

Artful Adventures

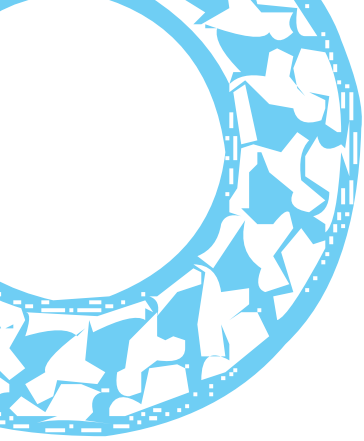
ANCIENT
GREECE

An interactive guide for families



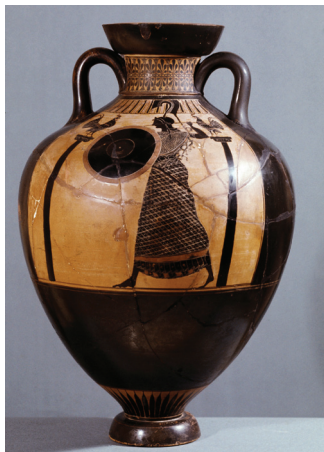
Your
Greek
Adventure
Awaits You!

See inside for details



ANCIENT GREECE

The Ancient Greek civilization lasted for about 850 years, from 900 b.c. to 31 b.c. Ancient Greek culture had a strong influence on the art, architecture, literature, commerce, politics, and social structure of the civilizations that followed it. Today we are going to look at some of the pottery and sculpture created during this important period in history and learn from these pieces about what life was like for the people who made them. The Greek gallery is located on the lower level of the Museum. Turn to the right when you get to the bottom of the stairs, and you will see cases full of large vases. This is the Greek gallery.



Greek, Attic, in the manner of the Berlin Painter. Panathenaic amphora, ca. 500–490 b.c. Ceramic; h. 62.4 cm., diam. 41.1 cm. Bequest of Mrs. Allan Marquand (1950-10) (photo: Bruce M. White)

GREEK GODS

The ancient Greeks worshipped many gods. Most of them represented forces of nature, like Poseidon, the god of the sea. The goddess Athena was different. She was a goddess of war, wisdom, and the domestic arts (like spinning and weaving). She was also the patron goddess of Athens, one of the most famous and powerful Greek city-states. In the case to your left, find the large vase, called an amphora, with a picture of Athena on it. Athena is walking between two columns, each with a rooster on top.

On the opposite side of the Athena amphora, which you can see by walking around to the other side of the case, you will see a picture of one of the contests. What kind of contest do you see?

WHAT IS SHE WEARING? CAN YOU DESCRIBE HOW SHE IS DRESSED?

You can recognize Athena on other works of art by her helmet and shield, reminding us that she is the goddess of war. This vase was important in the life of Athens. Once every four years the city of Athens gave a big party in honor of Athena. As part of the celebration, the Athenians held a big feast. They also held contests: running races, wrestling contests, chariot races, and even poetry and drama competitions.

HAVE YOU EVER PARTICIPATED IN A CONTEST? WHAT KIND?

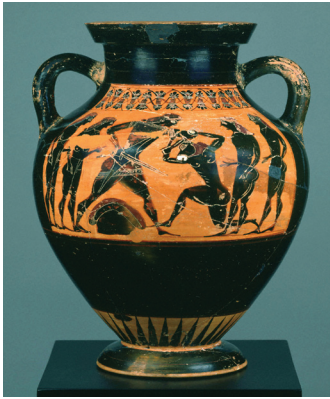
DID THEY HAVE PRIZES? WHAT WERE THEY?

See the answer below:

Yes, it's chariot racing! Winners of these contests would have received vases like this filled with olive oil, which athletes rubbed on their bodies. The Greeks also cooked with olive oil, so it was very important to them.



GREEK HEROES



Greek, Attic, South Italy, Campania, attributed to the Princeton Painter. Black-figure panel amphora: Theseus and the Minotaur, ca. 545–535 B.C. Ceramic; h. 42.8 cm., diam. 28.4 cm. Trumbull-Prime Collection (y168) (photo: Bruce M. White)

The Greeks also honored great heroes who could do amazing things. One of the most famous Greek heroes was Theseus. In the same case as the amphora we just looked at, but higher up, you will find an amphora with a picture of Theseus killing the Minotaur, a monster with the body of a man and the head of a bull. Theseus, the son of the king of Athens, was sent to Crete to kill the Minotaur and free the Athenian youths the Minotaur was holding captive. Theseus went home a hero and became the king of Athens.



