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LES ANTIQUITÉS CLASSIQUES

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FOREWORD BY HENRI LAVAGNE

This double volume introduces Fondation Gandur's collection of classical antiques gathered over more than forty years by Jean Claude Gandur in strict compliance with the law that regulates the buying and selling of antiques. It is a remarkable collection for the wealth, variety, and beauty of its over 400 totally unprecedented objects of material culture, 200 of which are analyzed in the present edition.

The first volume investigates the subject of ancient religion by observing images of idols, goddesses, gods, and devotees, and through them related rituals and religious practices; while the second focuses on especially exquisite objects, luxurious trifles known since ancient times as *deliciae*.

However, in both cases there is a two-fold purpose: on the one hand, making these artifacts known to the broadest public possible of scholars and enthusiasts, while on the other, giving voice to these very objects, allowing them to become the means for an increasingly profound knowledge of subjects connected to archaeology, to the history of religions, to iconography, and to the many aspects peculiar to ancient history and especially to the relationship between humankind and the rest of the world.

These two volumes interact with each other, forming a whole that offers a sparkling view of Greek-Roman antiquity, from geometric Italy to the Roman Orient of the Later Empire, through archaic Cyprus, classical Greece, and Hellenistic Egypt. Categorized by subject, origin, and date, each of these artifacts is analyzed by type and iconography, and is then placed within the historical context in which it was created.

This set is thus an invitation to readers to take part in a wonderful journey in the company of the gods and mortals of the ancient Mediterranean.

Isabelle Tassignon holds a PhD in archaeology and history of religions. She has been a member of the École française d'Athènes and a professor at the University of Namur. She is now the curator of the classical archaeology and ethnology collections at the Fondation Gandur pour l'Art.

Henri Lavagne has a PhD in literature and was a member of the École française de Rome. He has taught at the École pratique des Hautes Études (Paris-Sorbonne); in 2006 he joined the Institut (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres).