FIGURE 14

Marble sarcophagus showing a musical contest between Sirens and Muses. Roman. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 10.104

FIGURE 15

Marble sarcophagus showing the myth of Endymion. Roman. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 24.97.13

imitation of a Roman peristyle surrounding a garden with a fountain (Figure 16). The setting, with its colored architecture, trees and growing plants, and splashing water, was meant to convey the general atmosphere in which antiquities were seen in Roman times, when much of the art was made for the adornment of private





**FIGURE 16**  
The “Roman Court”  
in the south wing of the  
Museum as it was in  
1926



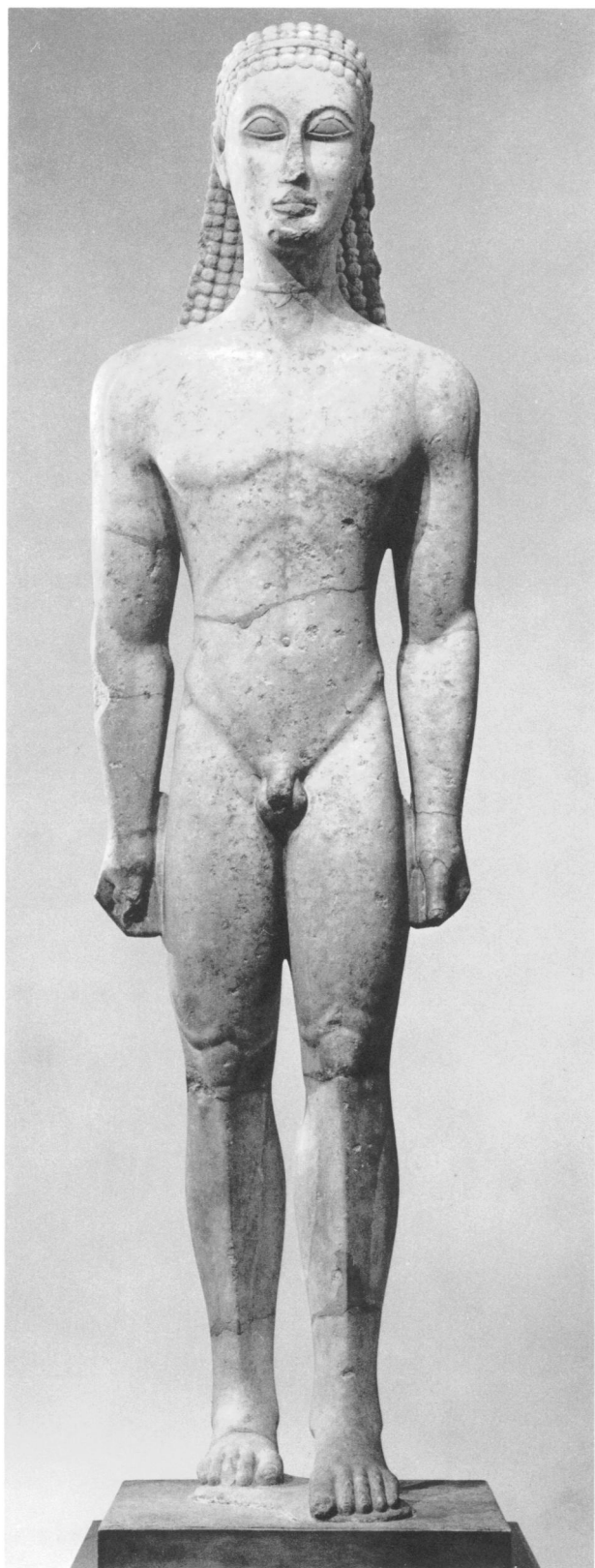


FIGURE 17

Marble statue of a kouros (youth). Greek. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 32.11.1

houses. In the large galleries to the east and south of this Roman court were exhibited the Cypriot and Etruscan collections.

After the death of Mr. Marshall in 1928 and of Mr. Robinson in 1931, the responsibility for the development of the department fell first to myself (up to 1948), then to my successors Christine Alexander (July 1948 to June 1959) and Dietrich von Bothmer (July 1959 to the present time). Instead of a European purchasing agent, the curator became responsible for new acquisitions, which were mostly acquired singly as opportunity arose.

A few of the most important of these acquisitions may here be specifically mentioned: the archaic statue of a kouros (Figure 17);<sup>22</sup> the sphinx crowning the "Megakles" stele (Figure 18);<sup>23</sup> the lion attacking a bull (Figure 19);<sup>24</sup> the statue of an Amazon from the Lansdowne Collection (Figure 20);<sup>25</sup> the portrait of Caracalla (Figure 21);<sup>26</sup> the gold plate of a sword sheath (Figure 22);<sup>27</sup> the set of gold jewelry including earrings with Ganymede and the eagle (Figure 23);<sup>28</sup> the terracotta stand signed by Kleitias and Ergotimos (Figure 24),<sup>29</sup> the

22. Acc. no. 32.11.1. G. M. A. Richter, "An Archaic Greek Statue," *BMMA* 27 (1932) pp. 218 ff.; Richter, *Greek Sculptures*, no. 1; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) pp. 47 ff.

23. Richter, *Archaic Gravestones*, no. 37, pp. 27 ff. and pp. 159 ff. (on the inscription, by M. Guarducci).

24. Acc. no. 42.11.35. G. M. A. Richter, "An Archaic Greek Animal Group," *BMMA* n.s. 4 (1945-1946) pp. 93 ff.; Richter, *Greek Sculptures*, no. 7; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) pp. 135 ff.

