

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
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History of David M. Robinson and Classics at Johns Hopkins

H. Alan Shapiro

Sanchita Balachandran

Interviewed By

Bill Leslie

On

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Interviewees: H. Alan Shapiro, Sanchita Balachandran

Interviewer: Bill Leslie

Subject: David M. Robinson and the Archeological Museum

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BL: Right, so now we're live. I'll say this is Bill Leslie from the Department of the History of Science at Johns Hopkins, and I'm with Professor H. Alan Shapiro and Sanchita Balachandran. Alan is professor of classics, Sanchita is the curator and conservator of the Archaeological Museum. This afternoon, we'll be discussing David M. Robinson and his contributions to classics at Hopkins. We'll also be talking about the Archeological Museum, its history, and its role as a space for research and for teaching within Johns Hopkins both in its former locations and here, a subject that Sanchita knows a fair amount about. And I thought, maybe we'd start with Alan. You'd done your graduate work elsewhere at Berkeley and Princeton—

AS: Yes—

BL: And you taught elsewhere. And so I was interested in your impressions coming to Hopkins in, what, 1997?

AS: Correct, well, you mean my impressions of David Robinson...?

BL: No. We'll get to that, sorry. Your impressions of the Hopkins Classics Department at that time, having come from a couple of important places in the field, and the museum, too. Your impressions of that.

AS: Yeah, I had never seen the museum before I came to teach at Hopkins. It was in two small rooms in the old Gilman Hall. In fact, I only had been on the campus of Hopkins once in my life before taking up the job and that was for a conference for an exhibition called "Pandora" on ancient Greek women, which was at the Walters Art Gallery, in 1995. I was aware of the tradition of Hopkins as one of the oldest classics departments and the first one to give a PhD. I was aware of—that Basil Gildersleeve, the sort of founder of classics and of the American, what's now called TAPA—Transactions of the American Philological Association. I was well aware of David Robinson because of his excavation of Olynthus in northern Greece, which is known to all archeologists. I also knew that Hopkins was an extremely small classics department, well, let me put it this way, that 50 years ago the Hopkins Classics Department had probably five faculty in it and it was considered one of the top graduate programs in the country. In the meantime, other institutions had doubled or tripled in size and Hopkins had remained at five. So I knew this was going to be an unusual situation. I also knew that since the early 90s, the department had transformed itself with two classicists coming from Paris who were trying to turn it into, a sort of French style classics program. I had some reservations about that but since I was coming from New Zealand, at the time, I was very happy to have a job at a first rate school on the east coast of the United States.

BL: (laughter) We may talk more about [inaudible] et cetera, maybe later. So, Robinson was certainly a known quantity among your generation of classicists.

AS: Yeah, through the public, because he was very fast to publish his excavation. There are, something like, thirteen big volumes in the Olynthus series that were published by the Hopkins Press between, I think, the very late 20s and the late 30s. Typically, Robinson would coauthor these volumes with one of his graduate students and the graduate student would do most of the work. But Robinson's name would be on virtually...

BL: This explains his remarkable productivity! (Laughter)

AS: Right, and he was a wunderkind, of course. Who went to college when he was 14 and started his academic career very young, and was very prolific, but even more so when you count all of the coauthored books with his various students. This Festschrift, which was very famous in its time as the biggest one in the field of classics...

BL: And its, literally, the biggest. As we're looking at this six inches of paper.

AS: Yes. There are many anecdotes that I had heard told about this Festschrift, and the Festschrift was put together by someone whom I actually met at the end of his life, George Mylonas, who was, also, a very key figure in the history of American classical archaeology. A student of Robinson's at Hopkins, and then for many, many years a professor at Washington University in St. Louis. Excavator of Eleusis and Mycenae and other sites in Greece, one of the best known archaeologists in the country. He, as an active homage to his teacher, put together

this Festschrift in the late 40s. Anyway I had met George Mylonas, and George Mylonas' son-in-law was my adviser in graduate school (laughter)

BL: That's a good connection!

AS: Yes.

BL: And Sanchita, I wanted to get your first impression, since you were coming here to take on a museum that was just been renovated, right? Had you ever seen it in the old...?

SB: I had. In fact, I moved here in 2007. And at the time, I actually did an early survey of the collection to establish the state of preservation that the artifacts were in with the hope that we would ask for some funding to do...uh...you know, better housing and care of the collections. And so, I had seen it in its original location and then several years later, when it came to install in this new space, I got to see some of these familiar objects again. And the reason why I even got interested in the history of the collection was from a very, kind of, practical point of view, because I had seen these objects. There was not very much documentation about them, and there were famous personalities who were purported to be associated with these objects. And so there was a great deal of, you know, all these research that had to be done to try and excavate some of this information, which is how I have run into Professor Robinson and others.

BL: Well, I want to hear more about your research on Robinson. And please feel free to interrupt each other... (Laughter) or to jump in whenever you like. Because it's

not an interview, it's more like a conversation. But was that collection, the old rooms, used for teaching much? For graduate teaching? For research?

