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## Finding Aid for the Helen Clay Frick Research Files on Italian Art, 1920-1933

## SUMMARY INFORMATION

**Repository**

The Frick Collection/Frick Art Reference Library Archives  
 10 East 71st Street  
 New York, NY, 10021  
 archives@frick.org  
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**Creator**

Frick Art Reference Library.

**Title**

Helen Clay Frick Research Files on Italian Art

**ID**

FARL.100.20.2

**Date**

1920-1933

**Extent**

2.5 Linear feet (5 boxes)

**Abstract**

Helen Clay Frick (1888-1984), daughter of industrialist and art collector Henry Clay Frick, founded the Frick Art Reference Library in 1920 and served as its director until 1983. These files were produced through her research on Italian sculpture and painting, primarily to annotate photo mounts in the Frick Art Reference Library Photoarchive. The Research Files span the years 1920-1933, and contain typed and handwritten research notes, black and white photographs, printed material, some correspondence, and extensive artist bibliographies.

**Preferred Citation**

Helen Clay Frick Research Files on Italian Art. The Frick Collection/Frick Art Reference Library Archives.

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## HISTORICAL NOTE

Helen Clay Frick (1888-1984), daughter of industrialist and art collector Henry Clay Frick, founded the Frick Art Reference Library in 1920 and served as its director until 1983. Miss Frick developed a special interest in Italian art during the 1920s, making four trips to Italy during the winter of 1923-24, and in 1925, 1927 and 1928. According to *The Story of the Frick Art Reference Library: The Early Years* by Katharine McCook Knox, the "four comprehensive field trips" during the 1920s were made to discover early Italian paintings and frescos, take careful notes on the works, and either purchase photographs when available, or have the works photographed when they were not. In 1925, Miss Frick contracted Mario Sansoni (then of Sansoni & Nesti) to photograph works of art in Italy, as well as acquire commercial photographs for the Library. In addition, photographs of Italian art were acquired for the Library in the 1920s through the services of Count Umberto Gnoli, Dr. Richard Offner, and F. Mason Perkins.

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## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains documents produced by Helen Clay Frick and the Frick Art Reference Library staff circa 1920-1933 during their research on Italian sculpture and painting, with the bulk of the documents in the collection dating from 1925-1933. The files contain typed and handwritten research notes, black and white photographs, printed material, some correspondence, and extensive artist bibliographies. The primary purpose of Miss Frick's research was to annotate photographic reproductions of artworks for the Library's photograph collection, now known as the Photoarchive. The documents in this collection are both preliminary and completed research notes for these annotations. The photographs in this collection are mainly duplicates of those in the Photoarchive, though some are described by Miss Frick or other Library researchers as unidentified.

Miss Frick's research notes follow the structure of the Frick Art Reference Library Photoarchive annotations, listing underneath a mounted reproduction of each painting or sculpture the title of work, name of artist, location of work, approximate date, known reproductions, owner, description, and bibliographic information.

In addition to research notes for the Photoarchive, there is also extensive bibliographic information for several Italian sculptors and painters. The majority of the bibliographic references were published circa 1923-1927 in periodicals such as *The Burlington Magazine*.

The collection also includes Miss Frick's notes and brief correspondence with librarians at the Frick Art Reference Library and other brief correspondence related to the purchase of photographic reproductions from well-known early 20th century photographic firms such as Alinari.

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## ARRANGEMENT

The materials are organized in three series:

Series I: Italian Sculpture

Series II: Italian Painting

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These records are open for research under the conditions of The Frick Collection/Frick Art Reference Library Archives access policy. Contact the Archives Department for further information at [archives@frick.org](mailto:archives@frick.org).

**Processing Information**

Arranged and described by Caroline Caviness, 2008.

[Return to Top »](#)**CONTROLLED ACCESS HEADINGS****Genre(s)**

- Photographs.
- Research notes.
- Correspondence.

**Personal Name(s)**

- Frick, Helen Clay, 1888-1984.

**Subject(s)**

- Art, Italian.

[Return to Top »](#)**COLLECTION INVENTORY****Series I: Italian Sculpture, circa 1920-1933, undated**

Series I. Italian Sculpture is further divided under Notes, Notes and Photographs, and Photographs. Notes contains typed and handwritten notes by Miss Frick on Italian sculpture. Each half sheet of paper lists the following information: title of work, artist or school to which the work is attributed, location of work, date created, photographic reproductions, collection, a brief description of the work, and brief bibliographic references. Notes and Photographs contains miscellaneous notes from Frick Art Reference Library staff, and photographs. The material was maintained in its original folder groupings with the original folder names, and items were filed within folders in original order.