25. Acc. no. 32.11.4. G. M. A. Richter, "The Lansdowne Amazon," *BMMA* 28 (1933) pp. 2 ff.; G. M. A. Richter, "Changes in the Restoration of the Lansdowne Amazon," *BMMA* 30 (1935) pp. 66 ff.; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) pp. 91 ff.

26. Acc. no. 40.11.1. G. M. A. Richter, "A Portrait of Caracalla," *BMMA* 35 (1940) pp. 139 ff.; Richter, *Roman Portraits*, no. 107.

27. Acc. no. 30.11.12. G. M. A. Richter, "A Greek Sword Sheath from South Russia," *Metropolitan Museum Studies* 4 (1932-1933) pp. 109 ff.; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) p. 97.

28. Acc. nos. 37.11.8-17. G. M. A. Richter, "The Ganymede Jewelry," *BMMA* 32 (1937) pp. 290-295, figs. 1-7; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) pp. 156 ff.

29. Acc. no. 31.11.4. G. M. A. Richter, "A Stand by Kleitias and an Athenian Jug," *BMMA* 26 (1931) pp. 289 ff.; G. M. A. Richter and M. J. Milne, *Shapes and Names of Athenian Vases* (New York, 1935) p. 31, fig. 189; Beazley, *ABV*, p. 78, no. 12.



FIGURE 18

Marble sphinx and acroterion, the top member of the grave stele shown in Figure 4

FIGURE 19

Marble group showing a lion attacking a bull. Greek. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 42.11.35



same painter and potter who signed the famous François vase in Florence; the large black-figured krater by Lydos (Figure 25);<sup>30</sup> the engraved gem with an archer testing his arrow, from the Southesk Collection (Figure 26);<sup>31</sup> the bronze statuette of Athena from the Elgin Collection (Figure 27);<sup>32</sup> a vase with a representation of an artist painting a statue, important for our understanding of the polychromy of Greek sculpture (Figure 28);<sup>33</sup> a lekythos with a wedding procession by the

30. Acc. no. 31.11.11. G. M. A. Richter, "A Black-figured Vase Attributed to Lydos," *BMMA* 27 (1932) pp. 74 ff.; J. D. Beazley, "Groups of Mid-Sixth-Century Black-figure," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 32 (1931-1932) p. 18 and p. 108, no. 1; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) p. 58 ff.

31. Acc. no. 31.11.5. G. M. A. Richter, "A Greek Gem from the Southesk Collection," *BMMA* 26 (1931) pp. 267 ff.; Richter, *Gems*, no. 42; J. Boardman, *Archaic Greek Gems* (London, 1968) p. 93, no. 248, pl. xvi.

32. Acc. no. 50.11.1. C. Alexander, "A Marble Lekythos and the Elgin Athena," *BMMA* n.s. 9 (1950-1951) p. 59.

33. Acc. no. 50.11.4. D. von Bothmer, "Enkaustes Agalmaton," *BMMA* n.s. 9 (1950-1951) pp. 156 ff.; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) pp. 116 ff.

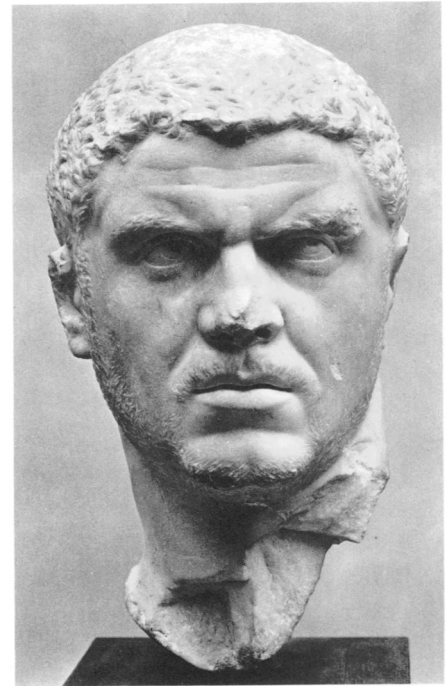


FIGURE 20

Marble statue of an Amazon. Roman copy after a Greek original. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 32.11.4

FIGURE 21

Marble portrait of the emperor Caracalla. Roman. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Samuel D. Lee Fund, 40.11.1



Amasis Painter, acquired in 1956 (Figure 29),<sup>34</sup> a companion piece to a lekythos acquired in 1931 showing women working wool: weighing it, carding it, spinning, weaving, and folding the finished piece (Figure 30).<sup>35</sup> The collection of Greek vases has in recent years been further enriched, for instance, by the acquisition in

34. Acc. no. 56.11.1. *BMMA* n.s. 15 (1956–1957) p. 54, ill. D. von Bothmer, "New Vases by the Amasis Painter," *Antike Kunst* 3 (1960) pp. 73 ff.

35. Acc. no. 31.11.10. Richter, "A Stand by Kleitias and an Athenian Jug," *BMMA* 26 (1931) pp. 291 ff.; Richter and Milne, *Shapes and Names*, fig. 93, p. 15; M. Bieber, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der griechischen Tracht*, 2nd ed. (Berlin, 1967) pl. 1; Beazley, *ABV*, p. 154, no. 37.