AS: I wouldn't say teaching in the sense of having as we do here, seminars or classes meet in the museum, there was no space that would've been adequate for... There were, I think, the survey... our history introductory survey course [NOTE: clarified later by Shapiro as the History of Art course], would sort of take the students through the museum very briefly. Our courses in classics did, sometimes, work on objects in the collection. But, typically, we didn't. We would just go in there maybe once, in the course of the semester and did the rest of the work in the seminar room.

BL: Was there anybody actively contributing to the... adding to the collection from their own research? I'm trying to get a feel for how...

SB: Well, Eunice Dauterman Maguire was the curator and she was researching some of the late antique, Byzantine objects in the collection but I'm not sure if...

AS: Right. I can speak to the—for most of the post-war period, the collection had no curator. Typically, there would be a graduate student from the classics department who would serve as a part time job. I remember, for example, in the 80s writing here for photographs of an object and hearing back from a woman who turned out to be a graduate student in the classics department. When Henry Maguire was hired in the art history department in, I would say about 1999 or 2000... if I came in 1997, I think Henry Maguire came about two years later... for better or worse, I would say I was the person who suggested, since he had made it clear that he

wouldn't come here unless there were a job for his wife. And since she had extensive museum experience in Illinois, I suggested that she be made the first, sort of, dedicated curator of the collection.

BL: I see. Now, I presume that our collection is pretty small compared to collections in other universities or is that not that case?

SB: According to the records and having gone through, I think, letters starting in the late 1880s until about 1950 at this point, at some point the collection was about twenty thousand objects, which is a significant amount of material. But things, sort of, moved in and out depending on who had donated it, whether the material fit with the scope of the institution. So, for example, the twenty thousand objects were reduced to about nine thousand or so, because a significant amount of that material went to Evergreen or to Homewood. So, it sort of got parsed out because they were textiles that were Chinese export textiles, for example, that had nothing to do with archaeological material. So, things seemed to have come in and out depending on who was in charge and who was teaching from it.

BL: You mentioned, of course, that Robinson is best known to people outside the community for his archeological work. Although, he did so many other things.

AS: Right.

BL: I mean... epigraphy and literature and poetry...

AS: And as a collector. He is well known in the field as a major collector of a lot of different materials but with a focus on Greek vases. He was a combination, which wouldn't exist anymore today due to various ethical issues... having to do with

buying of antiquities off of the market, the art market, or the bringing archeological objects out of Greece. So he was, you know, a figure of the earlier 20th century... of the type that was pretty unique, even then, but today would be unthinkable.

BL: How much of this collection is from Robinson's work? Because I think Olynthus... did any of that material come here or did that go elsewhere?

AS: I think when he started to dig at Olynthus, he had an agreement that a certain number of objects would come with him back to Hopkins. I think the Greek authorities intervened and canceled that. So, I don't think anything from Olynthus actually made its way here. Of Robinson's personal, private collection, I think there's a few pieces here...

SB: We're still trying to untangle this, because the documentation is...well... it's confusing. But, just on the Olynthus side, having seen, mention of this, several times in the papers—is it Remsen who was president in 30s and 40s? I'm forgetting which...

BL: No. It would've been Ames, probably, then umm...

SB: That's right, it's Ames. There are letters where he's discussing, you know...

BL: Or Bowman after 1935

SB: Oh, Bowman... there are letters where he's talking about what could come back here, and there are some very exciting transcripts of, I guess, they're telegrams? Saying I found such and such a thing and everything is in capital letters... there's

a whole series of these. It seems like things are going to come. And then, at one point, there's a letter that is being requested of him to send out to the funders of the excavation. He's being asked to explicitly say what Hopkins can expect in return, and he writes this very passionate letter saying, "Isn't the"—you know—"the preservation of the knowledge associated with the excavation more important than objects?" (laughter) So clearly, something happened in between that was not quite carefully laid out. But, certainly, Hopkins was expecting something in return for all of this funding. All of those financial details are listed in these various letters.

BL: Was Hopkins actually paying for his expeditions?

SB: So, money was coming through the chapter of the AIA and different people who were associated with Hopkins were interested in the excavation. There are lists of some of these different donors, but then the president actually writes and says we need to tell them something. Then a few letters later, this statement about the importance of preserving the information rather than the objects.

BL: The reason I express a little surprise is that William Foxwell Albright, of course, first did a lot of excavations in Palestine but all that was covered by other sources. The university was very reluctant to give a dime, if you could find someone else to fund the American School of Oriental Studies. So I don't know the extent to which Robinson...

SB: It might have been all just funders associated with Hopkins, rather than money specifically from the university. Though, I think—but I have to check my notes—

but I do think there was some money that came through classics, maybe, that did go to support prep students or something like that... I can go back and see...

AS: Could be, but an awful lot of the funding came from Robinson's own pockets.

