METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

JOURNAL 56

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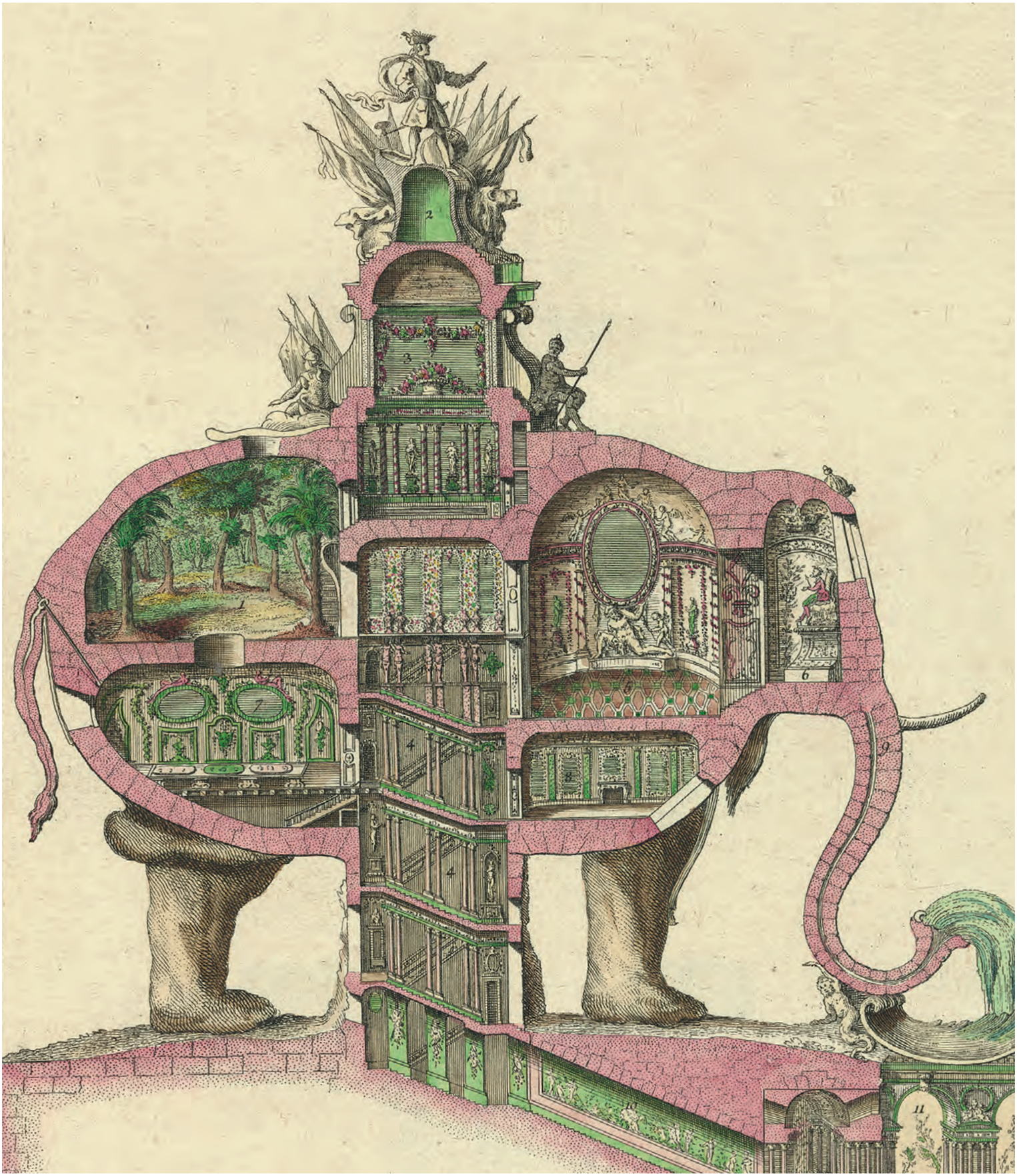
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METROPOLITAN MUSEUM JOURNAL 56

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THE MET

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

NEW YORK

In memory of Julie Jones (1935-2021)

ESTEEMED SCHOLAR OF PRECOLUMBIAN ART AND

DEDICATED EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBER OF THE *JOURNAL*

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Back cover illustration: Kneeling female figure, 15th–early 16th century. Mexico, Mesoamerica, Aztec. See fig. 5, p. 17.

Illustration on p. 2: Pierre Patte after Charles François Ribart de Chamoust. Section view of Ribart's elephant monument from Ribart 1758, pl. VI. Hand-colored etching. See fig. 4, p. 86.

Illustration on p. 4: Mask. Mexico. Olmec, 900–400 B.C. Jadeite, H. 5¾ × W. 5½ × D. 3 in. (14.6 × 14 × 7.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Alice K. Bache, 1977 (1977.187.33)

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MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES FOR THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM **JOURNAL**

Founded in 1968, the *Metropolitan Museum Journal* is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal published annually that features original research on the history, interpretation, conservation, and scientific examination of works of art in the Museum's collection. Its range encompasses the diversity of artistic practice from antiquity to the present day. The *Journal* encourages contributions offering critical and innovative approaches that will further our understanding of works of art.

The *Journal* publishes **Articles** and **Research Notes**. All texts must take works of art in the collection as the point of departure. **Articles** contribute extensive and thoroughly argued scholarship, whereas **Research Notes** are often smaller in scope, focusing on a specific aspect of new research or presenting a significant finding from technical analysis. The maximum length for articles is 8,000 words (including endnotes) and 10–12 images, and for research notes 4,000 words with 4–6 images. Authors may consult previous volumes of the *Journal* as they prepare submissions: www.metmuseum.org/art/metpublications. The *Journal* does not accept papers that have been previously published elsewhere, nor does it accept translations of such works. Submissions should be emailed to journalsubmissions@metmuseum.org.

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ABBREVIATIONS

MMA The Metropolitan Museum of Art
MMAB The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin
MMJ Metropolitan Museum Journal

Height precedes width and then depth in dimensions cited.

METROPOLITAN
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Aztecs in the Empire City: "The People without History" in The Met

JOANNE PILLSBURY

Museums are born of processes that assemble, categorize, and separate objects into collections—actions that are at the heart of institutional identity formation. These processes are informed by cultural and historical events, and changing understandings and belief systems across an array of fields. In turn, museums prompt the shifting of public and academic perceptions of times, places, and peoples. How collections are classified touches on histories of taste and the formation of canons, but also notions of history. Some of the complexities of these processes can be seen through the lens of a specific collecting area—ancient American art—and the ongoing goals and objectives of what has often been referred to as an "encyclopedic" museum.[1]

Metropolitan Museum Journal, volume 56, 2021. Published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in association with the University of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.1086/718033.

fig. 1 Fragmentary relief, 9th–10th century. Uxmal, Yucatán, Mexico, Mesoamerica. Stone, 6½ × 14½ in. (16.5 × 36.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of A. J. Lespinasse, 1877 (77.8)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art was founded a scant five years after the end of the U.S. Civil War, with nothing more than an idea as its impetus. Unlike the great museums of Europe such as the Louvre and the Prado, which had been created from royal collections, or even Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, which had built upon the Boston Athenaeum's holdings, The Met had no collection to begin with, nor any building.[2] It was an inauspicious start but nonetheless a noble and ambitious one. George Fisk Comfort, a lecturer at Princeton University and one of the founders of the Museum, declared that "a museum of art in a large and wealthy city should illustrate the history of the origin, the rise, the growth, the culminating glory, and the periods of decline and decadence of all the formative arts, both pure and applied, as they have appeared in all lands and in all ages of the world."[3] In all lands and all ages—aspirational words that would be forgotten within a few decades.

