

# There and back again: Archivists retracing paths of university teaching collections

Sarah Buchanan      @sarabi4now

University of Missouri

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## The C&U collecting mission and impulse

- Colleges, Schools, Departments, and individual Faculty: history of collecting
  - What is the acquisition story?
- Faculty and Archivist collaboration
  - Provenance research
- For purposes of formalizing postcustodial praxis and decentralized custodianship
  - Perhaps not by design! But to bring clarity to complex pedagogical traditions
- *The Collections: The University of Texas* as original research

## University Museums &

- 17<sup>th</sup> century universities are among the first collecting institutions: 100-400 years!
- Parent inst. role departure from collections care to research in the 1980s
- Refocus toward identity and promotion (mergers, moves)
- Reveal relationships with object biographies (Kozak, 2016)

## University Archives

- Formation of C&U committee in SAA in 1949 (Cook, 1988: 431)
- About 564 university archives were founded between 1960-72 (Burckel, 2008: 4)
- C&U archivists (~1814) are the largest % of SAA members per A\*CENSUS
- Increasing alignment with student learning & success

*Both professionals ask, “what goes on in the classroom?”*

Burckel, Nicholas C. (2008) Academic archives: Retrospect and prospect. In *College and university archives: Readings in theory and practice* (pp.3-26). Chicago: SAA.

Cook, J. Frank. (1988 Fall). Academic archivists and the SAA, 1938-1979: From arcana siwash to the C&U PAG. *American Archivist* 51: 428-439.

Kozak, Zenobia R. (2016). The role of university museums and heritage in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *The Museum Review* 1(1).

# A Teaching Collection

- The University of Texas counts 170 million cultural objects in 80 collections on campus (Bober, 2016 “The Collections”)
- Swenson coin donation in 1891; Greek Prof. J. Sterrett made first purchases in 1893 which became the Museum of Ancient Art in 1904 (plaster casts and lantern slides); Dept Chair J.E. Pearce’s Anthropology Museum in 1934 (TMM ‘39) & tablets’ purchase in 1938
- Two collections transferred from Texas Memorial Museum in 2005: cuneiform tablets (2100-1600 BCE) and sigillography (Frucht gem casts, 550 BCE-200 CE & 1670-1830)
- RTI & provenance research w cuneiform in Fall 2014 (see CDLI); Digital Archaeology Lab with coins since 2016