BL: Oh he was, himself, wealthy?

AS: Well, surely, he couldn't have amassed this vast private collection without—I have been unable to determine the source of his wealth. It doesn't seem to be from his immediate family, his father was a clergyman. It could be his wife's family, but I have looked for some clues as to what funded his tremendous purchases of hundreds of Greek vases and other objects. I've looked at some of his correspondence with the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, which under whose aegis he conducted the excavations. He writes there that he's going to have a large number of workmen, and he indicates that he's going to pay the workmen himself. At least, that's the impression that I got. He had a very fraught relationship with the American School in Athens and the various directors of the school, because some of them felt that he was too autonomous in his conduct of the excavation. They wanted to keep a closer eye on excavations that were, technically, under the auspices of the American School. Because all American excavations in Greece are, in some sense, under the aegis of the American school.

BL: That's interesting. In Albright's case, they named the school for him, right?

(Laughter) They were so happy with him. Well, you spent at least a year in that school, didn't you?

AS: I spent about three years, and some summers, at the school.

- BL: Robinson, himself, didn't have a great legacy through that school...
- AS: Well, he had a close attachment to the school because he had been a student there. He had, later, served as acting director of the school. He was a visiting professor at the school. He spent his first year, following his retirement from Hopkins, at the school in Athens.
- BL: That would've been 1947, 1948?
- AS: About 1947, right. He felt, I think, very close to the school and to certain of the personalities. The director, when he first got there was Bert Hodge Hill, who's an important figure, as well, in classical archaeology. I think Robinson was close to Hill, in later years. There's nothing named for him at the American School, as with Albright. He, certainly, represented Hopkins on the managing committee of the American School for all those years.
- BL: Now the space we're in is just the latest version of this museum, and you've done some research on, not only the two rooms here. Can give just a brief account of its own institutional history and place from the old campus?
- SB: Sure, this is still in process. Obviously, the very first version of this was in McCoy Hall in the downtown campus. It was on—and I have to check my notes—either the third or the fourth floor. We know that it was quite a large space which, amazingly, gather up to six hundred people per evening...
- BL: Six hundred people? We don't get that now! (Laughter)

SB: We have, at least, one reference to an event to look at objects that brought in about six hundred people, which is amazing.

BL: Did you get six hundred at the Open House for the Dean? (Laughter)

SB: Uh, no. (Laughter)

BL: You had a lot! But...

SB: We did have a lot, but I can't say we had that many.

BL: Six hundred, wow!

SB: So, that was the first location of it. Actually, it was on the third floor and we have one image of it...which I can bring over. (Walks away)

AS: Right, this is the one image which is always reproduced because it's the only one...

BL: (Laughter) The only one we have.

AS: The only one that we have from that period.

SB: (Walks back) the only one we have, which is really frustrating.

BL: And where do they put six hundred people? (Laughing)

SB: The six hundred people were actually gathered in the library, because things were taken from the museum to the library to accommodate that group. Everything was crowded into this one room, and most of the, well, a lot of the objects in this picture we can still associate with the objects that are on view now. So, this was

the first version. Then in 1916, when the collection was moved here, it was actually in the corner of this building in the...okay, we are now facing that floor?

BL: That's the west and that's the south. The southwest corner?

SB: So the southwest corner, facing out towards, I guess, what was the tennis courts at the time. That large room was the museum and—I should have brought you those images and you have seen these images as well—that's where the museum was installed. Objects were, literally, spilling out of that space and were all along the corridors here. At some point the Donovan Room was also, kind of, taken over with objects and exhibits. The idea there, specifically, was that as lanterns, slides and lecterns were being used for teachings that objects could literally be picked up out of cases or off the tops of cases and looked at by students. So really, the whole back part of this building, on this floor, was completely taken over by the Archaeological Museum collection.

BL: It suggests that Classics had actually quite a—well it wasn't called Classics then, but what would become Classics—had a lot of political power to have that much space. When the Biology department...

SB: Then of course the Oriental seminary, right?

AS: Right. Right.

BL: The Biology department was stuck in here for many, many years and then went to the Greenhouse. So...

AS: Right. Right.

BL: You'd think, well, Biology must have had plenty of clout to get space, but the classicists, apparently...

AS: Together, with Near East Studies...

BL: Near East Studies, that's true. Well Robinson was already here, I guess, by the time it... when did he...?

AS: Yes, he had arrived here in 1905.

BL: So he was part of that move then, to this place.

AS: Right.

SB: There were a lot of letters, before the move, between different classicists. I think, there was one letter from Haupt, we hope that the new museum space soon may it arrive, will have enough room for all of these artifacts that we have amassed. Clearly, they had run out of space already.

BL: So Haupt is in this conversation, too. I guess Albright wouldn't actually graduate until a little bit after this photo, and then he'd be in Jerusalem for a while and then come back.

SB: Haupt would have already been here by the time of this photo for twenty years, or something like that...

