



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

On Yemen Archives and Archaeology in Washington, D.C.: Unmapping Trajectories of Early South Arabian Objects in the Smithsonian Institution

NAGEL A. 1*

¹ State University of New York (SUNY), Fashion Institute of Technology, New York City, United States

*Corresponding author

Abstract

This presentation introduces the Smithsonian Institution's first acquisitions of ancient South Arabian materials and aspects of new research on these. Donated in 1948 and first published by the epigrapher Albert Jamme (1916–2004), new research reveals that at least one object was transcribed first by Dorothy Stehle (1914–1992), an eminent but largely forgotten scholar of ancient South Arabian languages who had received a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. A second group of early acquisitions includes a group imitating ancient South Arabian art. Following an enthusiasm for the rediscovery of ancient South Arabian cultures, as they first appeared to be admired and studied in European and North American museums in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century, Aden and Sana'a-based artists responded by developing skills in producing sculptures interpreting excavated works of art. This presentation will introduce the challenges of working with the corpus and illuminate the roles of Jamme, Stehle, Karl S. Twitchell (1885–1968) and Myron Bement Smith (1897–1970) and others in a network of scholars who directed research inquiries into archaeology during a crucial decade of discoveries in South Arabia.

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Yemen, Archaeology, Museums, Archives, Provenance

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