As stated in its charter, the Museum was founded to establish and maintain a museum and library of art, and to encourage and develop the study of the fine arts, with the goal of encouraging the "application of arts to manufactures and practical life, of advancing the general knowledge of kindred subjects, and, to that end, of furnishing popular instruction and recreation."[4] These educational goals, broadly construed, run parallel with some other museums established about that time. The South Kensington Museum, now the Victoria and Albert Museum, was established in 1855 to implement the design lessons of the Great Exhibition of 1851, and to make them available to the general public. Philanthropists and cultural leaders believed that art and museums could provide moral uplift to all visitors in the rapidly growing city of New York, regardless of socioeconomic background.[5]

This idea of public instruction, and the inculcation of civilizing values, was considered particularly urgent in New York. In 1870, the year the Museum was founded, fully one-half of the population of the city was born outside the United States.[6] Yet, in the first twenty years of the Museum's existence, very few of these New Yorkers could actually visit the Museum. In the nineteenth century, a six-day workweek was commonplace: only Sundays were free of the burden of labor. The Museum, however, adhered to the tradition of Sabbath laws, which forbade work and various other activities on that day. The subject of Sunday hours was fiercely debated within and beyond the Museum, and finally, in May 1891, the Museum opened on Sunday afternoons for the first time.[7] As a sidebar, from its beginning, the South Kensington Museum had open hours several evenings a week precisely to address the issue of outreach to those unable to visit the museum during the day.

In 1880, the Museum relocated to its current site at 82nd Street and Fifth Avenue and opened the doors of its new Ruskinian Gothic building. The Met's

positioning on the edge of Central Park is significant as it linked the institution with other currents of improvement in the city. One explicit purpose of Central Park was to bring the morally edifying and health-enhancing benefits of nature to those who could not afford an escape to the country, and the Museum was part of this civic initiative to instruct and improve. The vastly increased wealth in the hands of the economic elite was translated into rapidly expanding art collections, both private and public. Such aggrandizing ambitions were mirrored by The Met, and it built the first of its many expansions in 1888.

The growth of the Museum reflected a broader movement to foster a distinctively American culture in art, landscape design, and architecture, and while it was inevitably tied to Europe, it also looked to many other parts of the world for inspiration. The Met, in the eyes of many, was an essential project for what was, comparatively, still a young nation with an inchoate identity. Moreover, a newly emergent hemispheric view, one that specifically embraced Latin America, became part of the cultural seedbed that nurtured the foundation and expansion of the Museum. This embrace must be considered within the context of commercial and territorial ambitions in the hemisphere, and thus fraught with questions about colonialism and imperialism.[8] It remains critical to try to comprehend the intentions of those developing these institutions, and what they hoped to achieve.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century was a high-water mark for public interest in American antiquity. The excitement was fueled in part by the best-selling volumes of John Lloyd Stephens and illustrator Frederick Catherwood (1841, 1843), the first popular books to focus on the ancient Maya civilization, but also William H. Prescott's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, published in 1843.[9] New York was home to the Broadway Panorama, also known as the Catherwood Panorama, a venue for exhibiting objects Stephens collected on earlier visits to Central America and the Yucatán Peninsula along with Catherwood's paintings of Jerusalem, Thebes, and Niagara Falls.[10] Such was the fever for an ancient American past by the 1870s that Samuel Foster Haven, librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, declared it an "archaeological epidemic."[11] Entertainments and commercial enterprises such as the "Aztec Fair" featured collections of Mexican antiquities,[12] as did fine arts exhibitions, including the 1883 Pedestal Fund Art Loan Exhibition at the National Academy of Design.[13]

Collecting was partially fueled by expanding U.S. commercial interests in Mexico in the 1880s and 1890s. During the regime of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911), Mexico experienced a period of rapid economic growth under a government hospitable to foreign investment in order to modernize and expand the railroads and other infrastructure projects. The extensive construction, and the businesses that grew in their wake, led to the discovery of more archaeological sites. The railroads also facilitated the transport of objects within and beyond the country, feeding a rising demand from museums in Mexico City, Europe, and the United States.[14]

The first gifts of ancient American art were presented to The Met within three years of its founding. Acquisitions in the first decades arrived via various channels, including missionaries, but many came as gifts from diplomats, or purchased from their collections. Particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century, foreign missions in Latin America were crucial players in the shipment of antiquities outside the country, and often took advantage of diplomatic immunity for shipments.[15] The earliest Precolumbian acquisition still in the collection, a sculpted stone from the facade of the House of the Governor at Uxmal (figs. 1, 2), was presented by the U.S. consul in Mérida, Mexico, A. J. Lespinasse, in 1877. Mérida at the time was becoming a

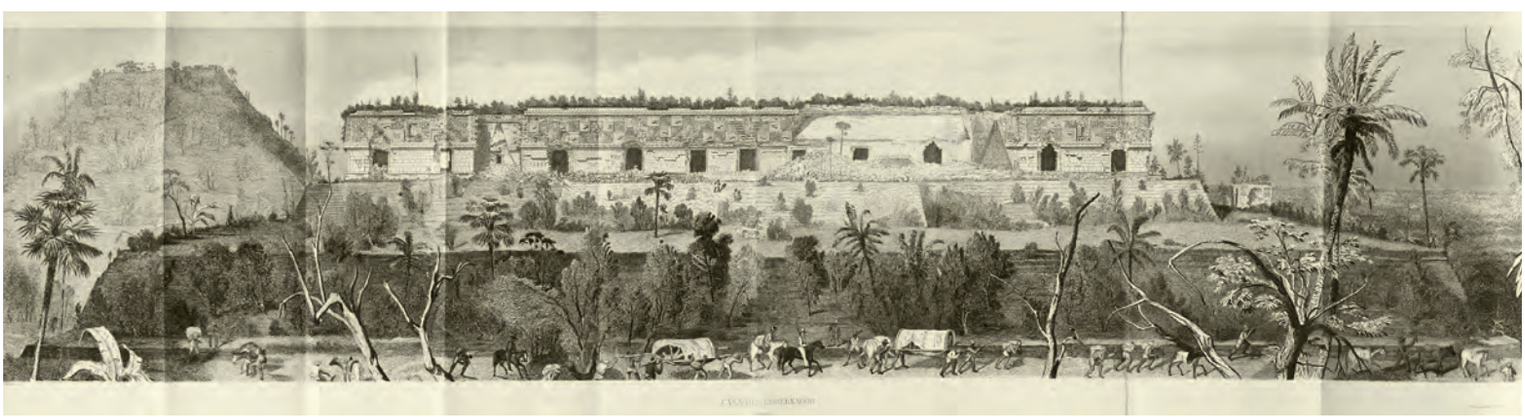


fig. 2 John Lloyd Stephens (American, 1805–1852) (author) and Frederick Catherwood (British, 1799–1854) (engraver). Casa del Gobernador, Uxmal, 1843. Rare Book Division, The New York Public Library. "Casa del gobernador, Uxmal," New York Public Library Digital Collections. http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47db-1209-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99

collecting point, and Lespinasse was but one of a number of diplomats extracting antiquities from Uxmal and other spectacular Maya sites of the Yucatán Peninsula.[16]

The stone, carved in deep relief, features three circular shapes within an upside-down U-shaped form terminating in volutes with loops on either side, above a trapezoidal element. On the reverse, a long, tapered tenon would have facilitated attachment to the facade of the building. Although we know now that the stone was once a component of a monumental mosaic "mask," an anthropomorphic portrait of a mountain deity, or *witz* in Mayan,[17] at the time, little was known about Maya iconography, and the complex forms were the subject of considerable debate. Augustus Le Plongeon, for example, argued that the Yucatán Peninsula was the cradle of civilization, and that sites there predated those of ancient Egypt.[18]

The Met's early acquisitions of ancient American art reveal what can be described, somewhat generously, as a nascent understanding of the field of American archaeology, and an abiding interest in origins, forging connections with other ancient traditions elsewhere on the globe. The correspondence around the Lespinasse gift illuminates how people were trying to categorize and understand an American antiquity, and where to place it within a larger worldview.[19] The consul, for example, compared Maya glyphs to Egyptian hieroglyphs. For many, the ancient Americas were a tabula rasa on which to project what are now considered outlandish ideas. Mid-nineteenth-century writers such as Thomas Ewbank, a founder of the American Ethnological Society, summed up the prevailing view: "Here is one half of the planet without a page of written record, without legends or traditions."[20] Essential questions about the civilizations of the ancient Americas still lingered late into the century: How did these people get here, and how do they relate to other ancient global traditions?