FIGURE 22

Gold covering from a sword sheath. Greek. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 30.11.12

1956 of sixty-five examples from the collection of William Randolph Hearst, including the famous amphora with a youth playing a kithara by the Berlin Painter (Figure 31),<sup>36</sup> and by the purchase of a superb amphora signed by Andokides, one of the initiators of the red-figured technique (Figure 32).<sup>37</sup>

36. Acc. no. 56.171.38. D. von Bothmer, "Greek Vases from the Hearst Collection," *BMMA* n.s. 15 (1956–1957) pp. 165 ff.; Beazley, *ARV*<sup>2</sup>, p. 197, no. 3.

37. Acc. no. 63.11.6. D. von Bothmer, "Andokides the Potter and the Andokides Painter," *BMMA* n.s. 24 (1965–1966) pp. 201 ff.

I recall the exciting circumstances connected with some of these purchases, particularly that of the archaic kouros (Figure 17)<sup>22</sup>—so well preserved that it seemed almost too good to be true, and accordingly suspected of not being authentic. Among the skeptics, the most formidable was the Englishman Humfry Payne, since he was not only an outstanding archaeologist but especially well informed in the field of archaic Greek sculpture. When Mr. Payne came to New York, however, shortly after the kouros was purchased, and had the opportunity of looking closely at the statue (by then

FIGURE 23

Pair of gold earrings, Ganymede and the eagle of Zeus. Greek. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 37.11.9, 10

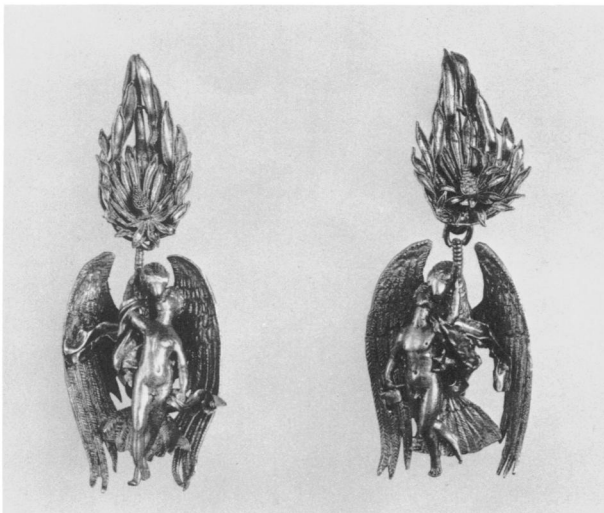


FIGURE 24

Terracotta stand signed by Kleitias and Ergotimos. Attic. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 31.11.4





**FIGURE 25**  
Terracotta column-krater (bowl for mixing wine and water). Attic, attributed to Lydos. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 31.11.11



**FIGURE 26**  
Impression of an engraved gem showing an archer testing his arrow. Greek. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 31.11.5

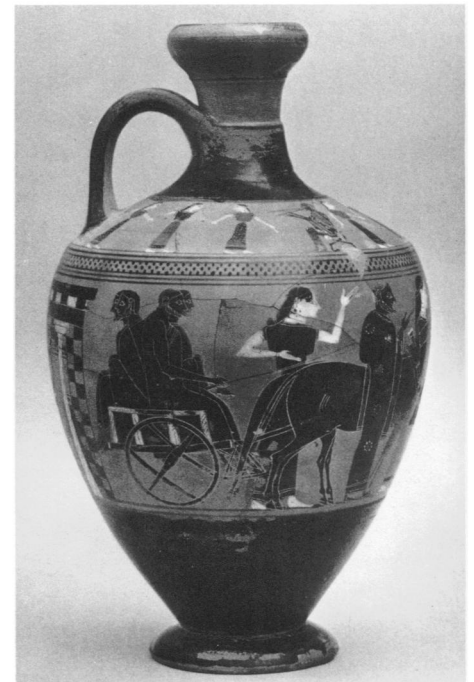






FIGURE 27

Bronze statuette of Athena flying her owl. Greek. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 50.11.1

FIGURE 28

Terracotta column-krater (bowl for mixing wine and water), a man painting a statue. Apulian. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 50.11.4

FIGURE 29

Terracotta lekythos (oil jug), wedding procession. Attic, attributed to the Amasis Painter. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, purchase, Walter C. Baker Gift, 56.11.1

FIGURE 30

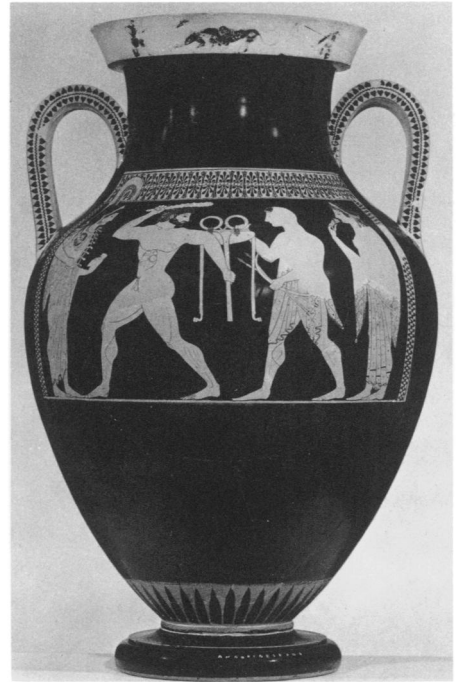
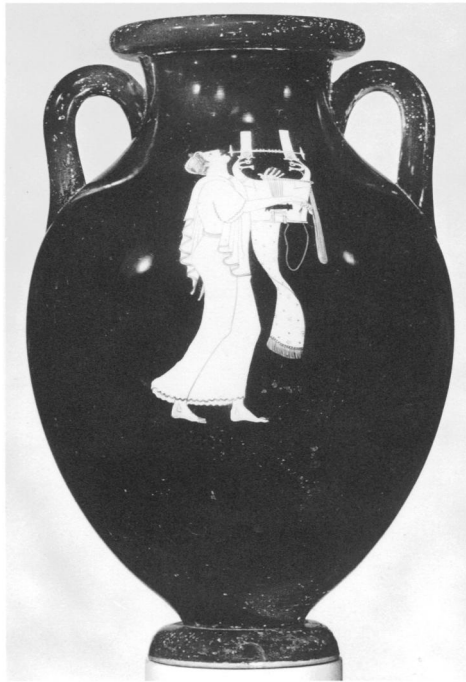
Terracotta lekythos (oil jug), women working wool. Attic, attributed to the Amasis Painter. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 31.11.10