BL: Yes, he's from the 80s, yes. He had been around quite a while. Does Gildersleeve figure into any of this? He's so much about philology that he just doesn't care about objects?

AS: I've not heard of Gildersleeve in connection with the museum...

SB: It doesn't show up in the letters...

AS: He did overlap with—he probably hired—David Robinson.

BL: He was active until 1920 and was still around in 1924.

AS: Robinson—it's not always clear to me—at one point there was a separate Department of Archaeology that may have been created by Robinson, sort of split off from the Classics department. Around the time, shortly before and during World War II—was it the Department of Archaeology?—before the creation of the Department of History of Art which came after the war...

BL: Quite late, yes it was.

AS: Yes.

BL: Robinson's own titles are remarkable, if you look at all the different titles he has. He's, sometimes, Art and Archaeology, and Classics and Greek. (Laughter)

AS: Right, sometimes epigraphy...

BL: Epigraphy. So the titles seem to change, I can't quite figure that out. He certainly had a wide range of interest. I did not realize he'd been President of the College Art Association.

AS: Right, and the founder of the Art Bulletin.

BL: Yes and editor! He edited, at one time, three or four or five important journals.

AS: One thing I wish you could find out, because nobody else has been able to, is that in 1922 Robinson became the first holder of W.H. Collins Vickers Chair of

Archaeology—which I now hold. I'm not aware that anyone in the university knows much of anything about who W.H. Collins Vickers was. Some years ago when the university did a very glossy brochure on named professorships, the one for Vickers was blank.

SB: Hmm... I think there's something in the president's letters, actually.

AS: I'm assuming that he was an acquaintance of Robinson's, and that Robinson persuaded him to create this chair because it would've been in the midst of Robinson's period here. Beyond that, I have no information at all about the eponym of this chair.

BL: Before I forget. When you were mentioning looking at Robinson's correspondence, were you looking at correspondence in our archive or in another archive?

AS: I looked at some that Sanchita also did between Robinson and presidents of the University. The American School in Athens has an extensive archives department. I was looking there and the correspondence between Robinson and various members such as directors or chairs of the managing committee of the school in Athens, which pertained largely to the excavation. There is other Robinson memorabilia, thanks to the archivist there, I was shown an article from the Baltimore Sun from the period when the Festschrift came out about 1951. A profile of Robinson that they had in their archives.

BL: This sounds like a junket to Athens to me (laughter). I just have to sell it.

SB: I should just mention, we were talking about the different departments. I have a little course listing from 1910 that describes something in the Department of Classical Archaeology and Art. It, specifically, mentions use archaeological material from the collection. Whatever this (laughter) rogue department seems to have existed, certainly, by 1910. By 1915, it's just described as Classical Archaeology as opposed to Classical Archaeology and Art. So, I don't know...

BL: People had a lot of leeway in deciding what to call themselves.

AS: Uh huh.

BL: Albright was, we might call him, a biblical archaeologist but he called himself an Oriental—what did he call himself? Not an Oriental—Yes, I think an Orientalist, I think is how he described his own field. He did not want to be described as a biblical archaeologist, despite it being his major interest—in some respects. Is there a way to assess Robinson's impact on the larger field of classics? I look at that Festschrift volume, and I see 74 PhDs and 41 Mas, and scattered others—was there a Robinson school?

AS: Oh, yes. Very much so. I think he trained more PhDs than any other American classical archaeologist of the first half of the 20th century. Many of his pupils became the major figures of the next generation. They were, also, for example, in the 1930s, they were refugees—emigres—from Europe. Famous example is George Hanfmann, who went on to become a professor at Harvard and one of the excavators of Sardis and one of the most important—who had already been trained in Germany—but when he came to this country, came to Hopkins and

received a PhD under Robinson. I could list many of the leading figures of the post war generation, who were all pupils of Robinson. He was, really, the doyen of classical archaeology.

BL: Did they share anything? In terms of method or focus or something that would identify them as a particular way of doing classical archaeology?

AS: Well, a lot of them had gone with him to Olynthus. If they were here anytime between the late 1920s and the late 1930s, they probably were involved in the Olynthus excavations. Other than that, they wrote dissertations on topics that were as wide ranging as Robinson's own interests, which included virtually every area of classical archaeology. I wouldn't say there was a methodology that I could define as such.

BL: In the back of my mind, because I'm thinking of Albright at the moment, where you identify the pottery and then you can use that for stratigraphy. It's a very particular method. Although his students, also, range, very widely, because they have rabbis, priests, Protestant ministers, and everybody else. But, more questions about his impact on the field, his influence on the field.

AS: Oh, yes. He, definitely, the most influential, in a lot of ways, of that whole first half of the 20th century. I think the list of his PhDs is notable for the number of women. I would say the only other—I mean Bryn Mawr was, of course, founded to train women at the graduate level. Though, there were a lot of women classicists and archaeologists coming out of Bryn Mawr. But other than that, none

of the Ivy League schools had female graduate students, or virtually none. This was really the one place that women could come to do advanced degrees.

