

# Representation Matters: Religion

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Museum Studies Praxis Fieldwork Seminar  
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Fieldsite: Bryn Mawr Special Collections  
Fieldwork Supervisors: Carrie Robbins and Marianne Weldon

## Goals and Deliverables of my Internship

- Help improve ways of tagging and searching for religious objects in Bryn Mawr's Special Collections
- Keyword and write blurbs for sample objects within TriArte
- Write a series of instructions for keywording that can go in Special Collections' Data Entry Standards document, using specific examples from my project

## Processes of my Internship

- 1) Explore the digital collections of museums across the country and find out what works and what doesn't for religious objects
- 2) Do the same thing with TriArte, the online database for the TriCo's Special Collections
- 3) Combine the previous two steps to create and implement a plan for TriArte

## Easier Change Within TriArte

**Seated Buddha**

Carved stone

12 1/4 in. x 6 1/2 in. x 3 in. (31.12 cm x 16.51 cm x 7.62 cm)  
Gift of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia

Bryn Mawr College  
**Accession Number:** 2006.2.8  
**Other Number(s):** 24235 (The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia Number)  
**Geography:** Asia, India  
**Classification:** Fine and Visual Arts; Sculptures  
**Culture/Nationality:** Indian  
**Collection:** William S. Vaux Collection of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia

Keywords Click a term to view the records with the same keyword [\\*Show Keyword Descriptions](#)

This object has the following keywords:  
[religion and mythology](#)



**Seated Buddha**

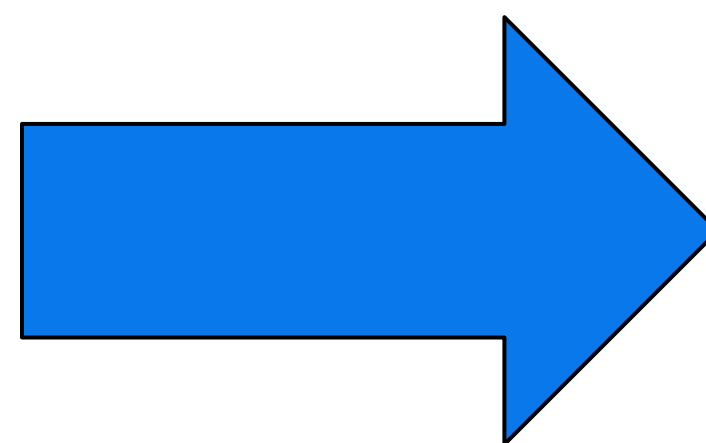
Carved stone

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Keywords Click a term to view the records with the same keyword [\\*Show Keyword Descriptions](#)

This object has the following keywords:  
[bhumisparśa mudra\\*](#), [Buddhas](#), [Buddhas\\*](#), [Buddhism](#), [Buddhism\\*](#), [Gautama Buddha\\*](#), [lotus\\*](#), [lotus thrones\\*](#), [mudra\\*](#), [padmasana\\*](#), [religion\\*](#), [Religion](#), [religion and mythology](#), [religions\\*](#), [Religions\\*](#), [religious art\\*](#), [religious objects\\*](#), [uṣṇīṣa\\*](#)



## More Complex Change Within Triarte

**Abraham Casting out Hagar and Ishmael**

Engraving

Composition  
20 in. x 16 in. (50.8 cm x 40.64 cm)  
Gift of Richard E. Bishop in memory of Mary E. Harrington

Bryn Mawr College  
**Accession Number:** 2005.3.129  
**Classification:** Fine and Visual Arts; Prints; Engravings  
**Collection:** Harrington-Bishop Collection

Keywords Click a term to view the records with the same keyword [\\*Show Keyword Descriptions](#)

This object has the following keywords:  
[religion and mythology](#)



**Abraham Casting out Hagar and Ishmael**

Engraving

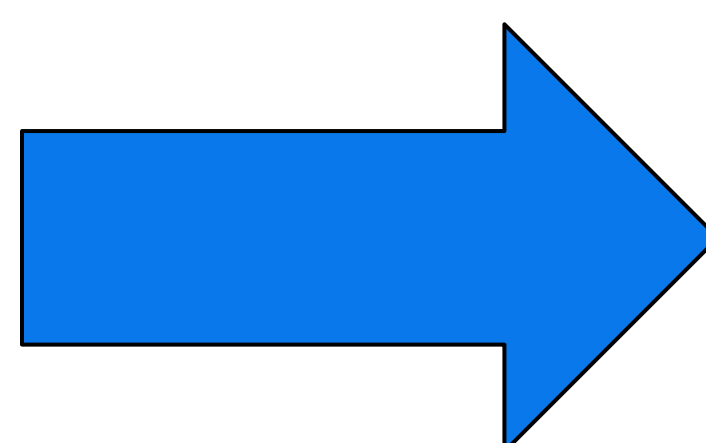
Composition  
20 in. x 16 in. (50.8 cm x 40.64 cm)  
Gift of Richard E. Bishop in memory of Mary E. Harrington

Bryn Mawr College  
**Accession Number:** 2005.3.129  
**Classification:** Fine and Visual Arts; Prints; Engravings  
**Collection:** Harrington-Bishop Collection  
**Description:** This engraving is of a scene from Genesis. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, Hagar (far right) was the slave of Sarah (far left). Sarah was the wife of the biblical patriarch Abraham, but due to her infertility, they had no children. To ensure Abraham's line would continue, he fathered a child, Ishmael, with Hagar. Several years later, Sarah became able to conceive and gave birth to her and Abraham's son Isaac. The birth of Isaac led to tension between the two women and the two children. Eventually, Abraham exiled Hagar and Ishmael at Sarah's bidding.

In the Islamic tradition, Hagar and Ishmael are named Hajar and Ismail, and Hajar was Abraham's (Ibrahim's) wife. After Hajar and Ismail were cast out when Ismail was a baby, God sent them a spring of water in the middle of the desert to help them survive. This spring became the Zamzam Well in Mecca and is considered holy by Muslims.

Keywords Click a term to view the records with the same keyword [\\*Show Keyword Descriptions](#)

This object has the following keywords:  
[Abraham \(Biblical patriarch\)\\*](#), [Abrahamic religions\\*](#), [Bible stories\\*](#), [engravings\\*](#), [Hagar \(Biblical figure\)\\*](#), [Isaac \(Biblical patriarch\)\\*](#), [Ishmael \(Biblical figure\)\\*](#), [Judaism\\*](#), [religion and mythology](#), [religions\\*](#), [Religions\\*](#), [religious art\\*](#), [Sarah \(Biblical matriarch\)\\*](#)



## Takeaways

- Word choice is incredibly important for cultural items
- Be wary of assumptions or biases
- Be as specific, respectful, and accurate as possible when keywording