Although to a lesser degree, antiquities from the territorial United States also came into the Museum in its first decade, including Mississippian pottery acquired by the financier and philanthropist Henry Gurdon Marquand (fig. 3). The Met's 1880 Annual Report records the gift of some eighty objects that Marquand had previously exhibited in his home in Newport, Rhode Island.[21] The report notes, "such relics are very important to the Museum, as in the future one of its features should be a collection of the ancient arts of the Americas."[22] Marquand continued to support this effort, funding the purchase of ancient Peruvian ceramics from the collection of Richard Gibbs, U.S. envoy to Peru.[23] Echoing his fellow diplomat Lespinasse and his search for an Egyptian connection, Gibbs was particularly interested in demonstrating a link between ancient Peruvians and Asia. First and foremost, however, Precolumbian objects were embraced as part of a continental heritage: indigenous antiquities, be they

fig. 3 View of ancient Peruvian and Mississippian ceramics, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gallery 29, Wing C, 2nd floor, 1907

fig. 4 Eagle relief, 10th–13th century. Mexico, Toltec. Andesite or dacite, paint, H. 24½ × W. 30½ × D. 2½ in. (62.2 × 77.5 × 6.4 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Frederic E. Church, 1893 (93.27.2)

from Mexico or South America, were fully American.[24] They were a component of a new hemispheric identity, one that made a conscious separation from Europe as the United States gained prominence as a global power.

Enthusiasm for developing the ancient American collection gained momentum, to the point that in 1882, John Taylor Johnston, president of The Met, and Luigi Palma di Cesnola, the Museum's first director, declared that "the antiquities of our own continent should form a prominent feature in an American Museum, and we are charged with a special duty to make here a Museum of old American art for the study of American scholars as well as scholars from abroad." They asked the Trustees to establish "a department of old American art."[25]

What is striking here is that this discussion was occurring in the context of a dedicated art museum. Other museums and learned societies in Latin America, Europe, and the United States had been acquiring American antiquities since at least the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Some of these institutions inherited former royal collections, often encompassing a range of objects from paintings to natural history

specimens, and would later break apart into separate entities.[26] Berlin, for example, created a dedicated ethnographic museum in 1868, the Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde (now the Ethnologisches Museum of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), where American antiquities were held. The Musée du Louvre, however, was a notable, if short-lived, exception to the rule that Precolumbian works were usually shown in general history or natural history museums. In 1850, Adrién de Longpérier, an antiquarian, organized the first Americanist exhibition in an art museum in Paris: some nine hundred works from civilizations "wholly unknown and of a highly peculiar character."[27] Yet, as Alice Conklin has noted, in the end, the Louvre's curators could not decide whether or not these were works of art, and they were taken off view in the following decades. By the late 1870s, "Ars Americana became ethnografica, of interest not for aesthetic qualities but their value as vestiges of extinct 'primitive' civilizations and races."[28]

fig. 5 Kneeling female figure, 15th–early 16th century. Mexico, Mesoamerica, Aztec. Stone, pigment, H. 21½ × W. 10½ × D. 9¾ in. (54.6 × 26.7 × 24.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum Purchase, 1900 (00.5.16)

Johnston and Cesnola remained firm in their conviction that American antiquities were best understood on aesthetic grounds. The functional nature of many of the works was seen as a complement to their status as fine art: "in gold and other metals, in stone, in textile fabrics and in pottery, are found works which sufficiently indicate the possession by ancient Americans of many useful arts, and a cultivation of the love of beauty, measured by an independent standard which, however distinct from ours, nevertheless proves the presence of intellectual and art loving races of men."[29] This opinion was shared by others, including the Hudson River School painter Frederic E. Church, one of four practicing artists on the first Board of Trustees of the Museum, and an advocate for the creation of a department of what he called "New World Antiquities." The Met was one of the first art museums—if not *the* first—in the country to collect ancient American art for aesthetic reasons.

That said, The Met's collection of American antiquities was admittedly small, at least until the early 1890s, when Church became more actively involved. Church was one of several admirers of Mexican antiquities in New York, and he donated a fine pair of Toltec panels depicting an eagle grasping a trilobed object to the Museum in 1893 (fig. 4).[30] Church had traveled widely in Latin America, and, beginning in 1881, visited Mexico some fourteen times, primarily for his health, amassing a large, if uneven, assemblage of Mexican antiquities as well as colonial art and contemporary decorative arts.[31] Church was also an advocate for the acquisition of the Petich Collection, some 1,600 Precolumbian works from Mexico gathered by an Italian diplomat, Luigi (Louis) Petich.[32] Primarily stone and ceramic sculptures, they were all identified as "Aztec" or "Toltec" at the time, the most recent cultures to flourish in central Mexico before European colonization in the sixteenth century.[33] This identification reflected the shallow understanding of Mesoamerican history, and the lack of recognition of regional traditions outside central Mexico. It is a reminder that our knowledge of this material has been acquired slowly over the course of decades. Highly variable in quality, the collection included fine Aztec sculptures, such as a kneeling female figure (fig. 5), as well as a number of elegantly carved works from Veracruz.[34]

fig. 6 The Petich Collection installed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gallery 29, Wing C, 2nd floor, 1907. The Aztec kneeling female figure (fig. 5) is at left (center of the lower shelf); the Remojadas heads are on the far right.

fig. 7 Mexican and Central American Hall, American Museum of Natural History, ca. 1910. American Museum of Natural History, New York (Image 33037)

First on view in the Museum as a loan, the Petich Collection was displayed in wood and glass cases along the gallery walls, with table cases in the center of the room, and one larger work, a feathered serpent head from Teotihuacan, on a pedestal encircled by a wrought iron bench (fig. 6). The installation reflects a nineteenth-century interest in taxonomies, especially in the presentation of dozens of Remojadas ceramic heads, fragments of complete figures. Petich, who had served as Italy's consul in Mexico from 1888 to 1890, among other postings, was something of a chancer, and the collection's journey to the Museum's permanent holdings was anything but smooth, causing Cesnola to declare that the Petich affair caused him more "trouble and annoyance than the whole Museum put together."[35] The collection was ultimately purchased by the Museum in 1900, vastly increasing the institution's holdings of ancient American art to more than two thousand items.[36]

The Met's interest in Precolumbian art waxed and waned over the course of its history, however. Despite a precocious beginning, acquisitions in this area slowed considerably after 1900, and The Met began to reconsider the place of Precolumbian art within a fine arts museum. Richard Morris Hunt's expansion in 1904 reoriented the building to Fifth Avenue, presenting a grand Beaux-Arts facade to the rapidly expanding city, and the institution's character itself shifted, from one primarily about instruction and edification, to one that increasingly saw itself as an arbiter of taste, aligned with the newly emergent discipline of art history. Along with this architectural reorientation came a reassessment of the Museum's collection and future directions. The Museum began to question whether it was appropriate to show American antiquities in the context of an art museum.

By this time, The Met had lost some of its most enthusiastic supporters of ancient American art. Church had died in 1900, and no one else on the board demonstrated much interest in this area. The Met's first director, Cesnola, who had at least a modest regard for American antiquities, died in 1904 and was replaced by Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke. A far greater impact on the issue, however, was felt when Edward Robinson, formerly a curator of classical antiquities and director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, joined The Met in 1906, and became director in 1910. Robinson was a committed believer in the centrality and superiority of the classically based European artistic tradition over all others, and these views were widely held by others in the Museum and beyond. The institution was increasingly a player in a theoretically and professionally evolving art historical world—one firmly anchored to Europe.

