

OBJECT GUIDE

Art of the Ancient Mediterranean



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Unidentified artist
Mesopotamian, Old Babylonian period
Cylinder Seal: War Goddess Ishtar,
c. 1800 BCE
hematite
Ackland Fund, 72.53.3



- By pressing their cylinder seals into damp clay, owners certified their presence at a commercial, legal, or diplomatic transaction. Cylinder seals could be worn around the neck or wrist by threading a cord through the hole in their center.
- In the modern impression of the seal's carving, from left to right, we see a female worshipper, a male worshipper carrying a sacrificial animal, and the war goddess Ishtar. Ishtar's attributes are the animal she stands on and her weapons – a scimitar, a mace, and two quivers of arrows above her shoulders.
- Next to the image of Ishtar, an inscription names two female deities. Nisaba is the Sumerian goddess of writing, accounting and grain rationing and measuring. Ashnan is a goddess whose name means grain.

Unidentified artist
Syrian, First Syrian period
Cylinder Seal: Divinities and Griffin,
c. 1850-1750 BCE
hematite
Ackland Fund, 72.53.4



- Hematite is a hard, fine-grained, gray stone ideal for cylinder seals because it produces a fine, sharp line when incised.
- The nude female figure is Sirbanit, wife of Marduk, the head of the Babylonian pantheon. The clothed female figure is the goddess Lama, associated with intercession and protection. Two male figures are either gods or high-ranking mortals, perhaps kings. Another scene shows two dancing figures, a braided pattern, and a griffin. The griffin is an attribute of Sirbanit.
- Based on a combination of elements – the seal’s motifs, clothing style, the arrangement of imagery, and the carving – this seal is thought to have been made sometime between 1850 and 1750 BCE.

Unidentified artist
Mesopotamian, late Jemdet Nasr period
Cylinder Seal: Gazelle, Eye, and Stars, c.
3100-2900 BCE
marble
Ackland Fund, 72.53.1



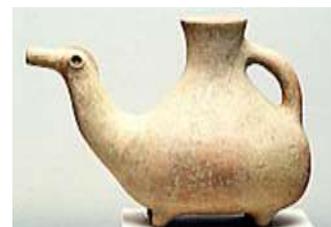
- On this cylinder there are three carvings: a gazelle, an eye, and two stars. Rolling the cylinder across a clay slab produces a repeating design, creating a sense that the animals are moving. In Mesopotamian art, the eye was associated with apotropaic power, making it an appropriate element for an amulet.
- To make cylinder seals, the designs were engraved into hard stone, creating a negative relief. When they were pressed into unfired clay or another soft material, they produced images in positive relief.
- Cylinder seals were invented circa 3300 BCE in Mesopotamia, at the same time that writing was invented in the region.
- This seal was produced during the Jemdet Nasr period, named after a major archeological site in southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). Seals from this period have been found in Iran, Turkey, Syria, Egypt, and even the Cycladic islands, evidence of trade across these regions.

Unidentified artist
Assyrian, Neo-Assyrian period
Cylinder Seal: Man, Two Griffins, and a Star, c. 750-700 BCE
chalcedony
Ackland Fund, 72.53.5



- The impression made from the seal shows a bearded man, possibly a hero or a ruler, wearing a mantle and a headdress with a tassel, flanked by griffins (mythical hybrid animals, usually depicted with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle).
- The imagery on this seal – a human figure between a pair of animals – is a type known as a contest scene, or *the master of animals*. Other elements of the seal include stars, a crescent, and a winged disc.
- In the eighth and seventh centuries, a commonly used technique in making cylinder seals involved making straight, narrow incisions with a rotating cutting disc.

Unidentified artist
Iranian, Caspian region, early Parthian period
Animal-Shaped Pouring Vessel, third to first
century BCE
earthenware
Gift of Osborne and Gratia B. Hauge in honor
of Dr. and Mrs. Sherman E. Lee, 91.21



- The body of this unglazed vessel was made on a potter's wheel, while the neck was modeled by hand. The pouring spout was probably molded around a cylindrical object.
- This pot would have been used to store and pour water or other precious liquids. Because it is unglazed, water could condense through the clay, keeping it cool.
- Animal-shaped vessels have been excavated in cemeteries in northwestern Iran in areas near the Caspian Sea. This vase is similar to ones found at a site in that area from the earlier part of the Parthian Empire (247 BCE - 224 CE).

Unidentified artist
Iranian, Nihavand region, c. late third to early
second millennium BCE

Painted Jar

terracotta

Gift of Osborne and Gratia B. Hauge in honor
of Dr. and Mrs. Sherman E. Lee, 91.20



- This vessel is similar to others found in the Nihavand region, located south of the Caspian Sea in northern Iran, and probably comes from the same area.
- The decoration on this jar includes forms that resemble hourglasses, wavy lines, and birds in profile, painted with minimal brushstrokes. We see only the tail feathers of some of the birds, suggesting that they are diving below the water surface.
- The Hauges donated this object and two others to the Ackland in honor of Sherman and Ruth Lee, who had given several objects to the Ackland in honor of the Hauges.