BL: He even had influence at Bryn Mawr, because there are 8 or 10 students listed at Bryn Mawr, on whose dissertations committees he served. He must have...

SB: Well, one other thing about that. The earlier students that we have referenced, who worked in the collection and catalogued it, were two women. I don't know if that means that the male students were off doing something far more important and scholarly, but they are, also, notable in having arranged the collection and documenting it.

BL: And they received their PhDs at Hopkins?

SB: Sarah Freeman?

AS: Yes.

SB: Who was here, she did get her PhD at Hopkins. I believe. There's another woman, who's a little bit earlier, I think her last name is Magee...Makee—I can look her name up as well—she was, also, a graduate student here.

BL: So, yes. Well, he was, also, a very prolific writer. I don't know if his writings have as much influence in the field as the students he trained. We have some people, like Gildersleeve, who really his impact is as trainer of graduate students, editor of American Philological Journal, and the seminary that he runs. But his own list of publications, probably wouldn't get him tenure. But Robinson has a lot

of publications, but I didn't know how to weigh them in terms of...compared with his contemporaries.

AS: His Olynthus volumes, which as I said his name is on—even if a lot of his pupils did much of the work—are still, because of course the site hasn't been reopened—although, I hear there are some talk about reopening the excavation of Olynthus. Until now, it's really his excavations that is what we have. The volumes are still consulted, very actively. His other publications—he wrote in some areas that would be considered, now... For example, he wrote a book—I think—about Sappho, the Greek poet that people wouldn't consult, anymore. So some of the work is, but he wrote three volumes of the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* for his own collection and those vases are now, mostly, at Harvard and at Mississippi. I don't know if I'd say they are models of the CVA fascicles, but they are heavily consulted because they are the first and, sometimes, only publications of these objects. I'd say his influence as a scholar is pretty significant but not that he sort of shifted the paradigm of scholarship and archaeology.

BL: Who would've been his major competitor or competitors at that time?

AS: That's a very good question...well, one person he felt very close to was Joseph Clark Hoppin. Who was at Bryn Mawr and who founded the department at Bryn Mawr. He was about a decade older than Robinson and died relatively young, so that their overlap was maybe a couple of decades. As I say, the women who didn't study here all studied at Bryn Mawr. There was this close interaction at places like Harvard, Princeton, and Yale there were—I'm trying to think if there were a

really, sort of, huge name like Robinson's—maybe Stillwell at Princeton...and Harvard?—before Hanfmann came, I don't recall a more specific...

BL: It's okay to say that he dominated the field. (Laughter)

AS: No...Rodney Young at Penn, who was of a slightly younger generation...

BL: Oh, Penn is a place I would've expected because of the very large museum.

AS: Yes, Penn is unusual because, of course it is by far, the biggest archaeological museum in North America and is on a different scale from any other university museum.

SB: Yes.

AS: It's, sort of, happenstance that in the late 19th century, Penn was already excavating extensively in the Near East. Large amounts of material came to the university museum, but I wouldn't call it a competitor. It's sort of a unique institution.

SB: If I could just go back to this CVA reference, so even though those volumes are 80-something years old now. I still, regularly, get requests specifically saying, "Do you have object X?" And here's this CVA fascicle that it's in and this is the plate. As Alan was saying, that might be the only place where some of this material has been published. We've actually had a graduate student, quite painstakingly, go objects that are here that either have no number or have multiple numbers or it may have been Robinson's. She's been cross referencing it with CVA and finding the original numbers or, sometimes, the original non-number,

because it was a Robinson object that he left behind here but was never a part of the official collection. It's been an incredible resource to have those original publications with the photographs, because often his objects have been extensively restored. Since those objects were taken, some of the numbers have been removed. We've been using a combination of contemporary, sort of, technical analysis but, also, just photographs and descriptions to try and recreate the original collection and to try and distinguished what was the museum's, what was Robinson's, and what is still a mystery. But they've been really invaluable, and people still refer to them all the time.

BL: You anticipated a question I have which was, how is the collection used by scholars now and the extent to which it's used both by our own faculty, but also by outside faculty or scholars from other institutions?

SB: I have to say that the website has been a tremendous help in reminding people and, in some cases, alerting people that we have this collection. There was no website for the collection until 2010, and we've seen tremendous interest in the website. The first year we had maybe, I think, five thousand hits. Last year, we had thirty thousand. So, in just four years we've had a lot more interest and a lot of people are using this "collection search." We've been able to put material on line, based on what's been taught in the museum. For example, Alan and his graduate students researched some of the Greek vases, and we have the whole section on our website about the collection with photographs. So people can write and say, "Can I have a photo of this?"—or—"I'm researching"—I don't know—"The Kiss painter, I see you have this image, can we have this for publication?"

Those kinds of pedagogical projects that are happening within the museum, which results in web content have really accelerated the way scholars then approach me for information about our collection.