Robinson himself devoted little attention to Latin America and was content to leave the field of American archaeology to the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), The Met's sibling on the other side of Central Park, and its staff of trained Americanist archaeological curators. The Mexican and Central American Hall, recently opened at the AMNH, was enlivened with large-scale casts of Mesoamerican monuments (fig. 7), and the Department of Anthropology maintained an active archaeological fieldwork program.[37] As far as Robinson was concerned, The Met should focus on building its collection of Greek, Roman, and especially Egyptian antiquities. In 1906, the Museum initiated archaeological fieldwork in Egypt, and excavations continued there for decades, along with other field projects in the Middle East.[38]

fig. 8 Face beaker with pumas and snakes, 12th–15th century. Peru, Lima province(?), Inca. Gold, H. 6½ in. (16.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Charles W. Gould, 1928 (28.128)

At the time, Robinson's dim view of American antiquities was widely shared at The Met, an institution that took pride in its growing collection of European masterpieces that embodied its aesthetic discernment.

This aesthetic discernment notably extended to Asian art, a field embraced by fine arts museums in Europe, and a burgeoning collecting area for The Met. As the Museum redefined its priorities under Robinson, the institution's early enthusiasm for American antiquity faded away. Letters from about 1910 between Robert W. de Forest, then The Met's secretary and vice president, and Henry Fairfield Osborn Sr., a paleontologist and director of the AMNH, betray an increasing unease on the part of The Met with the ancient American collection. In a 1911 letter to de Forest, Osborn wrote, "our lines of demarcation are perfectly clear: historic peoples belong to the Metropolitan Museum; prehistoric peoples and prehistoric and primitive works of art may well come here, to Natural History."[39] Osborn was a eugenicist, a believer in the idea of "breeding out" undesirable characteristics in human populations.[40] The field of eugenics gained momentum in the United States in the first decades of the twentieth century, due in part to accelerating interest in Gregor Mendel's work on hybridization and heredity, referred to today as genetics, but also amid a backlash against immigration. Eugenics forwarded the concept that certain people, and groups of people, were genetically inferior, giving rise to "scientific" racism that, in turn, led to entrenched institutional classifications.[41]

Such now debunked belief systems are components of the uncomfortable histories of museums, and even seemingly honorable actions are clouded by what we recognize today as sinister and utterly unfounded worldviews. One Met acquisition, a gold beaker made about the time of the rise of the Inca Empire in the fifteenth century, is a case in point. Badly crushed now, the result of centuries of burial, the vessel, featuring two faces, puma heads, and serpents, would have been filled with maize beer in convivial, community-building gatherings in antiquity (fig. 8). The beaker had been found on a farm near Lima, Peru, and it was sent by "the orphans of Lima" to the *New York Herald* to be auctioned for the benefit of those left fatherless and motherless by the great Galveston storm of 1900—the single deadliest natural disaster in U.S. history. Shown at The Met from December 1900 to February 1901, it was purchased by an anonymous donor and eventually given to the Museum, where it was cared for by the Department of Decorative Arts. The donor was Charles W. Gould, author of *America: A Family Matter*, a 1922 volume that advocated for the maintenance of "racial purity" and the inherent supremacy of the "Nordic races."[42]

The idea of a European cultural superiority was not a new idea at the beginning of the twentieth century, however, and it permeated a range of fields, including the visual arts. James Stephanoff's 1845 watercolor *An Assemblage of Works of Art in Sculpture and in Painting, from the Earliest Period to the Time of Phydias* gives form to a hierarchy of the arts of the ancient world (fig. 9). Maya sculptures from Copán, Honduras, and Palenque, Mexico, are at the base, placed on either side of a group of Indian Hindu and Buddhist sculptures that are flanked, in turn, by Burmese Buddhas. Above them are Assyrian reliefs, Egyptian works, the pediment of the Temple of Aphaia from Aegina, and finally, at the top, the figurative pinnacle, the Parthenon marbles. The

fig. 9 James Stephanoff (British, 1786–1874). *An Assemblage of Works of Art in Sculpture and in Painting, from the Earliest Period to the Time of Phydias*, 1845. Watercolor over graphite, 29¼ × 24½ in. (74.3 × 62.2 cm). British Museum, London (1994, 1210.6)

watercolor was based on works in the British Museum, London, as well as others that museum hoped to acquire, so while ancient American works were considered worthy of the institution, relative values were clearly expressed.[43] In the ensuing decades, in the wake of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), Stephanoff's watercolor, a local image prepared for a local audience, was superseded by a more widespread belief in the relative superiority or inferiority of individuals and populations and their artistic achievements based on evolutionary models. Adopted with alacrity by many anthropologists in the late nineteenth century, global history was soon regarded as an evolutionary progression from savagery to civilization, and the beliefs held sway in New York and its institutions for some time. As late as 1936, a potential donor offered a selection of Chinese paintings to the AMNH; the museum declined, noting, "the field of the Department of Anthropology does not extend to the art of the more developed civilizations."[44]

The discussions surrounding the proper setting for the arts of the ancient Americas reveal multiple factors. For example, the minutes of The Met's Board of Trustees meeting in December 1913 record that the Museum was unable to exhibit the "Mexican sculptures and early American pottery" by reason of lack of space, a rationale for sending most of the collection across the park to the AMNH the next year. As noted above, Robinson, who was director of The Met from 1910 to 1931, was a classical archaeologist and a believer in the superiority of the classically based European artistic tradition over all others.[45] The ancient American collection, to his mind, did not belong in an art museum, and lack of space was an excuse to remove it. Robinson, the first true professional art historian to lead the Museum, studied in Berlin, where works related to ethnography, including American antiquities, were emphatically separated and placed in their own museum. Robinson's beliefs were widely shared in an evolving Western art historical world.

The Met grew in a complex and tangled way with the very discipline of art history—a comparatively young field whose first professional body, the College Art Association, was established only in 1911. The Met was quickly becoming an institution that prided itself in a growing collection of masterpieces and an overall discernment in the fine arts. The absence of artists' names, and the functional nature of many of the Precolumbian works, surely also mitigated against an embrace of the works as fine art. By this time, the idea of "art for art's sake"—that art was self-sufficient and independent of any demeaning utilitarian purpose—had taken firm hold within the discipline, and ceramic vessels by unknown makers fell outside the canon. One might argue that the same could be said of other collecting areas such as ancient Near Eastern or Greek and Roman, but these fields stood in a distinct relationship with the history of art as it was then construed. As Yelena Rakic shows in this volume, while ancient Near Eastern suffered from similar prejudices, it was still seen as a precursor along an evolutionary road through Egyptian, Greek, and Roman—the foundations of Western art. Furthermore, an enduring engagement with the well-respected subject of Biblical archaeology kept ancient Near Eastern relevant to contemporary New Yorkers. As for Greek and Roman, some sculptors' names had been known since antiquity, and the study of the authorship of signed and unsigned Greek vases was gaining momentum.

The idea of an ancient American creator as an artist, on the other hand, was relatively new, and possessed only a flickering presence in popular imagination.

