

Greece and Rome Level 3

 Gallery Search

 Important Facts

In Death



Clay coffins became the standard type of burial vessel on the island of Crete from about 1400 to 1100 B.C. The Minoans made the sarcophagi in two different shapes – either a footed box with gabled lid or in the form of a bathtub. Such coffins were also painted. The deceased was placed in a flexed position, and the *larnax* was secured with a cord strung through the holes in its rim and lid.

Describe the shape and decoration of the coffin, and discuss their significance.

The coffin is chest-shaped, maybe copying wooden chests that were used to store textiles or household goods, stressing a domestic theme.

The wavy lines decorating this *larnax* may represent the sea that the soul of the deceased had to cross to reach the Afterworld.

 Find the Minoan *larnax* (coffin) in the Gallery of the Bronze Age Aegean.

Ideal Man



 Find the athletic figure that reflect the style of Polykleitos - the 5th century B.C

Polykleitos was a Greek sculptor who invented the “canon”, a set of rules for rendering an ideal male body. Note the small portion of curly beard preserved at the break of the neck. This hints to the identity of the individual represented as either a bearded Herakles, or a bearded Roman emperor in the guise of this popular hero.

Elaborate grave monuments such as this one were a major form of sculptural art in the Classical period. The deceased *lostrate*, who is sitting on a *diphos*, looks into a jewel box held by her slave girl.



 Find the Grave Stele of *lostrate* , circa 350 B.C.

Why would you have a grave stele?

To commemorate and show affection for the deceased or to show your wealth and status in society

What can you discern about a woman's role in Greek society from this image?

She oversees the home and servants; she is looking for jewellery to make herself beautiful for her husband. She is fully clothed and veiled indoors.

Hoplites and Helmets



This “Corinthian” Helmet follows the classic pattern with refined curving outlines and offers all-round protection. The holes along the lower edge are for attaching a lining. Found in 1834, reportedly with the skull inside, at the battlefield of Marathon, 490 B.C.

What other helmets do we have from famous battles?

“Illyrian” Helmet- from the Battle of Plataia, 479 B.C.

“Chalkidian” Helmet- Battle of Thermopylai, 480 B.C.

As the resources of Greek city-states and individuals increased, armies of foot soldiers, known as hoplites, were formed within the wealthier city-states. These soldiers were characteristically equipped with about 35 kg of armour.

Look at images of hoplites in the surrounding case. List the typical equipment of a hoplite soldier.

 Find the “Corinthian” Helmet, 490 B.C.

A 2.5-3 metre thrusting spear with metal tip and butt, a helmet, cuirass (chest armour), greaves (shin guards), and a large shield about 75 cm in diameter.

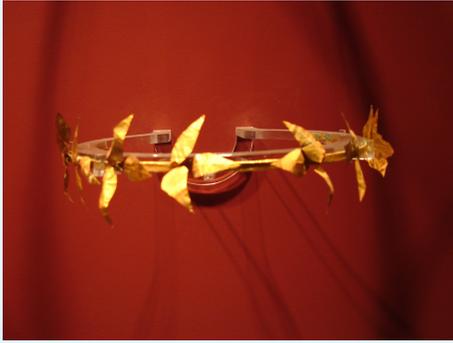
Find another ruler in this gallery that depicts himself in the guise of Herakles.

Alexander the Great on the coins.

Why would a ruler want to be shown in the guise of Herakles?

Herakles was represented not only as a hero of extraordinary strength and vitality but also as beautifully groomed and ideally proportioned, all aspects a ruler in Greece or Rome would want to stress.

Golden Splendour



These delicate golden wreaths from the 3rd century B.C. are of the type commonly found in Hellenistic Greek burials. They were expressions of reverence for the dead. Golden wreaths were made in imitation of various leaves.

Look at the ROM's collection of golden wreaths. What types of leaves are represented and why?



👁️ Find the golden wreaths from the Hellenistic Period.

Oak, olive, and laurel; most of these trees or plants have associations with various deities (for example, oak was sacred to Zeus).

Mysteries of Rome



👁️ Find the Mithraic relief in the Gallery of the Bronze Age Aegean.

This Mithraic relief from Italy dates to the 2nd century A.D. Mithras was an Iranian god whose secret and mysterious cult became very popular throughout the Roman Empire, spread largely by soldiers.

The religion of Mithras was practiced in small groups, with ten to twelve participants. Members of the cult met in a *mithraeum*, an underground vaulted grotto with complex astronomical and planetary symbolism. Much of the evidence of this cult comes from archaeological finds and depictions of the god.

Describe the scene. What insights can you gain into this secretive cult from this image?

The cult was male oriented, sacrifice of a bull as part of cult ritual, and astronomical and planetary symbolism were used during rituals.

Busts of Sol (the Sun) and Luna (the Moon) watch over the ritual scene of Mithras slaying the bull, aided by a dog, snake, and scorpion.

Who would this cult appeal to?

Roman legionaries, the imperial household, imperial slaves, and ex-slaves.

Royal Contenance

Tiberius was fifty-six when he became emperor in A.D. 14, after the death of the first Emperor of Rome, Augustus. Despite long years of experience as a general and administrator under his stepfather, Augustus Tiberius was not a popular ruler and spent the last ten years of his reign living in seclusion on the Island of Capri. Emperors used sculpture as a tool for communicating specific ideologies to the Roman populace.

How is Tiberius portrayed?

Youthful, beautiful, and benevolent; the face of the new dynastic family.

What sculpture styles does this piece combine to make such a powerful statement?

Heroicizing idealization of Hellenistic art with Roman ideas of individual likeness (portraiture)

Portraits of Tiberius show a remarkable and fictionalized resemblance to Augustus. Why would he make such a connection?

To legitimize his authority and to help substantiate his position as successor.



👁️ Find the head of Emperor Tiberius in the Gallery of Greece, A.D. 14-37.