Charles Townley Encyclopedia Article

Charles Townley

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Charles Townley

1733-1805

British traveler and collector who stimulated interest in the archaeology of ancient Rome. Like many wealthy Englishmen of his era, Townley toured the Continent in order to absorb its history and culture. Visiting Naples in 1768, Townley met British diplomat Sir William Hamilton and, following his example, became an enthusiastic collector of ancient Roman sculpture. Willed to the British Museum upon his death, the Townley marbles became the core of the museum's Roman sculpture collection.