FIGURE 31

Terracotta amphora, youth singing and playing a kithara. Attic, attributed to the Berlin Painter. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 56.171.38

FIGURE 32

Terracotta amphora signed by Andokides, struggle between Herakles and Apollo for the Delphic tripod. Attic. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 63.11.6



exhibited in the sculpture hall of the Greek and Roman Department in a good light), he turned to me and said: "Of course, when one *sees* the statue, all doubts vanish." The arguments that had been advanced against the authenticity of this kouros by several archaeologists were instructive: namely, that it differed in certain particulars from the known Greek archaic works—e.g., that the head was too large for the body and the neck too long, that the forearms were turned forward in an unnatural manner, and that the scheme of grooves and ridges indicating the anatomical construction of the legs was peculiar and had no parallel in extant archaic sculpture. On examination it was found that these strictures, though they applied to *later* archaic sculptures, had parallels in, and were indeed typical of, the few *early* archaic examples that have survived. The result of this experience, as far as I was concerned, was the writing of my book on kouroi.<sup>38</sup> A nice little bit of confirmation of the authenticity of the statue came presently by way of the discovery of several fragments belonging to the legs of the Sounion group of kouroi in Athens, which showed the same anatomical markings as those on the New York kouros. As these fragments were not known when the New York kouros was purchased, they could not have been utilized by a forger!

In 1930 a gold plate from a sword sheath of Scythian form, but with a Greek representation of a battle between Greeks and barbarians (Figure 22),<sup>27</sup> was offered to the Museum from the Bachstitz collection. It belonged to a class of Greek antiquities that have been exclusively found in southern Russia and were evidently made by Greek artists for Scythian chieftains. All these pieces were in the Hermitage in Leningrad. To examine material comparable to the gold plate offered for sale to the Museum therefore necessitated a trip to Russia, which was a memorable experience and naturally included a study of the rich collection contained in the Hermitage, in large part begun by Empress Catherine the Great of Russia.

Another memorable experience was the acquisition of the large black-figured column-krater with a lively scene of the return of Hephaistos to Olympus escorted by Dionysos and a gay band of satyrs and maenads (Figure 25).<sup>30</sup> Not only was the vase in exceptionally

38. G. M. A. Richter, *Kouroi* (New York, 1942); 2nd ed. (London, 1960); 3rd ed. (London, 1970).



FIGURE 33

A plaster cast of the Metropolitan Museum's marble group of a lion attacking a bull shown together with a plaster cast of the joining half in the National Museum, Athens (compare Figure 19)

FIGURE 34

Shaft of the marble grave stele shown in Figure 4 with the addition of a plaster cast of fragments in the National Museum, Athens

good condition, but it was possible to attribute the painting to the outstanding artist Lydos, an attribution afterward confirmed by J. D. Beazley.<sup>39</sup> The attribution of Athenian vase-paintings to their artists, of which the recent scientific study is largely due to Beazley and his followers, has raised the interest of this branch of Greek art to the level of that of Renaissance paintings—though of course we have no Vasari to tell us about their lives.

A responsible decision was the purchase of the engraved gem with the archer from the Southesk collection (Figure 26).<sup>31</sup> This collection was for sale in London during the summer of 1931, where I was able to examine it—and to select this one piece and pay for it with the "Curator's Fund." It seemed to be *the* outstanding engraved gem in that collection, and indeed, one of the finest of its period in existence. And since our collection had become rich and important, it seemed best to enrich

39. Beazley, "Mid-Sixth-Century Black-figure," *BSA* 32 (1931–1932) p. 18.



it with a masterpiece rather than with several less significant examples.

The acquisition of the famous statue of the Amazon from the Lansdowne collection (Figure 20),<sup>25</sup> which was sold at auction in London in 1930, presented difficulties; for the Museum had just spent a goodly sum for the purchase of the archaic kouros, and now other departments had claims. And yet the addition of the Amazon to our collection seemed important since it is one of the two best surviving Roman copies of a famous Greek original by an outstanding sculptor of the fifth century B.C. This difficulty was resolved when John D. Rockefeller acquired the statue and subsequently gave it to the Museum. As a result of this generous gift, the public has been enabled to visualize one of the most rhythmical compositions in Greek sculpture.

The marble group of a lion attacking a bull (Figure 19)<sup>24</sup> was offered for sale to the Museum in New York in 1942, and since it was a fine example of Greek animal sculpture datable to the late archaic period, it seemed an eminently desirable acquisition. Its interest was further increased by the possibility—first pointed out to me by Dietrich von Bothmer—that it was once joined to a similar group in Athens, as illustrated only in an old Greek archaeological journal.<sup>40</sup> This suggestion was happily confirmed on my next visit to Athens when—with the help of Christos and Semni Karouzou and Nicholas Yalouris—the corresponding group was found in an outlying storeroom in the National Museum, and an examination showed that the two fractures fitted. (I had brought with me a cast of the fracture in the New York piece.) Now this important pedimental composition, comparable to some of those found on the Athenian Acropolis, is exhibited in the archaic gallery of the National Museum in Athens, augmented by a cast of the New York group, and a photograph of the whole group is shown on the label in New York (Figure 33).