BL: I did want some examples, from your teaching, using the objects in the museum...

AS: Right, well, that was one seminar that just did red figure cups because those are, sort of—among scholars—the most famous pieces in the collection or among the most famous. But we've had my former colleague, Hérica Valladares, did several class exhibitions...

SB: Yes. Several student exhibitions, which are behind you and on the side of the room, as well.

AS: Classes for both undergraduate and graduate students...

BL: Did Robinson teach undergraduates? Do we have...? Because Gildersleeve didn't.

AS: No.

BL: It might have been what kind of deal you cut... Rowland, the physicist, never taught undergraduates either but Robinson did. Do we have any evidence on what he did?

SB: There's mention of undergraduates. He writes this—I can't remember what this was for—maybe, I think, Carnegie Mellon was doing a volume on different departments that taught archaeology in North America. They asked for some contributions about different departments and why they taught, how they taught. There's a transcript of what Robinson decided to include which goes into this

very impassioned defense of the study of classics and classical archaeology as a way of raising responsible citizens who know something about culture and the past. So I think, this idea that you study classics as an undergraduate was something he felt very seriously about.

BL: When... where did that appear?

SB: I can find you the reference. I think it's in... must be in the 1940s...

BL: That would be a very valuable thing to see.

SB: I read that to your students when they came through. I could find that for you.

BL: I remember in the late 1980s when Charles Sykes wrote that book, *Profscam*. He wrote of that piece, at the same time, in the *Wall Street Journal*, basically an epitaph for Hopkins Classics. It got a lot of play in the president's office. It was, sort of, the death of classics at Hopkins. We had—and I've forgotten the details of it—but it was...even at Hopkins, classics has fallen on terrible, hard times.

AS: That was, probably, the lowest degree...

BL: We were struggling, yes.

AS: The late 1980s...when the department came very close to being shut down, because virtually everybody had left. It was...

BL: I think Luck was the only guy...

AS: Luck was the only one left standing, yes.

BL: Because when Sykes came to campus, I remember, Luck went up and said, “Yes. I’m that guy. The last classicist at Johns” (laughter)—it didn’t turn out to be that way, though. So, the department did rebound considerably after that.

AS: I think Jerry Cooper, from Near Eastern was, sort of, the caretaker...chair for a year or two. Then, it was decided to put together a committee that would bring some famous name, which turned out to be Marcel Detienne... kind of reinvent the Classics Department that way. The administration must have felt that it would just not look good if there were no Classics Department.

BL: Was anybody doing archaeology in Classics at that point?

AS: Yes. There was one, short lived, faculty member called Lori-Ann Touchette, who was here for four, five years during that period of the meltdown. Once the new faculty, Detienne and Sissa, arrived, she didn’t fit into their plans and that was the end of her.

BL: But when you came, in 1997, that brought in a...

AS: When I came in 1997... I think Detienne and Sissa had always in the back of their mind—first they needed to hire enough people to teach the basic courses, and that was Matt Roller and another man from Berkeley. Then they had enough people to, sort of—but it was in the back of their mind that there should be an archaeologist, but they didn’t get around to it until 1995. It was the beginning of the search.

BL: Since you mentioned Near Eastern Studies, the museum includes both Near Eastern Studies and Classics. So, you don’t make any distinctions, really, between

those fields...except in terms of location and dates and etc. But it's not a Classics museum or a Near Eastern studies...but yet, we have two small departments. And I'm sure people have thought, from time to time, "Why do we have two small departments? Why don't we have one large?"—are they, essentially, different in their approaches?

AS: Oh, yes. They are very different. In fact, if you look at the whole country. Once again, Bryn Mawr is, virtually, the only place that has classical and Near Eastern archaeology in one department. Its, kind of, the exception that proves the rule. In every other university, they're separate departments. The thing that I'm not—as there are other people that can tell you about—everywhere that Ancient or Near Eastern Studies is taught, it's organized a little bit differently. The Hopkins model, which has these four subfields, is probably different from any other school. There is a huge variety of the way the ancient Near East is taught in this country, where as classics and classical archaeology is a little more standard way of doing it. The only difference would be somebody like me in some universities would be in the Art History Department and some in the Classics Department.

BL: But don't you have an appointment in Art History?

AS: Sort of courtesy. For example, Pier Luigi Tucci, who was also a classical archaeologist, is based in the Art History Department.

BL: I guess in Robinson's day he was the Art History Department, in some respects.
(Laughter)

AS: I think, at times, he had a second, younger person—that's a good question, whether there was more faculty besides Robinson in archaeology. I'm not sure.

BL: He cast a pretty big shadow. (Laughter)

AS: Yes.

BL: We can look at the circulars, and we can find out who the associate was.

SB: Well, there are letters to the president saying, "Here are all the different things that I have taken on, arranged in the museum teaching all these courses, overseeing so and so"—he doesn't often mention other people when doing this. (Laughter)

AS: No, he doesn't.