Another important Greek hero was Herakles, the strongest person who ever lived. You may know him by his Roman name Hercules. You can see Herakles with his nephew on the large amphora in the center of the gallery. Here they are fighting a monster with nine heads, called the Hydra.



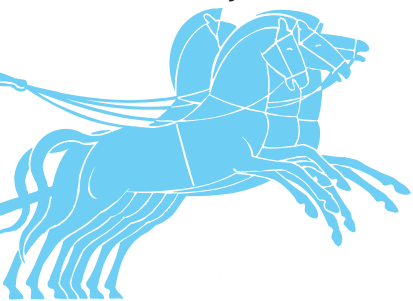
Greek, Attic: Red-figure amphora with Herakles and the Hydra, attributed to the Pezzino Painter, ca. 510–500 B.C. Ceramic, h. 58.0 cm., diam. 40.6 cm. Lent by the Collection of Shelby White and Leon Levy

Herakles was told he must accomplish twelve almost impossible deeds. Of course, being a hero, he managed to complete all twelve. In the deed that is pictured here, he needed some help. When one of the monster's heads was cut off, two heads grew back in its place. To stop this from happening, the nephew of Herakles, Iolaus, used a burning torch to sear the monster's neck each time Herakles cut off a head. This prevented new heads from growing back.

CAN YOU SEE THE BURNING TORCH IOLAUS IS HOLDING?

DOES THE HYDRA REMIND YOU OF ANOTHER ANIMAL?

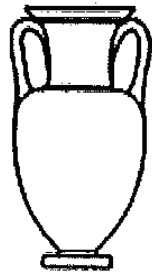
Killing the Hydra was the second of Herakles's twelve deeds. His first deed was to kill the Nemean lion. After he accomplished this task, he always wore the lion's skin. You can identify Herakles on other works of art by his club and by the lion skin.



VESSELS

Many museums house collections of Greek clay pottery like the pieces you see here. The ancient Greeks were excellent pot-makers. Clay was easy to find, and when it was fired in a kiln, or hot oven, it became very strong. The ancient Greeks are credited with inventing the potter's wheel. They decorated pottery with scenes from their everyday lives or from myths, stories about legendary heroes and the Olympian gods. Historians have been able to learn a great deal about what life was like in ancient Greece by studying the scenes painted on these vessels.

Greek pottery comes in many different shapes and sizes. This is because the vessels were used for different purposes; some were used for transportation and storage, some were for mixing, eating, or drinking. Some were decorative; others were ceremonial. Below are some of the most common shapes. See if you can find examples of each of them in the gallery.



Amphora

The amphora was a large, two-handled, oval-shaped vase with a narrow neck. It was used for storage and transport.



Krater

The word krater means "mixing bowl." This large, two-handled vase with a broad body and wide mouth was used for mixing wine with water.



Kylix

The kylix was a drinking cup with a broad, relatively shallow body. It had two horizontal handles.



Hydria

The name of this three-handled vase comes from the Greek word for water. Hydriai were used for drawing water and also as urns to hold the ashes of the dead.



Oinochoe

The Oinochoe was a small pitcher used for pouring wine from a krater into a drinking cup. The word oinochoe means "wine-pourer."



Lekythos

This narrow-necked vase with one handle usually held olive oil or perfume. It was also used in funerary ceremonies.



JEWELRY

Many ancient Greek women wore fancy jewelry. In the case on the other side of the gallery are two round brooches, or pins. They are made of gold with garnets (red jewels) and enamel on them. A goddess is pictured on each of the pins. Athena is on one, and the goddess Artemis is on the other. Both of these goddesses were unmarried and were very strong, powerful, and independent. They made great role models for Greek women! Because we find their portraits on many pieces of ancient Greek jewelry, we think these goddesses were popular among Greek women. Artemis, pictured here with a quiver of arrows over her shoulder, was the goddess of the hunt.



CAN YOU FIND THE ARROWS?

ATHENA CAN BE IDENTIFIED BY HER HELMET. CAN YOU FIND IT?

WHERE DO YOU THINK ANCIENT GREEK WOMEN WORE THESE PINS?

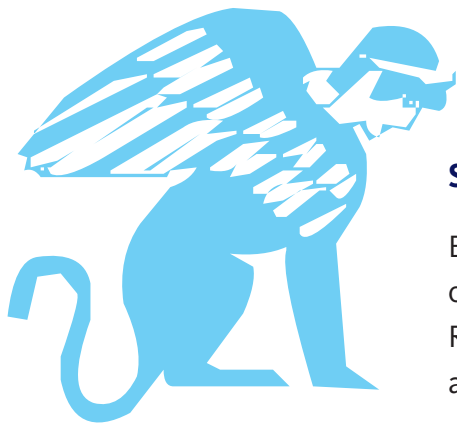
A woman would have pinned them to her robe, which is called a himation. Some think women would have worn them on their shoulders; others think on the front and the back of the robe.