Unidentified artist
Syrian?, Late Roman to Umayyad periods?
Head of a Lion, 3rd to 8th century CE?
terracotta
Ackland Fund, 66.27.1



- Originally, this object might have been a decorative feature attached to a clay vessel, but its condition makes it difficult to be certain.
- Determining a date for this lion head is complicated because it includes stylistic elements from several historical periods. The shape of the ears and nose and the outlines around the eyes are typical of much earlier lions from the Iron Age. The holes in the eyes, however, are more common later, in the late Roman and Umayyad periods.
- In several ancient cultures, the lion was guardian figure, often represented in large-scale sculptures near entrances to citadels.

Unidentified artist
Mesopotamian, probably c. early 2nd
millennium BCE

Frog
hematite

Gift of Miss Emily L. Pollard, 69.3.1



- Between 1889 and 1900, Hermann V. Hilprecht worked at an archeological site at Ur, an important ancient Sumerian city now known as El Muqaiyir in southern Iraq; this frog is recorded as coming from that site. He later gave this frog to Emily Pollard, who gave it to the Ackland.
- This object was an amulet that could have been worn or carried on a chain (through the hole visible in the frog's side) to protect its owner. Frog amulets have been found in Sumerian tombs, worn around the neck of the dead.
- The frog is a symbol of fertility in Mesopotamia and is associated with the god of a subterranean ocean.

Unidentified artist
Roman, Imperial period
Juno, 150-200 CE
bronze
The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art
Fund, 87.4



- The decorated diadem, veiled head, clothing, and the objects this figure may have originally held suggest that she is a married aristocratic woman or a goddess. Roman imperial coins have identified a figure with similar characteristics as Juno, the goddess associated with motherhood and marriage.
- This figure was hollow-cast and the arms may have been cast separately from the body. It is almost entirely intact, missing only the earrings and inlay for the pupils. Originally, she may have held an offering vessel in her right hand and a scepter in her left hand.
- A sculpture such as this one may have belonged in a private shrine of a wealthy Roman household.

Unidentified artist
Etruscan, Late Archaic period
Female Dancer, c. 500-480 BCE
bronze
Ackland Fund, 77.51.1



- The date assigned to this object is based on comparisons with other Etruscan figures. Earlier Etruscan figures have more elongated limbs and more exaggerated poses.
- Since parts of the limbs are missing, it is difficult to know exactly what this object was used for, but it is likely that it adorned a candelabrum. Dancing female figures were considered fitting ornaments for candelabra, echoing the real dancing that took place at candlelit banquets.
- The clothing of this small figure is decorated extensively. There are rows of small holes punched into the surface visible, for example, around her waist and neck. Incised lines in the skirt indicate the texture and close fit of the fabric.

Unidentified artist
Roman, Transjordan
Al-Uzza Aphrodite, 1st to 2nd century CE
terracotta
Gift of Mr. William Dale, 78.2.3



- Al-Uzza is an Arabian goddess associated with fertility and linked to the morning star. She became associated with the Greek goddess of love and fertility, Aphrodite. Many ancient Arabian deities became assimilated into the Greek and Roman pantheon as Greek and Roman cultural and political influence spread through the area.
- The composition of this figure – the graceful standing Aphrodite encircled by a flowing veil – refers to the story of her birth and identifies the figure as a type of image called *Aphrodite Rising from the Sea*.
- Transjordan refers to an area east of the Jordan River, mostly in what is now Jordan. At the beginning of the second century the area became part of a Roman province.

Unidentified artist
Greek, East Greek, Archaic period
Head of a Goddess, c. 500 BCE
terracotta
Gift of the Tyche Foundation, 2010.8



- This head was made with a mold and was originally painted. There are traces of red and blue paint in the eyeballs, earring, and the headband or veil.
- Determining which deity this sculpture represents is difficult without more information about its original setting or other attributes. One possibility is Demeter; there was an important cult of Demeter at Cnidos, where the sculpture was found.
- Cnidos was a Greek city on the west coast of Asia Minor. This sculpture's red clay and style resemble objects from the nearby island of Rhodes. Similar objects have been found in graves at both locations.

Unidentified artist
Eastern Mediterranean, Hellenistic period
**Head of a Grottesque Wearing a Banquet
Wreath**, 2nd to 1st century BCE
terracotta
Gift of Dr. Frances Huemer, 70.16.1



- The irregular shape of this figure's head and its pronounced facial features suggest that it represented a comic actor or entertainer. Such figures were popular during the Hellenistic (323 - 31 BCE) and later Roman periods.
- Figures like this one had a variety of functions, including religious and protective.
- This object was a gift to the Ackland's collection from Frances Huemer, who was a professor in the Department of Art and a specialist in the art of Peter Paul Rubens and other seventeenth-century European artists who admired the art of Classical antiquity.