An interesting experience was connected with some fragments (ten in all) acquired in 1914, which evidently belonged to a Roman copy of the well-known Greek relief from Eleusis representing Demeter, Persephone, and perhaps Triptolemos.<sup>41</sup> As there are few instances

40. *Ephemeris Archaeologica* (1862) pl. 1.

41. Acc. no. 14.130.9. G. M. A. Richter, "A Roman Copy of the Eleusinian Relief," *BMAA* 30 (1935) pp. 216 ff.; Richter, *Greek Sculptures*, no. 34; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) pp. 136 ff.

of the survival of a Greek original and its Roman copy, it seemed desirable to reconstruct the fragments for comparison with a cast of the original. This work took considerable time but was finally completed in 1935. The result was important. The accuracy of the copy was indicated by the fact that the marble and plaster parts exactly fitted, not only in size and depth of relief, but in practically every detail, furrow for furrow, and ridge for ridge, conclusively showing that the copy could only have been made by the mechanical process of the pointing machine. Equally enlightening, however, was the contrast in the execution of the two versions—the delicacy and subtlety of the modeling in the Greek original and the comparative hardness in the Roman copy.

I also recall a happening that stands out in my memory as a pleasant surprise. As I said (see p. 75), Mr. Marshall had acquired for the Museum in 1911 the “Megakles” stele—a tall marble archaic gravestone decorated with a relief of a youth and a girl (part of the latter is in Berlin), together with its inscribed base and akroterion (see Figure 4). On the upper face of the akroterion there were still visible three entire paws and part of a fourth, evidently of a finial in the form of a lion or sphinx. Almost twenty years later a photograph of a sphinx was shown me by a New York art dealer, who said it was for sale in England. I was interested and asked to have the sphinx sent us for inspection. In the meantime, in studying the photograph, I noticed that the style of the face and hair resembled that of the youth and girl in our stele, and also that three paws and part of a fourth were missing. Could it be that this sphinx was the crowning feature of our monument? I had casts made of the paws on the akroterion so that on arrival of the sphinx we could immediately see whether the fractures fitted. When the great moment came, the fit was found to be perfect (see Figure 18). There could be no doubt that the sphinx belonged to our stele. As reconstructed, the monument stands over thirteen feet high. Quite recently, several pieces belonging to the youth’s body were found in the study collection of the National Museum of Athens; they were identified by Semni Karouzou in 1966 and G. Despinis in 1967. All in all, the “Megakles” stele has become the most remarkable example of its kind that has survived to our day (see Figure 34).

Now and then we were enabled to purchase a whole

collection, formed by the owner during many years. Such an opportunity was presented in 1941 by the offer of the collection of Albert Gallatin,<sup>42</sup> consisting of over 250 Greek vases, ranging in date from the seventh to the third century B.C., the fruit of thirty years of collecting by an experienced, discriminating connoisseur. Another exceptional opportunity came in 1942 when we were able to purchase a selection of thirty-eight engraved gems from the collection of Sir Arthur Evans—each a little masterpiece.<sup>43</sup>

The majority of these acquisitions made throughout the years came from art dealers in New York, Paris, London, and Switzerland. Those purchased in Italy were exported with a permit from the Italian government on the payment of a reasonable tax—an excellent arrangement, also scrupulously observed by John Marshall. (I make a special point of mentioning this to avoid misconceptions.)

Naturally, all these purchases would not have been possible without the generosity and public spirit of American donors, principally those of the Rogers, Fletcher, and other large funds, parts of which were allocated by the trustees to the Greek and Roman Department.

From time to time, gifts and bequests greatly contributed to the wealth and importance of our collection. Outstanding among these was the bequest of Richard B. Seager in 1926 of objects from Crete, datable to the

42. G. M. A. Richter, “The Gallatin Collection of Greek Vases,” *BMAA* 37 (1942) pp. 51 ff.

43. G. M. A. Richter, *Ancient Gems from the Evans and Beatty Collections* (New York, 1942); Richter, *Gems*.

FIGURE 35

Bronze dagger blade showing a man attacking a boar. Minoan. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, bequest of Richard B. Seager, 26.31.499



Early, Middle, and Late Minoan periods.<sup>44</sup> A large part had already been on loan to the Museum and had enabled us to augment our display of Minoan and Mycenaean reproductions. Especially important among these Cretan originals was a collection of 339 seal-stones, many engraved with inscriptions, important for our knowledge of the development of the Cretan script; likewise welcome were a number of fine, hand-carved stone bowls (about 2500–2000 B.C.) comparable to Egyptian products, as well as a dagger blade with an incised representation of a man attacking a boar (Figure 35),<sup>45</sup> a precursor of many later similar scenes. As one of the first great excavators and experts in the Cretan field, Mr. Seager naturally had rare opportunities of acquiring genuine products of that early period.