SB: And that maybe because he has chosen to pretend that they're not there.

BL: What Alan said about his publishing, where he and a grad student would publish this and that..it was a...

AS: Right.

BL: Although, that's common in many fields, too. So it's not, in any way, unusual to have Classics and Near Eastern Studies separate and equal and unequal...

AS: No.

BL: But the museums are not arranged that way, or you wouldn't have two separate museums?

SB: A small university collection, probably not. Though, there are some discussions, in the early letters, about how all the cuneiform tablets and the things related to the cylinder seals, for example, stayed with the Oriental Seminary because they were taught with there. Whereas all these materials, for example, was specifically purchased by members in classics for teaching their courses. Perhaps they were at some point just stored with all of the reference materials in their seminar rooms. But when this museum was created—and I haven't found any information about when the third floor of McCoy Hall became this museum space, maybe at that point everything was kept in one place for logistical reasons, I have no idea.

BL: That is the Hopkins tradition of the seminary has its own library...

AS: Right.

BL: You do your work in the Oriental seminary or the Historical and Political Science seminary.

AS: But the collection, I think, was always one collection.

SB: I haven't...

AS: There's no..?

SB: There's no evidence to say one or the other. All I can say is that there are different people donating parts of the collection, and they just say that they give it to the university. Then, it ends up here. There's not really a clear...

BL: Did I understand before that we're not actively collecting now?

AS: Right. I mean, there's no acquisitions budget. I think it's fair to say.

BL: Is that a weakness or we have what we need already?

AS: I think a lot of people in the museum world would say that if a museum doesn't grow, at least a little bit, that it, kind of, becomes an artifact of another era. I mean, the pre-Columbian collection is an example of a pretty radical change about ten years ago. Where, not only did a lot of new material come in the field, but the museum hadn't been collecting before. The museum accepts gifts, but it does not have a budget.

BL: But as Curator, you don't have a budget to go out and buy...

AS: No.

SB: No, and I imagine that Betsy would agree with me, I think we should ask her, too. The fact that the collection has never been fully documented and carefully accounted for. (Laughing) Even in its long history, and this has been going on for a very long time. There are lots of letters that say, "We really need to know what's in this collection, it really needs to be documented." We haven't been able to get there, as yet. Not even knowing what we have and making sure that it's all accounted for means that acquiring more material adds this additional burden. That's, I think, one big concern for us. Making sure that we can care of what we already have. And then, really making this material accessible because, like I said, with this website and this new online search on our website; people are writing to us about material that's been, sort of, languishing in storage for many decades. So, there are still a lot of things to be published and researched that have never been accessible before. We, also, do have a policy that if all of our ethical and

legal requirements are met, we do consider donations. Our Advisory Board regularly sees requests for acquisition and renders a decision. So, it's a possibility, but we're not in the position to purchase anything.

BL: It's a stunning space visually. I'm wondering how it is for research and teaching. Is it a good working space? As a faculty member or curator?

SB: I think it's a fantastic space. It does, you know, sometimes sitting in a glass box and having people stare at you is a little... (Laughter)

BL: I was going to say, you're kind of part of the exhibit, you know... (Laughter)

SB: But, I think what it does, it makes visible the work that it takes to look after a collection, to research a collection. It draws people in when they see faculty and students working with objects. It makes it feel much more open, whereas I think the previous space was completely shut in. You only had access if you were friends with someone that could let you in.

BL: I remember walking by and it was only open two hours a week or something. (Laughter)

AS: Right, most people did not know it was there. Even if they were in Gilman Hall every day.

SB: We have this open plan, such that even if the museum space, the interior space is not open, you can walk around the museum and still see four hundred objects. It's a very unusual design. Of course, the conservator in me is always concerned about that, so we rotate our exhibitions as often as we can to make sure that the

more light sensitive things come in and out. I think it's a tremendous sense of openness that did not exist before, and if you look at some of the early writings about what this collection was supposed to do, it was supposed to be a way of connecting with the ancient past on a daily basis and here, it's really fulfilling that mission. We have regular visitors that come through the same corridors every day and might stop to look at their favorite objects. I think that's a very, very different way of thinking about how this collection can be useful and inspiring.

BL: I noticed that paleontologists, and other museum people, increasingly put their work in a glass box, basically, at the Smithsonian. So, you can watch them put together their new T-Rex—I'm not sure I'd like to be the paleontologist with the—do you teach in this space often?

AS: I haven't taught, on a regular basis, in this space. I typically, like when we did the seminar on the red figure cups, we came in here three or four times over the course of the semester. I mean there's a certain amount of—and especially falls on Sanchita to bring material out of the cases and set it up here in such a way that it can be looked at and handled. There's some effort involved in there, but there are other people... and your classes meet in here.

SB: Betsy's classes often read in here, and we have James Osborne teaching in there, right now. Emily Anderson, also a classicist, teaches every semester here. So, every week they work with objects in the collection.