Unidentified artist
Greek, Hellenistic period
Head of a Woman, 2nd century BCE
bronze
Ackland Fund, 67.24.1



- Possible subjects for this head include a goddess, a queen, and a mourning woman. The veil and tilted head suggests mourning, either that of a mortal or a deity like Demeter, who lost her daughter Persephone. If the headband is a diadem, it could be a clue that it is a queen.
- The head was originally part of a full-length figure which was cast in bronze in several pieces. The head itself is comprised of two pieces – the mantle was made separately from the head. The bronze components were then soldered together; solder drippings are visible from the back where the head and mantle were joined. The eyes originally were inlaid with a material like stone or glass.
- This sculpture has been discussed in several scholarly publications – on ancient Greek bronze casting methods, on American collections of Classical art, and on ancient portraits.

Attributed to the Amykos Painter
Greek, active in Lucania, active c. 430 – c. 400 BCE
**Fragment of a Vessel (Neck Amphora): Youths
and Girls**, c. 400 BCE
terracotta, red-figure ware
Gift of Professors Henry and Sara Immerwahr,
77.6.11



- The Amykos Painter was an artist who painted red-figure pottery. His name comes from a vase painting in a Paris museum that depicts a story from Greek literature in which Amykos, a son of the god Poseidon, is punished by the Argonauts.
- This piece was originally part of a large neck amphora, a type of vessel with two handles (one handle remains on this fragment) that was used to store and carry things, often wine.
- The heads of several figures are visible. On one side, two pairs of young men and women face each other, suggesting possibly a courting scene. On the other, there are two male heads.

Unidentified artist
Egyptian, Old Kingdom, Fourth or Fifth
dynasty
Head, c. 2680-2420 BCE
limestone
The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art
Fund, 70.17.1



- This head may be related to a group of similar object found in tombs from the Fourth dynasty, known as reserve heads. Most of them, like this head, were carved in white limestone, but unlike the Ackland head, most are approximately life sized.
- Reserve heads probably protected or replaced the head of the deceased person in the tomb. They could provide a repository for the soul and a more permanent surrogate in case the mummy's head was damaged.
- The specific placement of a reserve head within the tomb is not certain because of ransacking and pillaging in ancient times. Most of them were excavated at Abusir, Dahshur, Giza, and Saqqara.

Unidentified artist
Roman, Imperial period
Head of a Roman Notable, c. 200 CE
(recarved c. 250 CE)
marble
Ackland Fund, 69.9.1



- This head was first made to be a portrait of someone who lived around the year 200. Later, the hair was recarved to alter the hairstyle so it could function as a portrait of someone else. At some point after that, incrustations of soil and cement suggest that it was embedded in a wall, used as construction material.
- Because the head is over life size, it probably represented a person of a certain importance. The facial features do not match known portraits of Roman emperors, so the Ackland describes it more generally as a Roman notable.
- Determining a date for the original portrait based solely on style is difficult because Roman portraits made during a broad span of time in the second and third centuries imitated the styles of earlier periods.

Unidentified artist
Roman, Imperial period
Torso of Dionysos or Apollo, 2nd century CE
in a 4th-century BCE Greek style
marble
Ackland Fund, 62.14.1



- Roman artists often made marble copies of Greek bronze sculptures. This one imitates the style of fourth-century Greek sculpture. In the complete figure, the right leg would have extended slightly forward and the left arm would have reached away from the body.
- Any attributes that would have helped establish the identity of this figure are missing, along with its head, arms, and legs. The most likely candidates are the gods Apollo and Dionysos. During the fourth century, both gods were depicted as youthful, slender, and sensual figures with long hair.
- At the lower edge of what remains of the left leg is the remnant of a support. Marble sculptures needed additional support to prevent extended limbs from breaking off due to the weight of the stone. Artists sometimes disguised those supports as tree trunks that the figure appeared to lean against.

Unidentified artist
Cypriot, Archaic period
**Male Votary with Conical Helmet,
Tunic, and Mantle**, c. 550-520 BCE
limestone
Gift of W. A. Whitaker, 60.14.6



- This figure probably had a votive function. It stood together with other figures in the sanctuary of a deity.
- This sculpture and fifteen other Cypriot figures were given to the Ackland by donors who bought them at auction when the Metropolitan Museum of Art deaccessioned them in an effort to reduce the number of duplicate figures in their collection.
- The limestone this figure is carved from is weathered in some areas and shows traces of paint: on the hat, lips, neck, and tunic.

Unidentified artist
Cypriot, Sub-Archaic period
**Head of Beardless Male Votary with
Laurel Wreath**, c. 490-450 BCE
limestone
Gift of Mrs. Grace Kehaya, 60.15.7



- This piece shows elements of both Archaic and Classical Greek styles. The shape of the eyes and the slight smile are characteristic of the earlier, Archaic style. The set of the eyes (slightly deeper than earlier examples), fullness of the lower lip, and curved (rather than square) shape of the chin are typical of the Classical style.
- Nine of the Ackland's Cypriot sculptures are beardless male heads with laurel wreaths, like this one. The laurel wreath suggests that it may have been a gift to the god Apollo.
- In antiquity, Cyprus was important because of its natural resources (copper ore and timber) and its location in the eastern Mediterranean – ships sailing to and from mainland Greece, the islands, Egypt, and the Near East used Cyprus as a waystation.