Another important bequest came to the Museum in 1941 from W. G. Beatty, who donated his entire collection of over 500 engraved gems,<sup>46</sup> leaving the Museum free to decide the disposition of it. Included among the gems were a number of high quality and many of interest for their subjects. Thereby our collection—started, so to speak, with the gems from Cyprus in the Cesnola Collection<sup>1</sup> and the gift in 1881 by John Taylor Johnston of the King Collection (formed by the Reverend C. W. King of Trinity College, Cambridge)<sup>46</sup>—now moved into the first rank, equal in richness and importance to those in London, Berlin, and Paris.

Our collection of ancient glass—again initiated by the contingent in the Cesnola Collection, as well as by the gift of the Charvet Collection in 1881<sup>6</sup>—was further enriched by the important specimens included in the Gréau Collection of glass, presented to the Museum by J. Pierpont Morgan in 1917.<sup>47</sup>

A magnificent gift came to the Museum in 1926, in the form of antiquities from Sardis in Lydia, discovered by Howard Crosby Butler and his associates.<sup>48</sup> They were presented by the Turkish government to the American Society for the Excavation of Sardis in recognition of Mr. Butler's work and then by that society to the Metropolitan Museum. Included were important examples of pottery in typical Lydian technique, four coins of the time of King Croesus (560–546 B.C.), and a marble statue of a seated lion of about 500 B.C. The most significant piece was an Ionic capital, with part of the column, from the temple of Artemis, dating from the middle of the fourth century B.C. (Figure 36).

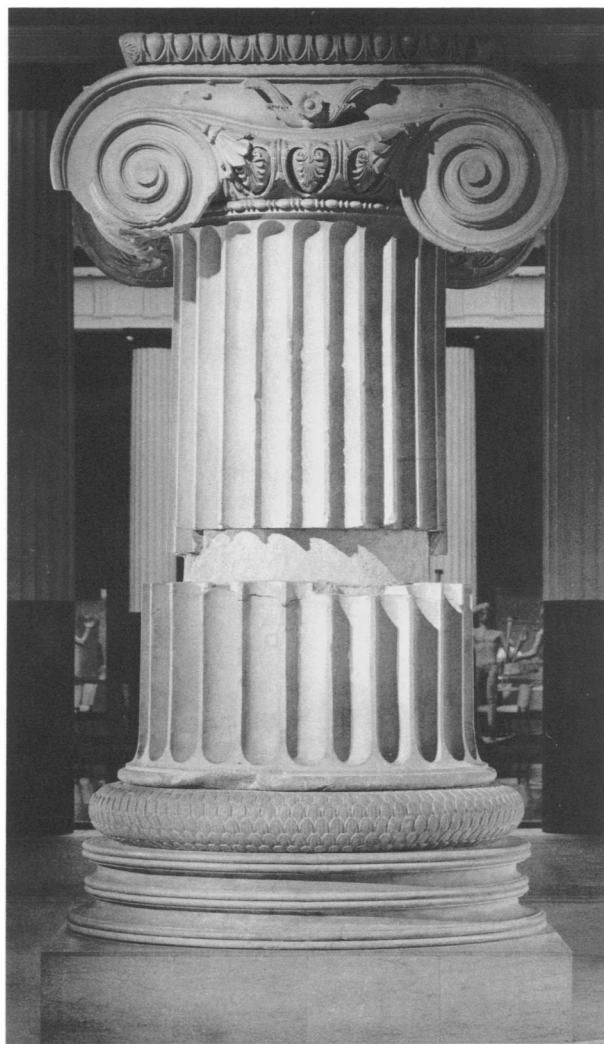


FIGURE 36

Capital and part of a column from the temple of Artemis at Sardis. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of the American Society for the Excavation of Sardis, 26.59.1

44. H. B. Wehle, "The Seager Bequest," *BMMA* 21 (1926) pp. 72 ff.; V. E. G. Kenna, "Richard Berry Seager, American Archaeologist, 1882–1925," *Archaeology* 23 (October, 1970).

45. Acc. no. 26.31.499. Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) p. 17; Arthur Evans, *Palace of Minos*, I (London, 1921) pl. 718, fig. 541.

46. C. W. King, *Antique Gems and Rings* (London, 1872); Richter, *Gems*.

47. W. Froehner, *Collection Julien Gréau, Verrerie Antique* (Paris, 1903).

48. G. M. A. Richter, "The Department of Classical Antiquities: Extension and Rearrangement," *BMMA* 28 (1933) pp. 29 ff.; Richter, *Classical Handbook* (1930) pp. 321 ff.





FIGURE 37  
Terracotta amphora attributed to Exekias. Attic.  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund,  
17.230.14

It ranks as one of the finest extant examples of Greek architectural carving, comparable to the capitals from the Erechtheion in Athens in freshness and precision.

A gift of smaller dimensions but also particularly welcome came in 1928 from J. D. Beazley, a long-standing friend of the Metropolitan Museum. It consisted of the knob belonging to the lid of one of our finest black-figured amphorae (Figure 37).<sup>49</sup> He had found the little piece in "a box of rubbish," which he had bought at the Hope Sale—from which our amphora also came—and had recognized it as probably belonging to our vase. On arrival it was found to fit

49. Acc. no. 17.230.14. G. M. A. Richter, "The Lid of an Amphora," *BMMA* 23 (1928) p. 28.

exactly, and appreciably added to the design of the whole. Since few lids of Greek vases have been preserved, this addition has given us the opportunity of enjoying the composition of a Greek vase in its entirety—equal to an architectural design.