John Lloyd Stephens's publications of the mid-nineteenth century were the first widely read works that explicitly referred to the sculptors of the magnificent stelae at Copán, bestowing artistic agency on indigenous artists. The concept gained currency later in the century when the American painter George de Forest Brush, a pupil of Jean-Léon Gérôme, created a series of paintings featuring ancient Americans as artists engaged in creating and evaluating works of art. Canvases such as *An Aztec Sculptor* (fig. 10) and *The Sculptor and the King* (1888; Portland Art Museum, Oregon), both likely based on Catherwood engravings published by Stephens in 1841, place the artist at the center of the composition.[46] In *An Aztec Sculptor*, Brush depicts an artist at work on a bas-relief, based loosely on panels from the Temple of the Cross at the Maya site of Palenque, but with changes in scale and material (stucco to marble). Critics noted the "historical inaccuracies" of the work, including using "Aztec" in the title for a monument created by artists of a culture that flourished seven hundred years earlier and in a different region. By and large, however, *An Aztec Sculptor* was hailed for the artist's skill in rendering various surfaces, and it was compared to Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema's paintings of Greek artists. As Angela George has noted, whereas European artists looked to ancient Greece and Rome for artistic origins, Brush turned to Mesoamerica for an indigenous artistic tradition.[47] Despite these occasional emphatic gestures, ancient American art only truly became a proper subject in American art history in the 1940s, and largely through the efforts of one art historian, George Kubler.[48]

To return to The Met's about-face in 1914, internal documents imply that there was a tacit agreement that with regard to antiquities The Met would focus on the classical world and Asia, and the AMNH would be responsible for everything else.[49] The Met's Department of Far Eastern Art was established in 1915, although, as far as we know, the planned reciprocal exchange of Asian art from the AMNH to The Met never occurred. The important point here is that by the middle of the 1910s, Asian art was canonized at The Met, while the art of ancient Latin America—made by "the people without history"—would have only a spectral presence in the Museum for the next fifty years.

From our perspective today, it is difficult to accept the determination that these were peoples without history, but we must remember that the historical dimensions of Mesoamerican writing were not yet known, and radiocarbon dating was still decades in the future. The historical dates in Mayan inscriptions would not be identified for another fifty years, and the few Mesoamerican manuscripts that survived the priests' bonfires of the sixteenth century were just beginning to be studied. The rise of influential social-evolutionary anthropologists like Lewis Henry Morgan and his followers such as Adolph Bandelier further robbed the ancient Americas of their civilization. Morgan's *Ancient Society* (1877) proposed three major stages of development across the span of human existence—savagery, barbarism, and civilization. According to Morgan, for example, the Aztecs were no longer the state-level society described by Prescott—they were stalled in

fig. 10 George de Forest Brush (American, 1855–1941). *An Aztec Sculptor*, 1887. Oil on wood, 12½ × 23⅜₁₆ in. (31.8 × 58.9 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Gift (Partial and Promised) of the Ann and Tom Barwick Family Collection (2005.107.1)

fig. 11 Wurts Brothers. Installation view of the exhibition "American Sources of Modern Art (Aztec, Mayan, Incan)," at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, May 8–July 1, 1933. Gelatin silver print, 7 × 9½ in. (17.7 × 24.1 cm). Photographic Archive, the Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York (IN29.1)

mid-barbarism.[50] At the beginning of the twentieth century, in other words, ancient Americans were defined as eternal, unchanging, and primitive.

This point directs our attention to still other germane issues. During these years, The Met was hardly an early adopter of what we now think of as modern art.[51] Indeed, it is important to bear in mind that the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) was born in part out of frustrations with The Met's obdurate refusal to entertain contemporary art. Later in the century, it would be MoMA, and its neighbor, the Museum of Primitive Art, that would mount important exhibitions of Precolumbian art in New York such as "American Sources of Modern Art (Aztec, Mayan, Incan)" in 1933 (fig. 11), which included works from The Met's collection, and the landmark "Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art" in 1940.[52]

Moreover, the embrace by artists and connoisseurs of the term "primitive" to describe the arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas at that time—the three areas were often lumped together with little distinction—surely did not help Precolumbian art's position at The Met. Not only did the institution's aforementioned distancing from avant-garde art necessitate a rejection of one of the movement's creative wellsprings, but also, the term itself was at odds with The Met's emerging sense of aesthetic discernment embodied in its growing collection of European and Asian masterpieces. By contrast, the major institutional and individual collections assembled throughout these decades were primarily associated with anthropological research. Archaeology, ascendant by the mid-nineteenth century, was, by the end of the century, increasingly seen through the lens of science rather than the humanities. American and British universities were establishing anthropology departments from the 1890s onward, and archaeology was firmly, if not completely, located within that domain. American antiquities became artifacts of science, and increasingly they were shown in contexts appropriate to that classification. George Gustav Heye's massive collection of Native American art (including antiquities), for example, was first exhibited in 1910 at the Free Museum of Science and Art in Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology).[53] The sheer scale of Heye's collection, some thirty thousand items acquired by 1906, now cared for by the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, may have scared The Met away from the field. The growing professionalization of archaeology, and its scientific affiliation, may have been another factor weighing against The Met's brief consideration of these objects as fine art.

Thinking more internationally, there may have been still other factors. The revolution in Mexico (1910–20) shifted U.S.–Mexican relations in that era. Moreover, the extent to which the United States began to envision itself as a global actor rather than a hemispheric one throughout these decades may also have played a role in realigning The Met's vision of its collecting commitments. What is certain is that this decision in 1914 was overdetermined.

The Met's move was strikingly at odds with broader currents in the United States at the time. The completion of the Panama Canal in 1914 led to celebratory world's fairs, including the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego.[54] While The Met remained quiet in the field of ancient American art for decades, other institutions, such as the Brooklyn Museum, Philadelphia Museum of Art, and even the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, were doubling down on Precolumbian art.[55] The rise of Maya revival architecture in California in the late 1920s and 1930s also suggests attention to the aesthetics of the ancient Americas.[56] This is not to say that over the years there were not efforts to reignite an interest in Precolumbian art at The Met—Nelson A. Rockefeller, for example, became a trustee of the Museum in 1930, and periodically lobbied for a return to the field.[57] The Met's position on Precolumbian art, in other words, must be seen within a complicated and layered cultural context that was anything but monolithic.

The 1914 transfer of the Precolumbian collection to the AMNH coincided with The Met's commitment to

the study and presentation of original works of art, especially those that could be attributed to master craftsmen.[58] Casts, a prominent feature of many museums, including The Met in earlier decades, were taken off view. The relocation of ancient American works to the AMNH also signaled a redefinition of what constituted "American art," and an enshrinement of a more Anglo-Saxon and Dutch identity, particularly in the wake of a continued influx of immigrants to New York. The idea of "American art for an American museum" persisted, but in a more circumscribed manner.[59] The shift of Precolumbian works to the AMNH occurred a scant decade before The Met opened its Colonial Revival period rooms, a move that presented a new, selective approach to an American past.

The 1914 transfer of ancient American objects across Central Park was not comprehensive, however, and was limited initially to works in ceramic and stone. The Trustees decided to hold back the ancient Peruvian works in gold and silver at least until 1935, when they, too, were loaned, this time to the Brooklyn Museum.[60] Ancient Peruvian textiles, which The Met began to collect as early as 1882, not only remained in the Museum, but continued to be collected more or less without pause. Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke, Cesnola's replacement, was formerly director of the South Kensington Museum, and a firm believer that museums could positively influence industrial design. The garment business was New York's largest industry by far, and made up a third of the adult workforce, mostly immigrants.[61] As John Ruskin had argued decades earlier, the study of the decorative arts would lead to better design in factories and workshops, and this desire to teach and inspire resulted in the creation of The Met's Textile Study Room in 1910. The collector and trustee George D. Pratt became a major benefactor in this area, and an exhibition in 1930 celebrated a number of the ancient Peruvian textiles he gave to the Museum. Acquisitions slowed down considerably after Pratt's death in 1935, however, but strikingly, even in the absence of a specialist curator, ancient Peruvian textiles were acquired by the Museum. John Phillips, a curator in the Department of Renaissance and Post-Renaissance Art, for example, recommended the purchase of eight fine examples in 1959. Perhaps signaling a changing attitude at the Museum, Phillips noted, "[in] our day, when highly conventionalized forms have become familiar through the agency of contemporary painting and sculpture, these textiles seem far less *outré* than they once did."[62]