Attributed to the Borelli Painter
Greek, active in Sicily

**Top of a Clazomenian Sarcophagus:
Sphinx Flanked by Lions**, c. 530 BCE
terracotta

Ackland Fund, purchased in honor of Sara
Anderson Immerwahr, 77.25.1



- This style of sarcophagus is associated with the site of Clazomenai in Eastern Ionia, about twenty miles west of Smyrna (modern day Izmir, Turkey).
- The entire surface of the sarcophagus is decorated: at the foot a sphinx is flanked by two lions, at the top two griffins flank a bird. In addition, there are several types of ornament across the surface, including meanders, concentric circles, and checkerboard, cross, and cable patterns.
- The sarcophagus decoration has been attributed to the Borelli Painter, based on the use of multiple patterns and the rendering of mythical animals, similar to earlier sarcophagi decorated by the artist. Other painted sarcophagi attributed to him are in collections in Madrid, Brussels, and Athens.

Unidentified artist
Roman, Syrian (Palmyra)
**Funerary Relief of No'om (?), Wife of Haira,
Son of Maliku**, c. 170 CE
limestone
The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art
Fund, 79.29.1



- Palmyra was a major commercial city on vital trade routes connecting the Mediterranean and Near East. Prosperity under Roman rule during the first and second centuries led to the rise of a middle class and a major result of their patronage was funerary monuments.
- Second-century sculptures like this one came from underground rock-cut tombs. The deceased were buried in niches, called *loculi*, one on top of another. The short ends of the *loculi* were adorned with bust-length relief images. Family members visited the tombs both for burials and to venerate the dead.
- An inscription in Aramaic at the upper right of this relief identifies the woman represented. It has been translated as: "No'om, wife of Haira, son of Maliku, alas."

Unidentified artist
Roman, Imperial period
**Fragment of a Horse and Rider (from a Lion
Hunt Sarcophagus)**, c. 270-280 CE
marble
The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art Fund,
77.66.1



- There are several fragments from this sarcophagus in other museum collections. The photograph on the wall shows the horse's rider, a fragment now in the Glyptothek in Munich. Two other pieces in Munich come from either end of the sarcophagus' front side. Another, a head in the Princeton University Art Museum, is also associated with the sarcophagus.
- The lion hunt is a subject often depicted on Roman sarcophagi. The deceased person could be shown in a heroic way, facing the ferocious lion with valor, just as he faced death. The horse's frightened expression and turning posture accentuate the drama of the hunt.
- The carving includes elements in low relief, like the horse's harness and blanket made of lion skins, as well as areas that are deeply carved, like its mane. Even areas not readily visible on the sarcophagus, such as the horse's left side and the underside of its hoof, are carefully finished.

Unidentified artist

Greek, Attic

Fragment of a Funerary Vessel (Lekythos):

Scene of Leave-Taking, c. 420-410 BCE

marble

Ackland Fund, 76.24.1



- *Lekythos* is the name given to slender Greek vessels with a narrow neck, used to hold oil and perfume. This sculpture is in the shape of a *lekkythos*, but it is solid inside. It functioned as funerary monument.
- The marble surface depicts a man, a woman, a child, and a man on horseback. The man and the woman are shown shaking hands, which may be a gesture of parting (because one of them has died) or of reuniting. The man on horseback may be the god Hermes, who escorted souls of the deceased to the underworld.
- The portrayal of a family group on the *lekkythos* suggests that the object belonged on a family plot, and may have been used to mark its boundary. Elaborate funerary markers placed on family plots not only commemorated the deceased, but also indicated the family's social standing.

Unidentified artist
Greek, South Italy (Apulia)
Vessel for Liquids (Askos), c. 300 BCE
painted terracotta, Daunian ware
Gift of Professors Henry and Sara
Immerwahr, 76.55.1



- The ornamental decoration at the top of the vessel includes waves, a broken meander, a spiral band, a floral garland, and palmettes.
- This vessel was made using a potter's wheel, and the handle was attached later. It belongs to a group of similar vessels created by a single potter or workshop near Canosa in the coastal region of Daunia (now Apulia) in southeastern Italy.
- This type of asymmetrical vessel, known as an *askos*, was created in light fine-grained clay to imitate a goatskin flask. Containers created in this shape were traditionally used in southern Italy to carry water or wine. This one probably came from a tomb.

Unidentified artist

Greek, Attic

**Fragment of a Wine Mixing Bowl
(Volute Krater): Heavily-armed Foot Soldier
(Hoplite) and Horseman, c. 530-510 BCE**

terracotta, black-figure ware

Gift of Professors Henry and Sara

Immerwahr, 77.6.3



- The narrow and flaring rim identify this fragment as part of a *volute krater*, a type of vessel used for mixing wine and water.
- Scenes with Greek warriors arming, departing for war, fighting, and dying, are some of the most common subjects in Greek art. On this fragment, a Greek foot soldier follows or pursues one on horseback. The foot soldier carries a shield and a long sword or spear and he wears a helmet, cuirass, and greaves. The other soldier wears no armor and carries only a spear.
- The date of this fragment is based on its stylistic characteristics, such as the simple drapery patterns and loosely drawn zigzag folds.

