

Ancient Greek objects at the Ashmolean

- These objects from ancient Greece are on display in Gallery 16: The Greek World. Objects on display include pottery, sculpture, jewellery and objects crafted from metal and stone.
- Displays cover a wide range of themes; Early Greece, Sparta, Corinth and Athens; The Hellenistic World; gods and goddesses; heroes and myths; the symposium; trading posts in Western and Eastern Greece; arts and crafts; death and burial; theatre and athletics; art and literature.
- The Ashmolean's collections are especially rich in painted Athenian pottery in a range of shapes and designs, attributed to many different Painters, showing the Trojan war, mythology and daily life.

Other galleries containing ancient Greek objects

Gallery 18: Cyprus

Gallery 20: Aegean World

Gallery 14: Cast Gallery

Gallery 7: Money

Gallery 21: Greek and Roman Sculpture

Gallery 3-4: Conservation

1, Gold necklace

Gold necklace from a woman's grave from the cemetery at Nymphaeum, 500-401BC

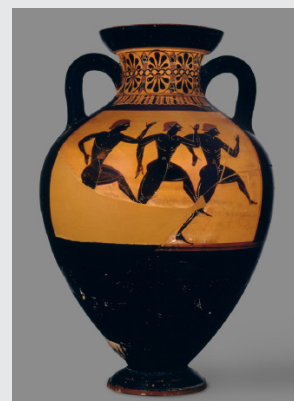


Gold rosettes with hanging acorns alternate with stylised lotuses supporting small beads. The Scythians were nomads from central Asia who settled on the north coast of the Black Sea. Items excavated from the cemetery reveal a mix of Scythian art and Greek luxury styles.

AN1885.482

2. Panathenaic Runners

Athenian black-figure amphora (storage jar), attributed to the Swing Painter, 550-501BC



Winners at the Panathenaic Games in Athens received a large jar of sacred olive oil with the goddess Athena on one side and an image of the event on the other. Here, three youths compete in a foot race. The Panathenaic games, held in honour of Athena, were modelled on the Olympic Games and held every four years in Athens from 566BC until the 3rd century AD.

AN1965.117

3. The Shoemaker

Athenian black-figure pelike (jar), attributed to the Eucharides Painter, Rhodes 550-500BC



Greek craftsmen generally had low status and many were slaves. Scenes of men at work are rare but give us a glimpse into everyday life. A shoemaker cuts out a leather sole around the foot of a customer. Underneath is a bowl of water used to soften the leather before cutting.

AN1896-1908 G.247

4. Weights and measures

Metrological relief, 460-450BC



This pediment-shaped relief probably hung above the entrance to a weights and measures office in the marketplace of a Greek city. It depicts the upper part of a male torso. Each feature; the hand, arm span and, footprint and fist cavity represents a different unit of measure.

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5. The Symposium

Athenian red-figure pottery stamnos (jar), attributed to the Copenhagen Painter, 500-450 BC

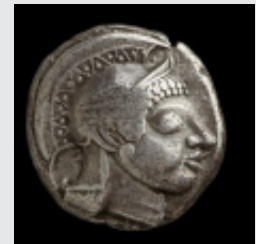
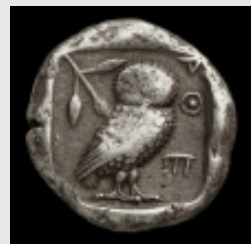


The symposium was a drinking party held by elite Greek men. Gathering at a private home, guests reclined on couches and drank wine mixed with water. Conversations ranged from philosophy and politics to gossip, becoming increasingly raucous as the night wore on. Musicians, dancers and poets entertained the revellers.

