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SPECIFICITY OF ARTIFACT DESCRIPTION TERMINOLOGY IN ENGLISH MUSEUM CATALOGUES

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For historians and archaeologists, a museum catalogue is not merely an inventory list but a critical scholarly tool that ensures the verification and classification of finds. In the context of the globalization of the academic sphere, English-language museum discourse has become the international standard for professional communication. The precision of terminology used in the catalogues of leading institutions, such as the British Museum or the Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met), directly affects the quality of attribution, dating, and subsequent historical interpretation of artifacts. The terminology system for describing artifacts in the English-speaking environment is based on the use of controlled vocabularies, such as *The Getty Art & Architecture Thesaurus*. The description structure usually covers three levels: technological attribution, condition analysis, and reconstruction of the provenance context.

Classification of Archaeological Finds. In English museum discourse, classification is based on the principles of functionality and morphology, which allows for the integration of a find into a broader historical context. The systematization process involves the use of a hierarchical structure of terms:

Vessels and Containers: This category is the most detailed. It covers terms for describing form and purpose, such as *storage jars* (*pithoi*), *drinking vessels* (*cups, kylikes*), and *ritual vessels* (*sacrificial bowls*). Terminology for *cooking ware*, *tableware,* and *transport amphorae* is distinguished separately.

Tools and Implements: Classification is conducted by field of application. Terms used include *agricultural tools*, *textile tools* (e.g., *spindle whorls*), and *woodworking tools*.

Personal Adornments: Description is based on anatomical placement and material. Characteristic terms include *fibulae* (brooches), *torque* (neck ring), *lunula,* and *intaglio* (*engraved gems*).

Military Equipment: Divided into *offensive weapons* (*swords, spearheads*) and *defensive armor* (*helmets, cuirasses*).

Votive and Ritual Objects: This group includes artifacts with sacred significance, such as *figurines, amulets,* and *altars*. Such an extensive terminology system allows not just for naming an object, but for immediately defining its role in the socio-economic life of ancient society.

Technological and Material Attribution. In English terminology, there is a detailed system of names. For example, for ceramics: from general *earthenware* and *stoneware* to specific *black-figure* or *slip-cast*. Metal artifacts are described through processing techniques: *repoussé (chasing*), *filigree*, *cloisonné* (*enamel*), or *lost-wax casting*. This allows for the reconstruction of the level of craft development in society and the identification of regional production characteristics.

Condition Analysis and "Object Biography." A special place is occupied by the concept of "object biography," where the *Condition Report* becomes a tool for reconstructing the history of an item from the moment of its creation to its museum acquisition. Here, terminology is divided into several functional categories:

Natural Degradation: Terms such as *pitting* (point corrosion), *oxidation*, *craquelure* (*network of cracks*), or *mineralization* allow archaeologists to determine the environment in which the object remained.

Anthropogenic Impact: Lexemes such as *abrasion, indentations,* or *micro-chipping* help evaluate the intensity of exploitation of *edged weapons* or tools.

Museum History: In English museum discourse, the history of an object's preservation is documented with extreme terminological precision, clearly distinguishing between different types of physical intervention. The term "stabilization" refers to the minimum necessary actions taken to halt further chemical or mechanical decay without changing the object's appearance (e.g., desalination of ceramics or consolidation of friable surfaces). In contrast, "restoration" focuses on "visual recovery" and the aesthetic reintegration of the artifact, aiming to return it to a known or assumed former state the boundary between original material and modern intervention is marked by specific formulas in museum catalogues. The phrase "reconstructed from fragments" indicates that while the object is composed of original pieces, its structural integrity has been restored using modern adhesives. When missing parts are replaced to provide structural support or visual continuity, the term "gap-filling" (or "*infilling*") is used. This process is governed by the principle of "discernibility", which dictates that all modern additions must be subtly identifiable upon close inspection to prevent the creation of "fake" antiquities.

Furthermore, modern English terminology increasingly uses the word "remediation" to describe the removal of harmful previous restorations. Documentation also tracks "preventive" "conservation", which refers to controlling environmental conditions (*humidity,light, temperature*) rather than treating the object itself. Such detailed categorization allows researchers to evaluate the degree of an artifact's "integrity" and "authenticity", ensuring that the "object biography" accurately reflects both its ancient life and its modern museum history.

Linguistic Features of Description. Descriptions in English catalogues often use passive constructions and impersonal sentences to ensure scientific objectivity (e.g.,*is dated to, is characterized by*). Also characteristic is the use of compound adjectives to describe the morphology of objects: *pear-shaped, double-handled, high-necked*. This promotes conciseness and precision in visualizing the object without the need for illustrations.

Specificity of Decorative Elements and Provenance. English catalogues are distinguished by high detail in describing ornamentation. The use of terms like *incised, burnished,* or *embossed* allows for the differentiation of artistic schools. The *Provenance* section operates with standardized formulas (*formerly in the collection of, bequeathed by*), ensuring transparency in ownership history. Standards for archival description in the English-language environment, such as ISAD(G), DACS, and EAD, ensure a transparent and accessible information space. They transform archives into dynamic databases where metadata serves as a key to understanding the context of a document's creation. For modern historians and archaeologists, mastering these standards is a critical necessity for working with global resources like the Smithsonian Institution or The National Archives (UK).

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