Circle of the Lycurgus Painter
Greek, active in Apulia, active c. 350 BCE
Fragment of a Wine Mixing Bowl (Krater):
Heads of Laios and Chrysisippos, c. 350 BCE
terracotta, red-figure ware
Gift of Professors Henry and Sara
Immerwahr, 77.6.12



- This fragment is thought to have been painted by an artist close to the Lycurgus Painter, who was known for posing figures this way – with tilted, turning heads and emotional expressions.
- In Greek literature, Laios is the father of Oedipus. In a story from earlier in his life, Laios is captivated by and abducts the young Chrysisippos, whose head appears at the lower right of this fragment.
- The vase this fragment came from was painted in a manner called the Ornate style. Typically, Ornate vases are large and extensively decorated on several levels of the vase body, with sometimes as many as twenty figures, often from scenes of tragic stories from Classical literature.

Curti Painter?

Greek, Attic, active c. 450 – 420 BCE

Fragment of a Bowl (Calyx Krater):

Head of Dionysos, c. 440 BCE

terracotta, red-figure ware

Gift of Henry and Sara Immerwahr, 91.96



- The Curti Painter is thought to have been connected to Polygnotos, one of the most important Greek vase painters in the red-figure style, in which the figures remain the red color of the clay. The Curti Painter often painted headbands in the manner seen on this fragment.
- Experts use many stylistic elements to date this fragment, including the delicate brushwork, the way the hair hangs over the figure's shoulder, the shape of the head, the way the eyes are depicted, and the use of thin lines for the drapery.
- The hairstyle and head band are typical in images of Dionysos, the god of wine. Perhaps the vine above his head was a grapevine. The vase this fragment comes from was a *krater*, used for mixing wine and water – a scene featuring Dionysos would be fitting decoration.

Unidentified artist
Greek, Hellenistic period
Appliqué Head of Dionysos,
2nd to 1st century BCE
terracotta

Gift in memory of Mary Dirnberger Mack
Sundbeck (AB 1929) and Edward Sundbeck
by Charles R. Mack (AB 1962, PhD 1972),
Ilona S. Mack, and Katrina Mack Daniels,
2001.13.4



- This mold-made head, also called a mask, was originally attached to a vase made on a potter's wheel, probably a wine container. The corkscrew curls on the beard may have been added separately.
- Dionysos is recognizable by the beard and the type of head band he wears, decorated with ivy leaves and grapes.
- He was not only the god of wine, agriculture, and merriment, but also associated with the theater. In theater contexts, he was often represented in the form of a mask such as this one.

Unidentified artist
Greek, Attic
**Fragment of a Lip Cup (Kylix):
Panthers**, c. 545 BCE
terracotta, black-figure ware
Gift of Professors Henry and Sara
Immerwahr, 77.6.2



- The shape of this vessel is called a *kylix*, or drinking cup. This particular type of *kylix* is referred to as a lip cup because of its prominent wide lip or rim. Starting in the mid-sixth century, the lip cup was one of two preferred types of drinking cups.
- One side of the cup is decorated with two panthers, while the other side reveals a fragment of a tail, indicating that the design was originally replicated on both sides.
- Lip cups often included the artist's signature, a motto, or a greeting in the lower portion. One common inscription was: "Hail, drink me." In this case, however, the inscription is purely decorative and lacks meaning, suggesting that the artist was illiterate.

Circle of the Lycurgus Painter
Greek, active in Apulia, active c. 350 BCE
Fragment of a Bowl (Bell Krater):
Heads of Paris and Helen, 340-320 BCE
terracotta, red-figure ware
Gift of Professors Henry and Sara
Immerwahr, 77.6.10



- The Phrygian cap with two side flaps may identify the male figure as Paris, allowing us to surmise that the female figure is Helen – two key figures in Homer’s *Iliad*, the story of the Trojan War.
- The composition and style of the figures are characteristic of the years 340-320 BCE: their heads are tilted, their faces are in three-quarter profile, their lips pout, their hair is long and curly, and their drapery slips off the shoulder.
- The Lycurgus Painter’s name comes from the subject of a vase he painted which now belongs to the British Museum in London. It depicts Lycurgus, who was known as a founder of Spartan society in ancient Greece.

Achilles Painter

Greek, Attic, active, c. 470 – c. 425 BCE

Fragment of a Jar (Nolan Neck Amphora):

Head of Trainer, c. 445-430 BCE

terracotta, red-figure ware

Gift of Professors Henry and Sara

Immerwahr, 77.6.8



- An amphora was a vessel used for storing and carrying wine, oil, or other edible goods. It could also function as a funerary urn. This fragment comes from a particular type of amphora called a Nolan neck amphora, one of the most common shapes that the Achilles Painter and his workshop painted.
- The purple fillet in the man's hair is of a type that Greek artists used as an attribute of an ephebe, a young man in his late teens who had begun his military and gymnastic education. The figure on this fragment, who is not a young man, might be a trainer of ephebes.
- The Achilles Painter gets his name from a vase depicting Achilles that is in the Vatican Museums. He was an important painter in fifth-century Athens and is thought to have worked in the black-figure, red-figure, and white-ground painting styles.

