

A Timeless Classic: The Story of the Diniacopoulos Family Collection

**Clarence Epstein
Concordia University**

When Olga and Vincent Diniacopoulos arrived in Montreal from Post-War Europe, they brought with them more than two thousand antiquities amassed since 1900. As archaeologists and conservators, they hoped to impart their knowledge and passion of the old world to the new world.

Despite their efforts to organize related exhibitions and lectures, Canada's largest private collection of antiquities was acknowledged by few members of the academic and museum communities. If not for the exertions of the Government of Quebec to acquire from Vincent Diniacopoulos in 1966 a number of significant Greek and Roman pieces, little from their original collection would have remained in Canada. Indeed, when Olga Diniacopoulos decided to disperse the rest of the works in 1998, several of the world's most important museums and private collectors zealously vied for possession of the family provenance.

In order to place the astute acquisition of the Government of Quebec into context, we must consider those works from Assyria, Persia, Sumer, Akkad, Babylonia, Parthia, Nubia, and especially Egypt, which provided the original collection with its comprehensive representation of the ancient world. For the couple, it was impossible to understand the development of civilization without comparing the social and cultural development of societies. A survey of the original holdings will bring to light the encyclopaedic depth of the Diniacopoulos Collection.