BL: Yes, it is quite a fantastic space. I have a, kind of, final speculative question. Which is, what would David Robinson think about this department now, if he

could come back and see it? Would he see it as an extension of what he'd been trying to do or has the field taken a different trajectory than his day, and he would find it either unsettling or just different?

AS: No, I think on the whole he would approve of it. He would probably be a little disappointed that we have a relatively few graduate students in Classical Archaeology, fewer than, I'd say, in his time. Actually, getting fewer all the time. When I retire, which will be next year, there may not be much classical archaeology left at all.

BL: That's a shame given our history.

AS: Right. Yes, and with this collection. So, he would probably think that priorities of the department are a little bit... not so sympathetic to him. But, it's always been true at Hopkins that the university goes through cycles. There were, as I said, long periods after Robinson left, when archaeology dwindled here. Then somebody came in and it was revived for a while, and then they left...because we're so small, we're always on the edge of extinction. For a while, starting when Michael Koortbojian taught here around 2007, we started an inter-departmental program between classics and art history, that I think Robinson would be very much...that has now, pretty much, died. Because the Art History department has withdrawn from it.

BL: I think we have always been so dependent on particular people. I mean, Robinson made this place an epicenter for it.

AS: Right. Right.

- BL: As did Albright in his field, but then you depend on finding somebody who can...now, Kyle McCarter said, “Well, when Albright retired they had to get six people to replace him.” And he wasn’t entirely joking. (Laughter)
- AS: A good example when Robinson left, one of his pupils, John Young, became the archaeologist. Unfortunately, John Young was not a particularly significant figure in the field. Not somebody who would attract graduate students to come here. He was a pretty notorious alcoholic, in his later years. So, through the 1950s and 1960s, even in the 1970s, there was a lot less going on in archaeology.
- BL: That happened in physics. When Rowland died young, his replacement was a guy named Wood. Who was very good, but kept us in one particular direction doing diffraction gratings. If you’re dependent on one person like that, if you get somebody who doesn’t do the job as well as his or her predecessor, it’s really tough. For you, about Robinson and the museum, I presume that given this old photo that he would think that you’re living in heaven here. (Laughter)
- SB: I think so. I wish he’d have left us some more clues as to how he was thinking about arranging the museum. The sense that I get from reading his letters is that he really felt that these were his personal objects that he was so familiar with. Being someone, who was obviously such a scholar, he didn’t always give us a clue as to how to recognize these objects later on. Often, we find these cryptic messages and letters and things like that, which I’d love to be able to associate with actual objects in our collection. Even the different administrators were, sort of, asking him to please document what’s yours, document what’s the museum’s, what belongs to the AIA. Clearly, it was not something he wanted to do very

much of. I wish could've given us a little more of a clue, (laughter) so that we could have less time to detect these things through the CVA and other sources.

AS: I think it's pretty clear that very little of his private collection is now here.

SB: I assume so...

AS: Certainly, not of the major pieces. That I think is a great shame, because he's so identified with Johns Hopkins.

BL: Did they go with him to Mississippi? Is that what happened?

AS: Yes, they went him to Mississippi. At his death, the lion's share was given to Harvard. Now, we know he had some falling out with the university here, which caused him to go to Mississippi in the first place. I mean why would you move to Mississippi?

BL: I thought he was hitting up mandatory retirement...

SB: Yes, I think that...

BL: Because he was 70.

AS: Yes, but he could've lived here in his retirement. Something fell out between him and the university. A young classicist in Ole Miss was smart enough to say, "If you come to Mississippi, you can continue teaching,"—and he was not ready to stop teaching. He did teach for a good ten years in Mississippi and bought like crazy... added to his collection and published. I think that he, quite deliberately, didn't leave much of anything to Hopkins. He left a fair amount to Ole Miss, for which they built a modern museum. Harvard, of course, had already a pretty

substantial collection but a very large percentage of the Greek vases in the Fogg or Sackler, are ex-Robinson.

BL: That is a missed opportunity.

AS: Yes, if we had what he gave to Harvard, sold...what he gave to Mississippi, we would be ahead of Penn and, virtually, every other museum of antiquities...university museum.

BL: I hate to end on a down note. (Laughter) ...We want to end on an up note... (Laughter) The classics is still relevant for Hopkins education...

AS: Yes. (Laughter)

BL: But we do have undergraduate classics majors...

AS: Yes. We have a few, and we have a few graduate students.

BL: I hope we will contribute...

AS: Yes.

BL: And continue. Is there anything that I left out that you want to add, for the record? Robinson's legacy, I guess.

AS: Well, that was the one thing I wanted to say. There's a very major piece that was Robinson's but we have it on loan from the BMA, which very kindly lent it to us. But it doesn't actually belong to us and could go back any time.

BL: Well, thank you. That was a wonderful interview, and I appreciate your time.

AS: I learned a lot.

BL: (Laughter)

End of Interview