Unidentified artist

Greek, Attic

Vessel (Neck Amphora): Herakles Wrestling the Nemean Lion; Departure Scene, c. 525 BCE

terracotta, black-figure ware

Ackland Fund, 59.16.1



- On one side of this vase, the hero Herakles wrestles the Nemean Lion, one of his twelve labors and an especially popular subject in Greek art during the Archaic period (630 – 480 BCE). On the other side, warriors depart for battle, guided by the god Hermes.
- The artist used incisions on the surface of the painting, to delineate Herakles' musculature, for example. He also added touches of red paint to enliven the figures in both scenes.
- The Herakles scene is a good example of the way Greek artists composed balanced scenes. Herakles and the lion lean toward one another, forming the shape of a triangle. On either side, they are flanked by a standing figure in profile (here the goddess Athena and Herakles' companion Iolaos).

Attributed to the Bucci Painter
Greek, Attic, active c. 525 – c. 500 BCE
**Vessel (Neck Amphora): Apollo, Leto, and
Artemis; Departure Scene**, c. 540-530 BCE
terracotta, black-figure ware
Ackland Fund, 88.15



- The Bucci Painter was a Greek vase painter, active late in the sixth century. The painting on the vase has been attributed to him on the basis of stylistic characteristics such as the anatomy of the horses and the ornament on the neck of the vase.
- One side depicts a four-horse chariot, a charioteer, a woman, and three warriors departing for battle. The woman hands a helmet with a laurel wreath to the warrior on the left. On the other side Apollo, wearing a laurel wreath, plays a stringed instrument. The small deer beside him is a symbol of his sister Artemis; she and their mother Leto stand on either side of him.
- There are twenty small holes visible on the surface of the vessel. They come from repairs made to the vase in antiquity, suggesting that it was valuable enough to reassemble rather than discard when it broke. Clamps would have been affixed to the vase through the holes.

Attributed to the Workshop of Lydos
Greek, Attic, active 565 – 535 BCE
Fragment of a Vessel (Neck Amphora):
Battle and Satyrs, c. 540 BCE
terracotta, black-figure ware
Gift of Professors Henry and Sara
Immerwahr, 77.6.1



- Two battling warriors stand over a third fallen warrior on the remaining side of this vessel. On the other side were satyrs – we can see the tops of their heads and pointed ears. This suggests that they were part of a scene of Dionysian revelry.
- The perfectly circular shields were drawn with a compass. The artist added red paint to the bold, abstract designs on the shields as well as to other areas of the scene.
- Lydos' work is associated with sixth-century Athens. He often painted battle scenes with monumental figures.

Attributed to the Bowdoin Painter
Greek, Attic, active, c. 500 – c. 475 BCE
Oil Vase (Lekythos): Woman Working Wool,
c. 480-470 BCE
terracotta, red-figure ware
Gift of Nathan A. Perilman, 78.15.1



- This woman is in the process of weaving. She holds a skein of wool, and a finished sash hangs on her left. Scenes of women in domestic spaces became popular at the beginning of the fifth century.
- The subject of a woman weaving alludes to the importance of textile industry in Greek society. It also conveys an ideal of female behavior in which the virtuous woman contributes to society by working diligently in her home.
- Details such as the profile eye, the large, clumsy hands and feet, and the dress drawn in outline are characteristic of the Bowdoin Painter's work. He often depicted scenes of women like this one.

Unidentified artist
Greek, Attic
Oil Vase (Squat Lekythos): Women at their Toilette, c. 430-420 BCE
terracotta, red-figure ware
The William A. Whitaker Foundation
Art Fund, 71.8.1



- The *lekythos* is typically used to hold oils and perfumes. Depictions of women are quite common on such vessels, reflecting their use mainly by women.
- This vessel depicts women in an interior scene, as suggested by the objects hanging in space. Several women hold mirrors while others carry boxes or hold vases. The women who sit in the chairs are most likely of higher status than those standing who may be companions or slaves.
- The painting might be by an artist familiar with the Eretria Painter (active c. 420 – 430 BCE), an Athenian painter who often depicted domestic scenes. Another possibility is the Washing Painter, also active at that time in Athens.

Attributed to Makron
Greek, Attic, active c. 500 – 475 BCE
**Cup (Kylix): Reclining Drinker;
Youths at a Drinking Party**, c. 475 BCE
terracotta, red-figure ware
Ackland Fund, 62.14.2



- Makron was an Athenian vase painter who was active during the first quarter of the fifth century. A signed vase painting by Makron is in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Over 300 vases have been attributed to him based on stylistic similarities with the Boston vase.
- This cup, which was designed for drinking wine, was reassembled from nine separate pieces. The cup was valued in antiquity, as indicated by four lead-filled holes in its interior that reveal an ancient repair.
- After consuming wine from this cup, the drinker would have seen a picture of a man reclining on a couch and also holding a *kylix*. The bearded man pictured on the inside of the vessel is likely a participant of a male drinking party. He is depicted playing a game in which participants flicked the dregs of their wine toward a target.

