

THE COLLECTIONS

THE COLLECTIONS OF THE PEABODY MUSEUM span the globe and cover millions of years of human cultural, social, and biological history. Few collections in the world can match its breadth and depth. Strongest in the cultures of North, Central, and South America, the Peabody is also caretaker to important collections from Africa, Europe, the Pacific Islands, and Asia.



NORTH AMERICA

The Peabody's holdings from North America form more than a quarter of its collections, represent every corner of the continent, and span 10,000 years. From the earliest excavations in the Southeast and Mimbres pottery from the Southwest to the Grace Nicholson Collection of California baskets and the Lewis and Clark artifacts, the Peabody boasts a collection that is second to none.

CENTRAL AMERICA

The Museum hosts an almost unprecedented collection of Maya material culture and monuments from Copán, Holmul, Labna, Piedras Negras, and Uaxactun, fine Aztec artifacts from the Sacred Cenote of Chichén Itza, and more than 700 plaster casts of monuments at important Central American sites. Ethnographic collections include the Alice P. Melvin Mexican Folk Art Collection and important collections of textiles and masks.



SOUTH AMERICA

Some of the Peabody's earliest accessions—collected by Louis Agassiz and his son Alexander—form the backbone to Peabody's South American ethnographic collections. Particularly noteworthy are the collection of nineteenth- and twentieth- century featherwork headdresses and ornaments from the Amazon Basin and the William Farabee collection of Bolivian and Peruvian ceremonial and domestic objects. Important archaeological collections include Chimú, Nazca, and Moche pottery; Inca and Chimú metalwork; and an exceptional collection of prehistoric Andean textiles.

ASIA

The Museum's Asian holdings are very fine, with one of the earliest collections of objects made and used by the Ainu, Japan's indigenous people; Japanese ceramics; colorful textiles made by the Kachin, tribal peoples of northeastern Myanmar, and by the Shan, a people related to the Thai; Siberian hide costumes and carved wooden household items; and the Owen Lattimore Collection from Mongolia and the Quentin Roosevelt Collection from Tibet. Archaeological materials dominate the Asia collections with an extensive collection of excavated artifacts from Tepe Yahya (Iran), Tarsus (Turkey), and Vietnam.



AFRICA

The Museum's holdings include over 20,000 items in four significant collections. The three principal collections, gathered from Liberia, southern Cameroon, and Uganda during the first half of the twentieth century, include a diverse range of objects used in daily or ritual life. The fourth collection contains more than 200 musical instruments ranging from drums to hand pianos. Archaeological collections are represented by George Reisner and Oric Bates's excavations in Egypt and Nubia.

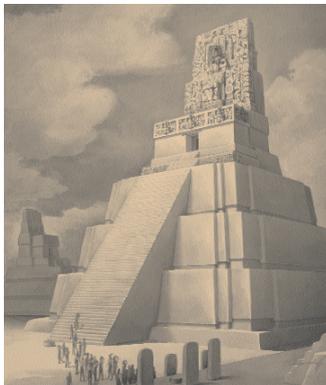


OCEANIA

Collected by eighteenth-century Boston merchants, traders, and researchers during their Pacific voyages, the 23,000 items of this collection include many rare and exceptional pieces. Highlights include Easter Island tapa figures and carved wooden statues; Hawaiian feather capes and helmets; Maori carved door panels, bowls, and human figures; Javanese shadow puppets; and Micronesian canoes and shell jewelry.

EUROPE

In addition to extensive Paleolithic collections from France, especially from the site of Abri Pataud where Cro Magnon man once lived, there are materials from Neolithic through Iron Age Europe, with the notable collection of the Duchess of Mecklenburg excavations in Slovenia. The European collection also includes a portion of the French archaeologist/political activist Gabriel de Mortillet's collections from Central Europe, a "Venus" figurine from the Grimaldi Cave in Italy, and Neolithic stone tools from northwestern Europe.



PAINTINGS & DRAWINGS

Numbering nearly 200 paintings and 950 works on paper, the Peabody's collection of artwork is an important and complementary addition to the object collections. About half, representing the David I. Bushnell, Jr. Collection of American Art, contains works by Alexander de Batz, George Catlin, Charles Bird King, George Gibbs, Edward Kern, John Webber, and over 130 oils, watercolors, and drawings by Seth Eastman, the foremost pictorial historian of the American West. There are also painted portraits of Native Americans by E.A. Burbank, some being the only extant representation of the subject. Other significant pieces include the works of Jean Charlot depicting the monumental architecture of Mesoamerica, twentieth-century works by Native American artists, an extensive series of Inuit prints, and thirty-eight works depicting people and places in India and Tibet by Andre Chéronnet Champollion.

RECORDS & PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVES

The holdings of both the records and photographic archives add inestimable value to the artifact collections. Together they form a rich depository that documents the Peabody collections.

The papers and manuscripts housed in the archives include institutional (departmental and Museum) records, special collections, and extant material associated with anthropological/archaeological expeditions, faculty members, and related research projects.

Ranging from daguerreotypes to colored transparencies, photographic images in the Peabody's collections number about half a million and traverse the archaeology and ethnology of the world, with particular emphasis in those areas where the Peabody's holdings in material culture are the richest. Major photographic collections include Native American cultures and portraits, Mexico, northern Central America, China and Southwest Asia, Africa, and pre-Columbian objects and art.

