The Origins of Museums
The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth-and-Seventeenth-Century Europe
Edited by Oliver Impey

Edited by Arthur MacGregor

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- A reprint of the original 1985 edition with updated photographs
- Thirty-three essays from scholarly contributors on the evolution of collecting, and how this lead to the formation of the modern museum
- One of the first books to explore how collectors live with their objects, a subject which has become increasingly studied and popular

History Today carried a feature in 2015, describing *The Origin of Museums* as "a cult book [that] spawned a new discipline in the history of collecting". Indeed, the first publication of this book in 1985 undoubtedly marked a propitious moment in the development of interest, in what has since grown to be a dynamic subject-area in its own right. That an appetite for such matters was already there is confirmed by the fact that the first impression sold out within a few months, a second impression a year or two later, and the third in 1989. There was to be no further printing by the original publishers, Oxford University Press. However in 2001 a new edition appeared with a new publisher. Demand again proved buoyant, but within a few months the company failed; having operated on a print-on-demand basis, it left behind it no unsold stock. *The Origins of Museums* reverted to a scarce (though much sought-after) volume. With original copies now selling for hundreds, if not thousands of pounds, the Ashmolean is proud to make this important volume readily available again.

The late **Oliver Impey** and **Arthur Macgregor** were both Assistant Keepers at the Ashmolean Museum, and both were involved with the *Journal of the History of Collections*.

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