Attributed to the Cavalcade Painter
Greek, Corinthian, active c. 600 – 575 BCE
**Wine Mixing Bowl (Column Krater): Battle
and Procession**, c. 575 BCE
terracotta, black-figure ware
The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art
Fund, 66.11.1



- The soldiers who face left wear full armor and those who face right wear little armor. This could suggest a class difference, but it may also be a device used to balance the composition.
- The Cavalcade Painter was active in Corinth in this period and often painted scenes with horsemen and animal imagery.
- Vases from Corinth in the sixth-century often depict battles. This one shows paired warriors in combat on one side, and riders on horseback on the other. A frieze of panthers and goats encircles the vase beneath the warriors and horsemen.

Unidentified artist
Greek, Corinthian, Late Classical period
Coin (Stater): Head of Athena, c. 350 BCE
silver
Gift of G. Patrick Hunter, Jr., 91.185



- On one side of this coin we see Athena, identifiable by her helmet encircled by a wreath. The other side shows the winged horse Pegasus.
- Under Pegasus there is a q-shaped mark, a letter from the archaic Corinthian alphabet. This suggests that the coin was minted in Corinth and used there and in its colonies: Ambracia, Leucas, and Syracuse.
- Coins depicting Athena and Pegasus were common in Corinth in the fourth and fifth centuries and in Corinth's colonies in the fourth century. Athena's soft facial features suggest that the coin is from the middle of the fourth century.

Unidentified artist
Greek, Early Hellenistic period
Coin (Tetradrachm): Alexander as Zeus-Ammon, c. 306-281 BCE
silver
Ackland Fund, 66.27.12



- This coin was made after Alexander the Great's death in 323 BCE and the division of his empire. Lysimachos, who took over as king of Thrace, minted this coin to connect himself to Alexander and legitimize his rule. The opposite side includes a seated Athena and a winged Nike (symbol of victory) placing a wreath over Lysimachos's name.
- This coin shows Alexander with ram's horns, which were associated with the Egyptian god Ammon. After visiting Egypt, Alexander consulted an oracle who proclaimed he was the son of Zeus-Ammon.
- The image of Alexander with Ammon's horns and the letters HP inscribed on it indicate that this coin was minted in Lampaschos, Lysimachos's largest mint in Asia Minor.

Unidentified artist
Greek, Hellenistic period
Coin (Tetradrachm): King Perseus,
c. 178-174 BCE
silver
The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art
Fund, 70.18.1



- The coin depicts Perseus, the last king of Macedon, who ruled from 179 until 168 BCE, when his kingdom was conquered by the Romans. The reverse side of the coin depicts an eagle with open wings encircled by an oak wreath (associated with the god Zeus) and an inscription: “of King Perseus.”
- The coin is associated with a mint in Pella, capital of ancient Macedon.
- Tetradrachms made after 171 weigh less than those made before. That and the type of imagery on this coin establish its date, between 178 and 174 BCE.

Unidentified artist
Greek (Smyrna), Hellenistic period
Coin (Tetradrachm): Tyche, c. 150 BCE
silver
Gift of the Tyche Foundation. Donated by
Michael & Stark Ward to the Foundation in
honor of Charles W. Millard, III, 2010.34



- Around 300 BCE, the sculptor Eutychides of Sicyon made a colossal bronze statue of Tyche (a female deity whose name means fortune). That sculpture, known as the Tyche of Antioch, set a standard for imagery of the goddess in which she wears a crown in the shape of a turreted city wall.
- The reverse side of the coin shows the word *Smyrnaion*, which translates as “belonging to the people of the ancient city of Smyrna” (modern Izmir, Turkey). The word is surrounded by an oak wreath. The oak tree is associated with Zeus, who was important to the citizens of Smyrna.
- This image of Tyche is one of over fifty objects given to the Ackland from the Tyche Foundation, which was also named after the goddess of Fortune.

Unidentified artist
Egyptian, New Kingdom, Nineteenth dynasty
Stele of Prince Ankh-nef-nebu, c. 1350-1100
BCE
limestone with some polychrome paint
Ackland Fund, 62.19.1



- Ankh-Nef-Nebu, a Nineteenth dynasty (1295 - 1186 BCE) prince, stands on the right. He offers gifts to three gods and goddesses: Isis (a protective deity and mother of Horus), Horus (a protective deity), and Min (the god of fertility).
- The band of hieroglyphs below the figural scene reads: "We give life, prosperity, and health." Hieroglyphs on either side of the sun disk identify the prince and tell us that he is the son of Neb(et)-akhet. Above the three deities, hieroglyphs tell their names.
- There are remnants of red and green paint in several areas of this relief – red on the circular shapes, clothes and flowers, and green on the flower stems, a pot, some of the hieroglyphs, and the figure on the far left.