**Notes**

Arranged alphabetically by city.

Box	Folder		Date
1	1	Bergamo - Florence	undated
1	2	Genoa - Prato	undated
1	3-4	Ravenna - Siena and Provinces	undated
1	5	Venice - Miscellaneous	undated
1	6-9	"Helen Clay Frick Preliminary Notes for Completed Frick Art Reference Library Mounts"	undated
2	1-4	"Helen Clay Frick Preliminary Notes for Completed Frick Art Reference Library Mounts"	undated
2	5	"Helen Clay Frick Preliminary Notes for Completed Frick Art Reference Library Mounts" – Musée Jacquemart-André	undated

### Notes and Photographs

Folders titled "Not Identified" were originally titled by Library staff in 1987, "Italian Sculpture Photos w/ Notes by Miss Frick Not Identified"

Box	Folder		Date
2	6	Desiderio, da Settignano, 1428-1464	undated
		Material stored in oversize box.	
2	7	Miscellaneous Cities	1933, undated
2	8	"Not Identified"	undated
3	1-2	"Not Identified"	undated
3	3-4	Miscellaneous research notes	1925-1933, undated
3	5	"Notes"	1931, undated

### Photographs

Arranged alphabetically by city, followed by a small group arranged by artist and type of sculpture. Dates indicate the dates the photographs were taken, according to the Alinari Archives, accessible online at <http://www.alinariarchives.it/>. Some photographs can be identified on the Alinari Archives site by searching for the partial image id (located at the bottom of Alinari, Brogi, and Andersen photographs).

Box	Folder		Date
3	6	Arezzo	circa 1920-1930
3	7	Florence – Palazzo Pitti	circa 1920-1930
3	8	Florence – Palazzo Vecchio	circa 1920-1930
3	9	Florence – Santa Maria Novella	circa 1920-1930
3	10	Florence – Church of Santi Guida e Simone	circa 1920-1930
3	11	Florence – Church of San Romolo	circa 1920-1930
3	12	Rome – Santa Maria in Trastevere	circa 1920-1930
3	13	Rome – San Giovanni in Laterno	circa 1920-1930
3	14	Rome – Misc. Churches	circa 1920-1930

3	15	Subiaco – Santa Scolastica	circa 1920-1930
4	1	Sulmona – Cattedrale di San Panfilo	circa 1920-1930
4	2	Sulmona – Chiesa dell S.S. Annunziata	1933
4	3	Torre de' Passeri	circa 1933
4	4	Cecere, Gaetano	circa 1931, undated
4	5-7	School of Donatello	undated
4	8	Sculptural Relief	circa 1920-1930, undated

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#### Series II: Italian Painting, 1925-1930, undated

Helen Clay Frick's typed and handwritten notes on Italian painting, as well as photographic reproductions of Italian paintings that are duplicates of the Frick Art Reference Library photo mounts. "Dupes" include photographs, clippings and notes, many pertaining to lectures Dr. Richard Offner gave at the Library from 1925-1927 on Italian art.

Box	Folder		Date
4	9	Helen Clay Frick Preliminary Notes for Completed Frick Art Reference Library Mounts	undated
4	10	Miscellaneous Notes	circa 1930, undated
5	1-6	"Dupes"	1925-1930, undated

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#### Series III: Artists Bibliographies, undated

Arranged alphabetically by artist name.

Box	Folder		Date
5	7-9	Italian Artists	undated

Benedetto, da Maiano, 1442-1497.

Desiderio, da Settignano, 1428-1464.

Ghiberti, Lorenzo, 1378-1455.

Jacopo, della Quercia, 1372?-1436.

Mino, da Fiesole, 1429-1484.

Nicola, Da Apulia; Pisano, Niccolò, 1206?-1280? (formerly known as)

Pisano, Andrea, 1270-1348?

Pisano, Giovanni, 1240?-1320?

Pisano, Nino, ca. 1315-ca. 1368.

Rossellino, Bernardo, 1409-1464.

Rossellino, Antonio, 1427-1479.

Verrocchio, Andrea del, 1435?-1488. (as sculptor)

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