By 1952, internal correspondence in Met files indicates that there was an acknowledgment that the Precolumbian collection should not have been withdrawn to the AMNH, and The Met began a somewhat desultory return to the field. Francis Henry Taylor, then director of the Museum, addressed the Board of Trustees that year, noting that many members were anxious to reenter the field, "not only because they believe that it is one of the important areas of the history of art with which an encyclopedic museum like the Metropolitan should concern itself, but also because of the growing interest and awareness of the history and archaeology of the Western Hemisphere."[63] The rising prominence of the Robert Woods Bliss collection, shown at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, from 1947 to 1962, surely contributed to the sense of a missed opportunity, as did the various exhibitions at MoMA and the Museum of Primitive Art (after 1957).[64]

Except for the textile collection and Precolumbian musical instruments, there were only a handful of ancient American objects still in the building in the 1950s, and they were under the nominal care of The American Wing. Dudley Easby Jr., a former assistant general counsel to Nelson A. Rockefeller while he was the coordinator of inter-American affairs, joined The Met as secretary of the Museum after he completed his service with Rockefeller in 1945. The Office of Inter-American Affairs, as the coordinator's office came to be known, was an agency outside the Department of State, created by Franklin D. Roosevelt and designed to strengthen hemispheric ties, particularly in the face of incursions of European fascism in Latin America. Cultural diplomacy was a key element of the office's strategy, including loan exhibitions of Latin American art in the United States.[65] These projects gave greater visibility to ancient American art, and the postwar period saw an increase in collectors, exhibitions, and overall interest in Latin America and the pre-Hispanic past.[66] Easby and his wife, Elizabeth, became authorities on ancient American art and major advocates for the field both at and beyond the Museum.[67]

By the mid-1950s, the will to reengage with ancient American art was evident, yet how does an institution start to rebuild a collection at this late date, particularly in an era when Latin American countries were increasingly vigilant over the illegal export of antiquities?[68] Not surprisingly, the reengagement proceeded in fits and starts. One potential solution was to pursue existing private collections in the United States. For example, in 1949, the Art Institute of Chicago had shown the collection of Walter and Louise Arensberg. Noted collectors of modern, African, and Precolumbian art, the

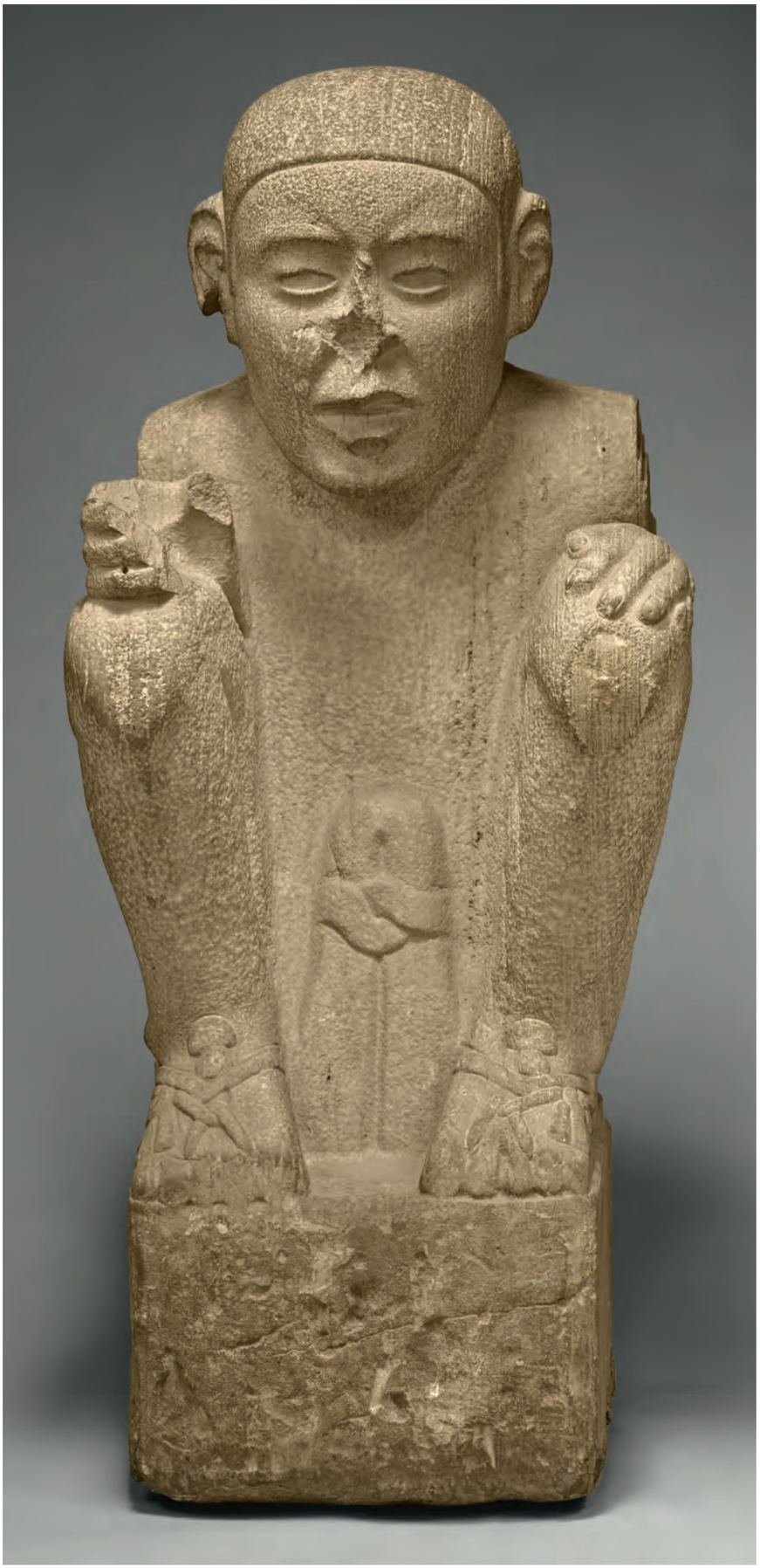
Arensbergs were searching for an appropriate permanent home for their collection.[69] With Marcel Duchamp as their go-between, they reached out to Taylor, The Met's director. Taylor was apparently more keen on the Precolumbian sculptures than the modern paintings, and he wrote of his wish to establish a department of Precolumbian art within a few years. Negotiations failed, however, and the collection ended up at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.[70]

The Met eventually reentered the field, although initially somewhat modestly—the Museum took a loan show of ancient Colombian gold in 1954—and occasionally through a conceptual back door. Several works, for example, were returned from the Brooklyn Museum, but not for exhibition in the primary galleries. Instead, they were placed on view in the Junior Museum at The Met, geared toward children.[71] By the 1960s, Precolumbian art was difficult to ignore in New York, especially after a twenty-five-ton Olmec basalt head was installed on a wooden pedestal designed by Philip Johnson in front of Mies van der Rohe's Seagram Building in 1965 (fig. 12). Sculpted about 1000 B.C., and officially called San Lorenzo Monument 1, after the site in Veracruz where it was found, the colossal head presided over Park Avenue for seven weeks in conjunction with the World's Fair, instantly becoming the darling of avant-garde artists and critics.[72] About this time, Easby, with support from James J. Rorimer, director of the Museum from 1955 to 1966, initiated a more robust return to the field of ancient American art, arranging for the purchase of a select number of major stone monuments, including a Maya storm god, Chahk,[73] and a standard-bearer from a temple in Veracruz carved after the Aztec conquest of that region (fig. 13).[74] By and large, however, the collection was rebuilt through the acquisition of collections, such as Nathan Cummings's ancient Peruvian ceramics, presented to the Museum between 1962 and 1976, and Alice K. Bache's smaller but exquisite collection of works in gold and jade, from 1966 to 1977.[75]