AN1965.127

6. Athenian Money

Silver coins, 500-480BC

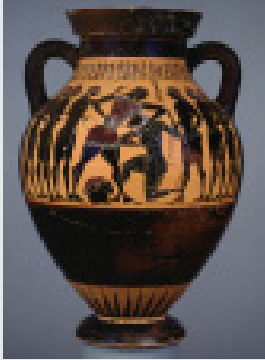


Silver coins minted in Athens. Early Athenian coins varied in design. By 450BC, a head of the city's patron goddess Athena and an owl had become the standard, easily recognisable in trade overseas.

HCR 9476

Theseus and the Minotaur

Athenian black-figure amphora (storage jar), attributed to the Painter of Berlin 1686, 550-501BC



Theseus slays the Minotaur, a mythical beast which was half-man and half-bull. Theseus, a young prince from Athens, travelled to Crete as part of the sacrificial offering of young men and women made to the Minotaur to prevent King Minos attacking Athens. Theseus successfully slayed the beast with the help of Minos' daughter Ariadne.

AN1918.64

Pandora's Box

Athenian red-figure pottery krater (mixing bowl), attributed to the Group of Polygnotos, 475-425BC



Pandora was sculpted by the goddess Athena, assisted by Hephaestus, out of clay from the ground. She was given the gift of deception by Hermes who sent her to the foolish Epimetheus who fell in love and married her.

AN1896.1908 G 275

9. Gorgon's head

Athenian black-figure kylix (drinking cup) with gorgon's head, 550-501BC

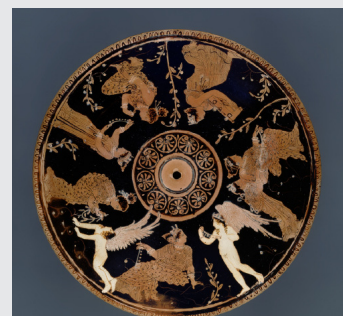


Symposium cups often used visual trickery to surprise guests when they had finished drinking. Drinking games were also played where participants held their empty cups by the handle and flicked wine dregs at a target.

AN1974.344

10. Woman's jewellery pot

Athenian red-figure pyxis (lidded box) attributed to the Meidias Painter, 420-401BC



This jewellery box is embellished with added gold leaf and shows women trying on necklaces, with the help of the winged Erotes, gods of love and lust.

AN1896.1908 G.302

Lines of enquiry: Classics

- Explore everyday life in Athens and Sparta through objects
- Research home life: houses, clothing, dinner parties
- The Olympic and Panathenaic Games
- Greek sculpture; shrines and temples
- Athenian pottery: research different 'Painters'; function and shape; black, red figure ware and white ground pottery
- Themes of decorated pottery: the Trojan war, mythology, daily life
- Religion: god and goddesses, their roles and significance, worship and sacrifice
- Explore the roles of different members of society: women, men, children, slaves and craftsmen.
- The significance of myths to the Greeks

Lines of enquiry: Art & Design

- Explore different techniques and styles of Greek pottery design. Find out about how patterns and designs changed over time and were adapted in different locations in the Greek empire.
- Make a study of key design elements from ancient Greek pots including the key and egg and dart pattern. Find examples of other designs and use these as inspiration to create your own repeat patterns.
- Explore how and where the Greeks used sculpture. How did they represent the body? What can we learn about clothing, hairstyles and fashion from sculpture?

Cross curricular links

- History: the rise and expansion of the Greek empire and its legacy today
- English: find out about the work of Greek writers, poets and philosophers
- Citizenship: explore Athenian democracy

Working with objects: key questions

- Who made it?
- Where and when was it made?
- What materials is it made from?
- How was it made?
- What was it used for? How was it used?
- Who used / owned it?
- How might it be interpreted by different people and at different times?



Athenian red-figure pottery krater (mixing bowl) attributed to the Komaris painter, 475-425 BC
A potter's workshop with craftsmen and slaves painting and carrying vessels.
AN1896.1908 G.287

Further resources The Beazley Archive:

<http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/tools/default.htm>

Cast Gallery

<http://www.ashmolean.org/departments/castgallery/research/>

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