It may be opportune to cite here what seemed a wise decision made by the trustees in 1928, namely, to auction off "duplicate" material that had accumulated during the years, much of it from the Cesnola Collection. The following is a quotation from a letter by Robert W. de Forest to Mitchell Kennerley of the Anderson Galleries of New York:

Rather than continue to hold these objects in storage where they perform no useful service, the Trustees have determined to dispose of them by auction sale in March and April so that other Museums and private collectors can obtain them and enjoy their possession. They deem it a duty to the appreciation of art that all these objects should be put to use. They earlier considered distributing them among other American museums, but to attempt to do so would have involved questions of discrimination and would have delayed vacating space for which the Museum has urgent and immediate need. It is the hope of the Trustees that by distributing these objects among a large number of people the interest in classical antiquities will be increased. The decorative value of this kind of material is only gradually being recognized. There is no better way of stimulating its appreciation than by placing such objects of art in as many museums, colleges, libraries, and private houses as possible.<sup>50</sup>

And now a few words about the trials and tribulations that beset the acquisition of antiquities for a museum. As everybody with experience knows, one of the great dangers is the excellence of the forgeries that now and then come into the market. So when an outstanding and perhaps unusual piece is acquired, its authenticity is immediately questioned. This was the case with the seated goddess in Berlin, with the standing goddess in Berlin, and with our kouros. All these statues were, however, later recognized as undoubtedly ancient. The reverse also happens. Specially remarkable was the case of the three terracotta Etruscan warriors, bought in 1915, 1916, and 1921, put on exhibition in 1933, after a laborious reconstruction from their

50. "Auction Sales of Classical Antiquities," *BMMA* 23 (1928) p. 98.

many fragments,<sup>51</sup> and immediately accepted by most archaeologists as remarkable Etruscan achievements. A few stylistic peculiarities, such as the thickset body of the larger of the two complete warriors, could be explained by the fact that the figures were not Greek but Etruscan. On the technical side modern potters assured us that the ability to fire such large statues was no longer current and that they must therefore be ancient. Furthermore, Mr. Marshall, who always tried when possible to investigate the circumstances of discovery, had been satisfied of the genuineness of the figures by the following incident: When he went to the place near Orvieto where the owners had told him that the fragments of the statues had been found, he was confronted by a policeman who forbade him to go further. This he naturally interpreted as showing that the place was being guarded to prevent further private digging. Long afterward, when the modern origin of the statues was definitely established, it was discovered that the policeman had been a fake, dressed up for the part.

As for the firing, the explanation is that the statues were made entire and then broken up into fragments to be fired, and that subsequently the surfaces of the fractures were artificially weathered. To such lengths will deception sometimes go!

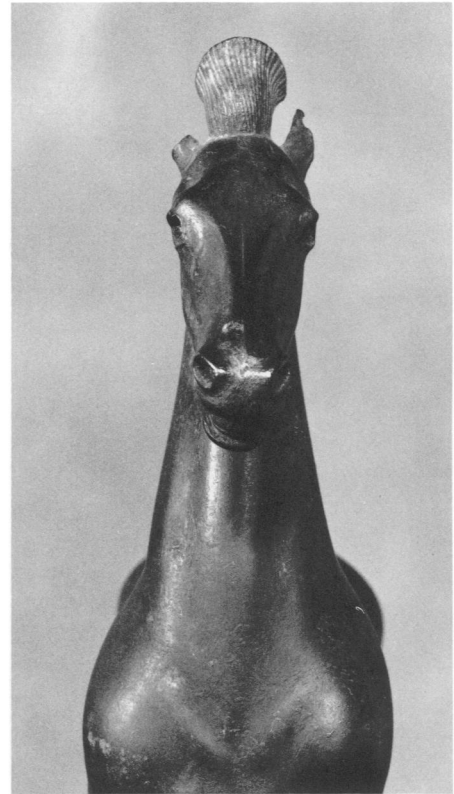
The large statuette of a bronze horse (Figures 38, 39),<sup>52</sup> acquired in Paris in 1923 from Rollin and Feu-

51. Richter, "The Department of Classical Antiquities," *BMMA* 28 (1933); G. M. A. Richter, *Etruscan Terracotta Warriors in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Metropolitan Museum Papers, no. 6 (New York, 1937); Richter, *Handbook of the Etruscan Collection*, pp. 19 ff.; D. von Bothmer and J. V. Noble, *An Inquiry into the Forgery of the Etruscan Terracotta Warriors in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Metropolitan Museum Papers, no. 11 (New York, 1961).

52. Acc. no. 23.69. G. M. A. Richter, "A Greek Bronze Horse," *BMMA* 18 (1923) pp. 89 ff.; Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) pp. 65 ff. On the controversy see *The New York Times*, December 7, 1967, p. 1, and Joseph V. Noble "The Forgery of Our Greek Bronze Horse," *BMMA* n.s. 27 (1968-1969) pp. 253 ff. (against the authenticity); C. Blümel, *Weltkunst* 38 (1968) pp. 568 ff., and "Zur Echtheitfrage des antiken Bronzepferdes in Metropolitan Museum in New York," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 84 (1969) pp. 208 ff. (for the authenticity).

FIGURES 38, 39

Bronze horse. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 23.69



ardent, the well-known dealers, was universally acclaimed as one of the finest late archaic animal studies, and was published as such again and again in our archaeological literature. Only recently was its authenticity questioned by some, reendorsed by others. The question is still open, and we await further findings.