The decisive institutional transformation came with the acquisition of the collection of Nelson A. Rockefeller, and that of the Museum of Primitive Art, the institution he founded in 1954, when The Met had yet to show sustained interest in the art of the ancient Americas, Africa, and Oceania. René d'Harnoncourt, director of MoMA from 1949 to 1967, and a close adviser of Rockefeller's, brokered the deal with The Met to create a new department encompassing the holdings of the Museum of Primitive Art and Rockefeller's personal collection. The agreement was celebrated with an exhibition of a selection of works in 1969. The grouping of the three disparate areas together, commonplace in European and U.S. museums and universities for much

fig. 12 San Lorenzo Monument 1 being installed in front of the Seagram Building, New York, May 18, 1965. Photograph: Eddie Hausner/*The New York Times*

fig. 13 Standard-bearer, 15th–early 16th century, Mexico, Mesoamerica, Veracruz, Aztec. Sandstone, H. 31 11/16 × W. 13 7/16 × D. 13 1/16 in. (80.5 × 34.1 × 33.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1962 (62.47)



of the twentieth century, was questioned by Robert Goldwater, the Museum of Primitive Art's director, in the exhibition's catalogue: "their [Oceania, Africa, and the Americas] differences—geographical, temporal, functional, and esthetic—so much outweigh their similarities, that if one looks at them individually, one doubtless questions how and why they are related."[76]

Easby became the consultative chairman of the new Department of Primitive Art in 1967; in 1974 the Museum of Primitive Art closed, and its library, staff, and 3,500 works were transferred to The Met. The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, dedicated to the memory of Nelson's son, who lost his life on a collecting expedition to New Guinea, opened to the public in 1982. Philippe de Montebello, then director of The Met, in an echo of the founders' beliefs over a century earlier, proclaimed that

> the so-called "primitive arts" are accorded the same prominence and permanence, under one roof, as the arts of Western Europe, the Far East, and the United States. The new installation affirms that all art invested with the power to transcend its locus in time and move us by its formal harmonies has a rightful place in this Museum. At long last, the arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Native Americas have shed their image as ethnography or exotica and speak to us, not through the language of tribal mysteries, but in the universal language of aesthetics and of significant form.[77]

On one level, the saga of ancient American art at The Met may be seen as the story of an institution establishing its identity over the course of a century. On another level, however, this history reflects an epistemological unease, an uncertainty of the place of the ancient Americas in narratives of the history of art. Ancient American art has been cared for by at least half a dozen different departments at The Met. Initially, sculptures were, logically, in the Department of Sculpture. Less logically, the sculptures that remained in The Met after 1914 were cared for by the Department of Renaissance and Post-Renaissance Art—what later became the Department of Renaissance and Modern Art—and then, in the 1920s, they were cared for by the Department of Decorative Arts. From the 1940s until the mid-1960s, Precolumbian collections were part of The American Wing. In 1969, the ancient American collection became part of the Department of Primitive Art, an entity known as the Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas from 1991 to 2020, and now known simply as the Michael C. Rockefeller

Wing. If we add in the various divisions that cared for the textiles, the art of the ancient Americas has migrated between six or seven different departments within the institution.

At the heart of this uncertainty is the epistemological question of how we understand Latin America before the arrival of Europeans in the context of world history. This has been a question since the Spanish invasion in the late fifteenth century, and the circumstances of the subsequent conquest have cast a long shadow over how the civilizations of the ancient Americas are viewed. Prior to 1492, Europeans had at least partial glimpses of Africa and Asia, but not the Americas: the encounter with the Americas was wholly unanticipated.[78] In the fifteenth century, knowledge was based on the Bible, and the classical authors. Yet the Aztecs do not appear in the Bible; the Incas are not accounted for in Pliny. The challenge was to explain their existence and insert them into an established history. The story of ancient American art at The Met is not only one of shifting definitions of what is considered fine art, it is also a question of recognizing the arts of the Indigenous Americas as part of global narratives that have themselves been evolving.

Museums are an acute reminder of the ways in which we try to understand the past, and the sharp distinctions between what is known from historical texts and what is known from the objects themselves. It has become a platitude to say that history is written by the victors, but the official histories of the ancient Americas were written decades after the glittering cities of these cultures had been destroyed and their populations devastated. Many were composed to justify the conquest, to present the indigenous populations of the ancient Americas as benighted, and in desperate need of salvation. These histories continue to cast a surprisingly long shadow onto present-day knowledge of the history of Latin America before the arrival of Europeans. Archaeology and art history are antidotes, or at least a complementary means, by which to view the past. In this sense, how collections are categorized and presented is fundamental not only to how we understand the histories of these regions but also how we see these regions today and into the future.

As noted at the outset, museums are born of processes that gather and organize, and they are also formed by processes that separate and relegate. The history of The Metropolitan Museum of Art's relationships with the art of the ancient Americas is a salutary tale of changing values in changing times, and it is a reminder that we should constantly acknowledge the fragility of our certainty about any moment. The very fact of the existence of changing priorities, of shifting definitions, however, is minatory as well as promising. For museums are living, evolving entities, constantly in a state of flux and in need of reassessment, redirection, and redefinition. We respond to changing cultural understandings—sometimes too slowly, sometimes with prejudice—but we should always be cognizant that an institution such as The Met is an unfinished story.

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JOANNE PILLSBURY

Andrall E. Pearson Curator, Arts of the Ancient Americas, Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