WHERE WOULD YOU WEAR THEM?



Greek, Hellenistic, Thessaly. Roundels with busts of Artemis and Athena, 2d century B.C. Gold, garnet, and enamel; diam. 7.9 cm. each. Museum purchase (y1938-49-50) (photo: Bruce M. White)



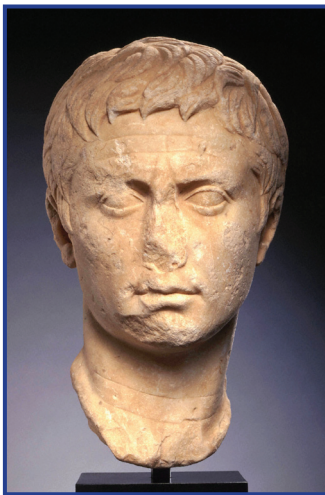


SCULPTURE

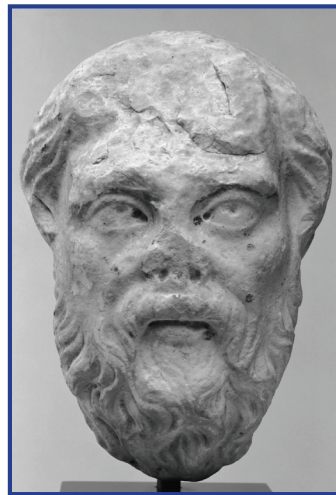
Before we end our tour today, we are going to look at some sculptures of the heads of famous Greek men. Go through the doorway into the Roman gallery. The ancient Romans loved ancient Greek art so much that ancient Roman artists often copied ancient Greek sculptures.

On the wall to the far left are three heads of famous Greek men that were made by ancient Roman artists. Farthest back is the head of the famous Greek epic poet, Homer. He wrote the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, tales about the heroes of the Trojan War—Achilles, Agamemnon, Hector, and Odysseus.

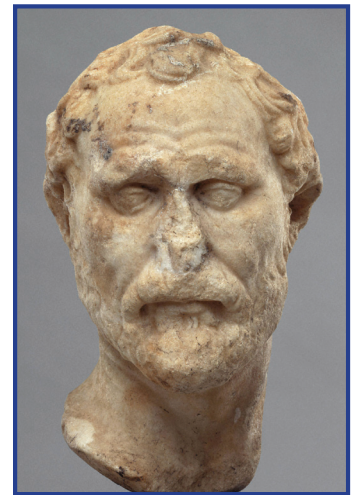
The man in the middle is Demosthenes, the most famous Greek orator, or speaker. Athens was a democracy. People voted for laws and elected officials. To persuade or convince others to vote for their ideas or candidates, they had to learn to speak persuasively. Demosthenes is remembered as the most persuasive speaker. A third famous Greek is Socrates, a teacher and philosopher who loved to question his fellow Athenians about goodness, beauty, and government. One of his students, Plato, wrote down Socrates's teachings and they are still studied today.



Roman, Augustan: Portrait of the Emperor Augustus, ca. 27–1 B.C. Carrara marble, h. 40.5 cm., w. 23.2 cm., d. 24.0 cm. Museum purchase, Fowler McCormick, Class of 1921, Fund (2000-308) (photo: Bruce M. White)



Roman. Portrait of Socrates (Type B), after a bronze prototype of around 320 B.C., probably 4th century A.D. Fine-grained white marble, probably Carrara; h. 28.1 cm., w. 20.0, d. 17.9 cm. (preserved). Bequest of P. H. von Blanckenhagen (1990-84) (photo: Bruce M. White)