Then there is the case of the so-called Boston Throne, a three-sided relief in the Boston Museum that is a counterpart of the Ludovisi Throne in the Terme Museum. A long controversy has raged concerning it. Immediately after its acquisition it was accepted as ancient by many and suspected as modern by others, and it has recently been "reinstated" by an archaeologist and a technician.<sup>53</sup>

Perhaps the most memorable episode in the field of forgeries that happened in our midst concerns two large marble statues, made by the Italian sculptor Alceo Dossena, one a striding Athena, the other a group of a youth carrying off a woman<sup>54</sup> (similar to the famous group of Eretria). The two statues had been sent to the Museum from Switzerland for inspection by a well-known and experienced dealer, and naturally high hopes of an important acquisition were entertained. Several days of close study, however, convinced us that the statues were not ancient, but exceptionally successful forgeries. Since they had been sponsored by prominent European archaeologists, and were still for sale, we could not, according to professional etiquette, mention the real reason for declining them. At that very moment, in fact, a lawsuit was being threatened by a New York dealer because the attribution of a painting he had sold as by Leonardo da Vinci was being questioned by some expert. And that explains why we could not warn another American museum against the acquisition of the Athena. In the summer of 1927, however, it emerged that we had refused the two large "pedimental" figures as suspect. Then followed a long investigation in which many prominent archaeologists took part, some agreeing that the sculptures were modern, others (backed by chemists and mineralogists) believing them to be ancient. Now, however, after the lapse of forty years, there is no doubt left. The sculptures were made by Dossena, who incidentally claimed that he had made them as fresh creations, not as forgeries. The whole incident was an enlightening experience from which all of us—both archaeologists and the general public—

have learned much; for it has made us realize what a subtle thing is connoisseurship, the fruit of long experience and training, and that the greatest art expert will always remain—like every scientist—a student.

Much progress has recently been made in the detection of forgeries by chemical and other technical tests. I have learned from my own experience that an examination of a marble sculpture under ultraviolet rays can be especially helpful;<sup>55</sup> if a marble is examined under ultraviolet light, a surface that has been exposed for a long period of time will fluoresce white, whereas a fresh marble surface will appear to be violet in color. But even the use of this technical aid requires experience, for any incrustation on the marble will confuse the picture. Thus, a famous archaic statue, now one of the great attractions in the National Museum of Athens, was refused as a fake by a European museum, on the ground that an examination under the ultraviolet lamp had shown it to be modern.

A favorite field for forgeries is terracotta statuettes. Those made in the late nineteenth century were easily distinguishable from the ancient ones by their modern expressions and gestures. Nowadays, however, the forgeries are often made from molds taken from ancient statuettes, and are then not so easily detected. In the Metropolitan Museum we tried to show the difference between ancient and modern by including a case full of forgeries in the same gallery as the Greek originals—for useful comparison.<sup>56</sup> There is indeed no better way to appreciate the simple beauty of the Greek statuettes than to compare them with these modern creations.

In addition to the dangers presented by forgeries, there is also that of acquiring an object which later proves to have been stolen from some museum—in which case it has by law to be returned. I recall the incident in which a little Greek terracotta portrait head was presented to the Metropolitan Museum by a donor

53. B. Ashmole, "The Three-Sided Relief in Boston," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 63 (1965) p. 59; W. J. Young and B. Ashmole, "The Boston Relief and the Ludovisi Throne," *BMFA* 66 (1968) pp. 124 ff.

54. G. M. A. Richter, "Forgeries of Greek Sculpture," *BMMA* 24 (1929) pp. 3 ff.; B. Ashmole, "An Alleged Archaic Group," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 50 (1930) pp. 99 ff.

55. James J. Rorimer installed an ultraviolet lamp near his office in the Metropolitan Museum, and I learned much by being able to examine our marbles with him. See J. J. Rorimer, "Marble Sculpture and the Ultra-Violet Ray," *BMMA* 24 (1929) pp. 185 ff.

56. Richter, *Classical Handbook* (1930) pp. 182 ff., fig. 123.

who had acquired it in Egypt.<sup>57</sup> When it turned out, however, that the head had been removed from the Kerameikos Museum in Athens, the Metropolitan immediately returned it to the Greek government—which then generously gave in recompense some duplicate pottery from Carl Blegen's dig at Zygouries.<sup>58</sup>

This short sketch may perhaps give an idea of the interest, excitement, and instruction that fill the life of a curator of Greek and Roman art in a large museum. But it would not be complete without a few more words about the variety of instruction that has come to me personally from different quarters, aside from that furnished through the detailed study of the acquisitions. First of all, from the very beginning of my service on the staff of the Metropolitan, I was allowed three months' "holiday," chiefly spent in traveling and studying in the museums of Europe, which gave me the possibility of seeing more and more material in my field, and which brought me into contact with my European colleagues for stimulating exchanges of opinions. I also had the opportunity of giving courses of lectures both in the Metropolitan Museum and elsewhere, which helped to put my thoughts into consecutive order. Furthermore, day by day there came to the Museum private individuals bringing objects for inspection; for in a *public* museum, a prime duty is to give information to the *public*. Such objects are often of a sort that have not been published and so cannot be found in books. They therefore present a challenge to the curator and furnish a valuable education. Then there was the experience afforded by the constant contact with the "repair department" staffed by experienced men with a practiced

eye. Personally I may say that I have learned much from them. Finally, there was the advantage of the opportunity to discuss problems with the curators of the other departments—Egyptian, Near East, Far East, Paintings, Decorative Arts, and Arms and Armor—all of whom have problems similar to one's own, and this makes for a widening of one's horizon. And this manifold experience serves the curator also during retirement, when he—or she—can utilize the accumulated knowledge.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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58. Richter, *Greek Handbook* (1953) pp. 13 ff.