NOTES

1 On the formation of museums in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Conn 1998.
2 Bayer and Corey 2020.
3 [Comfort] 1870, 505.
4 Metropolitan Museum 1895, section 1, unpaginated.
5 See Trask 2012, passim.
6 "[Table of] Total and Foreign-born Population New York City, 1790–2000," New York City Department of City Planning, Population Division, accessed February 18, 2019, https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/data-maps/nyc-population/historical-population/1790-2000_nyc_total_foreign_birth.pdf.
7 Bowling 2011.
8 The literature on U.S.–Latin American relations in the nineteenth century is abundant. On imperialism and collecting, see especially Manthorne 1989; Hinsley 1993; Evans 2004; Aguirre 2005; Cabañas 2006; and Brittenham n.d. (in press). It should be noted, however, that this area of study is distinct from collecting works from Africa and Oceania in the wake of imperialist expansion to those areas. As Alice Conklin (2013, 103) has noted, the latter was driven in part by a hegemonic impulse to "know" the colonized.
9 Stephens 1841 and 1843; Prescott 1843.
10 Brittenham n.d. (in press). The Panorama was open from 1838 to 1842, when the building burned to the ground.
11 Haven 1877, 8; Manthorne 1989, 92.
12 Orrin 1886. See also Upton 2000, 25–26, fig. 21; Aguirre 2005, chap. 4; and George 2011, 129–30, on public spectacles such as the "Aztec Children."
13 National Academy of Design 1883; see also George 2011, 138.
14 Boone 1993, passim; Florescano 1993; Sellen 2012; Bueno 2016; Achim 2017.
15 Hinsley 1993; Aguirre 2005; Sellen 2005.
16 Sellen 2005; Sellen and Lowe 2009; Lowe and Sellen 2010.
17 Doyle 2014.
18 Desmond and Messenger 1988.
19 Lespinasse to the [unnamed] director of the "Museum of Art," February 16, 1878, Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives. The consul was clearly unaware of the Broadway Panorama, and describes the stone as the only example of these ruins in the United States.
20 Ewbank 1855, 122.
21 MMA 79.1–27. Henry Marquand to John Taylor Johnston, October 18, 1879; November 23, 1879, Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives.
22 Metropolitan Museum 1880, 166.
23 MMA 82.1.1–27.
24 George 2011.
25 Johnston and Cesnola 1882, 242.
26 On Mexico's National Museum, see Achim 2017; on the British Museum, London, see Graham 1993, Moser 2012, and Delbourgo 2017; on France, see Williams 1993 and Conklin 2013; on Germany, see König 2007. As Steven Conn (1998, 87, 89; 2010, 30) has noted, the University of Pennsylvania's museum, founded in 1887, and opened at its current site as the Free Museum of Science and Art in 1899, presents an unusual example of an institution originally dedicated to science and art.
27 Longpérier 1850, 5.
28 Conklin 2013, 41.
29 Johnston and Cesnola 1882, 242.
30 MMA 93.27.1, 2; Pillsbury n.d. (forthcoming).
31 Bargellini 1991; Carr 1994, 1:2; Davis 1997; Kasl 2018, 80.
32 [Robinson] 1898; Pillsbury n.d. (forthcoming).
33 In present-day scholarly usage "Aztec" is generally used in reference to the empire founded on the Triple Alliance, a union formed in 1428 between the three central Mexican city-states of Texcoco, Tlacopan, and Tenochtitlan—the latter the home of the Mexica, a powerful Nahuatl-speaking group.
34 For a longer discussion of the Petich Collection, see Pillsbury n.d. (forthcoming).
35 Cesnola to Seeger and Guernsey, September 19, 1894, Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives. Unbeknownst to the Museum, Petich had taken out two loans against the value of the collection while it was shown at the Museum in the 1890s. Seeger and Guernsey represented the Bank of London and Mexico, one of the two creditors.
36 In the late nineteenth century museums in the United States, Europe, and Latin America were building their collections at truly staggering rates. For example, Berlin's Königliches Museum für Völkerkunde (Royal Museum of Ethnology, now the Ethnologisches Museum of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) acquired the Wilhelm Gretzer Collection, some 44,000 works, about the same time; see Hoffmann 2017.
37 Freed 2012.
38 Roehrig 2020. On Robinson and Mexican art, see Kasl 2018.
39 Osborn to de Forest, New York, May 17, 1911, American Museum of Natural History—Gifts and Exchanges, Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives. I am grateful to Rex Koontz for calling my attention to this letter.
40 Henry Fairfield Osborn Papers, box 6, folder 25, Special Collections Library, AMNH.
41 Conklin 2013, 146; Parker 2020.
42 Gould 1922.
43 Aguirre 2005, 91–93.
44 George C. Vaillant to I. C. Huang, New York, August 25, 1936, Department of Anthropology Archives, AMNH.
45 Trask 2012, 23–25.
46 See Anderson et al. 2008; see also George 2011, chap. 4.
47 George 2011, 141–46.
48 Barnet-Sánchez 1993. The oft-mentioned first dissertation on ancient American art, by Herbert J. Spinden, published in 1913 as *A Study of Maya Art: Its Subject Matter and Historical Development*, was prepared for partial fulfillment of a degree in the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University.
49 Elizabeth Easby, "Works of Art in the Pre-Columbian Collection of the MMA," February 1956, unpublished report, Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives.
50 Morgan 1877; George 2011, 131–33.
51 Trask 2012.
52 Cahill 1933; Museum of Modern Art 1940. See also "Rocky Road to Art," *Newsweek* 68 (July 18, 1966): 90.
53 Kidwell 2010.
54 For the impact of the fairs on the market, see Hutchinson 2009; see also Berlo 1992.
55 Hoobler 2020; Pillsbury and Doutriaux 2012. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, mounted an exhibition of Maya art in 1912, although they, too, moved away from the field shortly thereafter (*Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 1912). The William Hayes Fogg Art Museum, in conjunction with Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, mounted an exhibition in 1940 of Precolumbian art (Fogg Art Museum 1940).
56 Braun 1993; O'Neil and Miller 2017; Robb 2017; Hoobler 2020.

57 Pillsbury 2014. See also Hoobler 2020 on Walter Pach's attempt to interest The Met in the field, as well as parallel battles in Paris.
58 Trask 2012, 121.
59 Kasl 2018; Trask 2012.
60 Edward Robinson to Frederic A. Lucas [AMNH director], New York, April 28, 1914, carbon copy; H. W. Kent to Herbert Winlock, New York, March 1935; both Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives. Most of the Brooklyn loans were returned in 1963 (an embossed disk, MMA 86.17, was returned in 1962, as were the Toltec panels).
61 Peck and Spira 2020; Trask 2012, chap. 3. See also Tartsinis 2013 on the desire to stimulate a distinctly "American" design idiom.
62 Phillips 1960, 104.
63 Taylor to the Members of the Board of Trustees, MMA, October 23, 1952, Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives.
64 Malcom Delacorte, "Interim Report on Status of Metropolitan Museum of Art's Collection of Pre-Columbian Antiquities at the American Museum of Natural History," 1967, Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives. In addition to the MoMA exhibitions listed above, a major Peruvian show was mounted there in 1954 (Bennett 1954). See also Hoobler 2020 on other institutions collecting Precolumbian art in the twentieth century.
65 Pillsbury and Doutriaux 2012, 14; Pillsbury 2014.
66 Sullivan 2018; Hoobler 2020.
67 Among other projects, Elizabeth Easby curated The Met's centennial exhibition "Before Cortés" (Easby and Scott 1970).
68 On subsoil patrimony in Mexico, see Ferry 2005.
69 Walter Arensberg, Los Angeles, to Francis Henry Taylor, New York, March 25, 1950; Francis Henry Taylor, New York, to Walter Arensberg, Los Angeles, March 29, 1950, carbon copy; Francis Henry Taylor, New York, to Marcel Duchamp, April 11, 1950, carbon copy; all Arensberg, Mr. and Mrs. Walter C., 1949– , Office of the Secretary Records, MMA Archives. See also Walter Arensberg, Los Angeles, to Marcel Duchamp, April 8, 1950, Arensberg Archives I, subseries A, General Correspondence, box 6, folder 32 (Dickinson–Dyhrenfurth), Library and Archives, Philadelphia Museum of Art. I am grateful to Ellen Hoobler for calling my attention to this letter.
70 Nelson, Sherman, and Hoobler 2020.
71 Museo del Oro 1954. Two small Chiriquí frog pendants in The Met's collection, 91.37.39 and 91.1.1161, acquired in the late nineteenth century, were reproduced for sale at the time. The Toltec panels presented by Frederic E. Church (MMA 93.27.1 and MMA 93.27.2) were shown in the Junior Museum in the exhibition "Archaeology—Exploring the Past" (September 23, 1962–July 4, 1966). The pace increased later in the 1960s, including loan exhibitions such as "Maya Art from Guatemala" (1968).
72 Castañeda 2013. See also Sawyer 1968 on the Guggenheim's exhibition of ancient Peruvian ceramics a few years later.
73 MMA 66.181.
74 Easby 1962; Jones and Vogel 1975. The Museum is guided by the Report of the Association of Art Museum Directors' Task Force on the Acquisition of Archaeological Materials and Ancient Art (revised 2013) and the American Association of Museums' Standards Regarding Archaeological Material and Ancient Art; see Metropolitan Museum 2021, 8–9. Object records provided by the MMA online collection catalogue—an ongoing research project—provide data on the history of works from the time of their creation to their acquisition by the Museum.
75 A portion of the Cummings collection, along with twenty loans from the Museo Nacional de Antropología y Arqueología, Lima (now the Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia del Perú), was shown at The Met in 1964. Installation photographs are available at https://libmma.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16028coll14/id/8754. See also Sawyer 1966.
76 Goldwater 1969, unpaginated. It was a concern echoed by others, including William Rubin, curator of the controversial "'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern" exhibition at MoMA (1984), who felt that Precolumbian "court styles" such as Aztec should be grouped with "Egyptian, Javanese, [and] Persian" art, overlooking the fact that "court styles" were also present in Africa; Rubin 1984, 3.
77 De Montebello 1982, 8.
78 Grafton, Shelford, and Siraisi 2002.

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