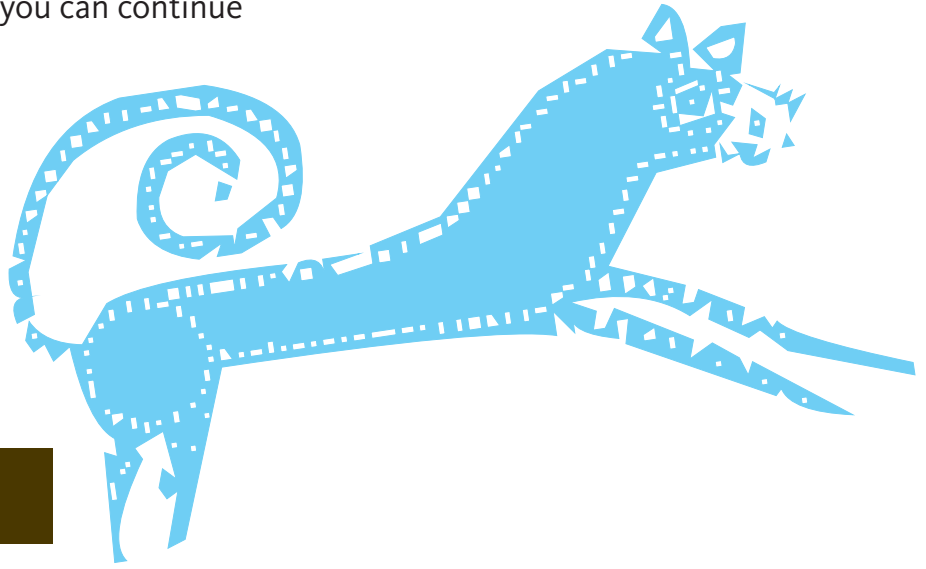
Roman. Portrait of Demosthenes, after a Greek original by Polyuktos of ca. 280–279 B.C., ca. A.D. 80. White marble with medium-sized crystals; h. 34.9 cm., w. 20.0 cm., d. 19.5 cm. (preserved). Gift of Edward Sampson, Class of 1914, for the Alden Sampson Collection (1962-133) (photo: Bruce M. White)

Thank you for joining us today to explore the art of Ancient Greece. Don't forget to stop at the information desk to collect a sticker for your Artful Adventures Passport. We hope you enjoyed your visit to the Princeton University Art Museum and that you will come back to join us for another Artful Adventure!

Here are some suggestions for ways that you can continue your Greek Adventure at home.

ART PROJECT

ANCIENT GREEK PUPPETS

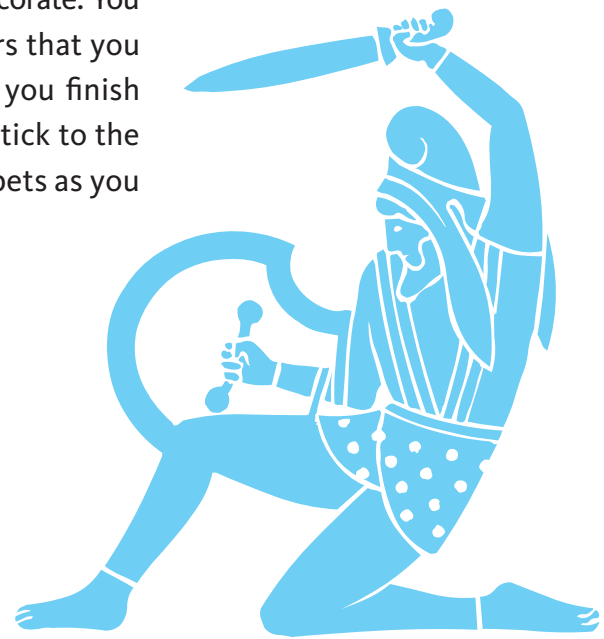


Today you learned about many myths from Ancient Greece. These myths were often performed by actors and actresses at the theater. Below are instructions for making your own puppets so you can act out the myths you learned about today!

You will need:

- Cardstock or sturdy construction paper
- Popsicle sticks
- Scissors
- Glue
- Crayons/colored pencils/markers

This project allows you to use your imagination! Create the body of the character out of the cardstock, using markers, crayons, or colored pencils to decorate. You can base your drawing and decorating on the drawings of the characters that you saw today, or come up with something completely different! Once you finish decorating your character, cut him or her out. Next, glue a popsicle stick to the back. This is the handle for your puppet. Make as many different puppets as you need to act out the myth. Now you're all set to put on a show!



SUGGESTED READING

Picture books

The Goatherd and the Shepherdess: A Tale from Ancient Greece
retold by Lenny Hort; illustrations by Lloyd Bloom

Non-fiction for young children

Step Into: Ancient Greece, by Richard Tames

National Geographic Investigates Ancient Greece: Archaeology Unlocks the Secrets of Ancient Greece, by Marni McGee

Non-fiction for older children

The Twelve Labors of Hercules, by James Riordan; illustrated by Christina Balit

The First Olympic Games: A Gruesome Greek Myth with a Happy Ending,
retold by Jean Richards; illustrated by Kat Thacker



All of these books can be found in the children's section of the Princeton Public Library.