Unidentified artist
Egyptian, Late period (c. 664 – 343 BCE) to
Ptolemaic period (305 – 30 BCE)
Amulet: Head of Bastet (?) on an Aegis
blue-green faience
Ackland Fund, 62.19.28



- The combination of the aegis (a broad, beaded collar) with a cat- or lion-headed deity on top indicates one of two possibilities: Bastet, the cat goddess, or Tefnut, the goddess of moisture.
- The aegis served a protective function in temples. It could also be mounted on the front and back of boats used in religious processions and also appeared in amulets. This amulet has a suspension hole behind the head; its owner could thread a cord through the hole and wear the amulet for protection.
- The Ackland acquired this object and other Egyptian amulets from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. They came from an excavation at Giza between 1929 and 1931 that was supervised jointly by the Boston MFA and Harvard University.

Unidentified artist
Egyptian, Late period (c. 664 – 343 BCE) to
Ptolemaic period (305 – 30 BCE)

Amulet: Sow or Wild Pig

bright green faience

Ackland Fund, 62.19.21



- This amulet represents a wild female pig with her snout to the ground. In ancient Egypt, the sow was associated with the sky goddess, Nut, and was said to give birth to the sun each morning and to the stars each night, and to then swallow the sun at dusk and the stars at dawn. Given these associations with renewal and nourishment, the amulet could have been intended for a funerary context.
- It is also possible that the amulet was worn by a living person to promote fertility, since the sow has also been linked to the goddess Isis and fertility.
- Green and blue were popular colors of Egyptian amulets. Egyptian faience was made from ground quartz and usually a blue-green glaze that likely sought to imitate the colors of semiprecious stones.

Unidentified artist
Egyptian, Late period, Twenty-sixth to
Thirtieth dynasty
Amulet: Wedjat Eye, c. 664–343 BCE
green and black faience
Ackland Fund, 62.19.18



- In this small object, which represents the eye of the falcon-headed god Horus, we see the brow, the eye, the cosmetic line (extending from the outside corner of the eye), and several additional features, including chevrons, feathers, and two rows of tiny monkeys.
- In one ancient Egyptian account, Horus' eye was plucked out in a battle with the god Seth. The god Thoth then healed it. In other stories, the god Horus offered the healed eye to his dead father Osiris. The power of the eye was so great that it brought him back to life.
- The Ackland's collection includes five *wedjat* eyes, which are the most ubiquitous type of amulet found on Egyptian mummies. In tombs, *wedjat* eyes were placed beside the head. They were also worn by the living because of their healing properties; the loop at the top of this one allowed it to be worn as a necklace.

Unidentified artist
Sudanese, Napatan period, Twenty-fifth
dynasty, reign of Taharqo
Servant Figure (Ushabti) of King Taharqo,
c. 690-664 BCE
alabaster
Ackland Fund, 62.19.5



- King Taharqo is the fourth of five rulers in the Twenty-fifth dynasty, (c. 712–664 BCE), also known as the Nubian Dynasty. This dynasty came from the ancient Kush Kingdom from ancient Sudan, located in present day southern Egypt and northern Sudan.
- *Ushabtis* are small figures that were placed in tombs. In the afterlife, they were to perform the work of daily life for the deceased person. King Taharqo's tomb included more than a thousand *ushabtis*, an indication of his wealth and status.
- There are nine rows of hieroglyphs on the lower part of this figure. On figures like this, hieroglyphs were often words from the ancient Egyptian text, the *Book of the Dead*. They activated the figure and determined the work it was to do for the dead.

Unidentified artist
Egyptian, Late period (c. 664 – 343 BCE) to
Ptolemaic period (305 – 30 BCE)
Amulet: Bastet (Cat with Two Kittens)
bright blue faience
Ackland Fund, 62.19.16



- Cat amulets represent the goddess Bastet. In amulets, she is typically shown as a seated cat. In other contexts, she was shown as either a cat or a lion-headed human. The kittens are a reference to her role as a goddess of fertility.
- There is a hole at the back of the cat's neck, indicating that the amulet could have been worn, perhaps as a necklace. Women wore Bastet amulets, both for protection and in the hope of having many children.
- This object probably comes from one of two periods in Egyptian art. Even though we know the site where it was found, amulets were small, portable, and may have been passed down as heirlooms so this one may have been made earlier than the date of its find site.

Unidentified artist
Egyptian, Third Intermediate period,
Twenty-second dynasty, reign of Sheshonq I
Scarab of Sheshonq I, 945-924 BCE
blue-green faience
Ackland Fund, 62.19.12



- On the underside of the scarab there are hieroglyphs that identify the king, Sheshonq I, and establish the object's date.
- The scarab, or dung beetle, was a popular symbol of renewal and regeneration and the most frequently represented subject in ancient Egyptian amulets. The scarab rolling a ball of dung was considered a metaphor for the movement of the sun across the heavens, associating the beetle with the sun god.
- Scarab amulets were thought to protect and bring longevity and abundance. As with other amulets, they were placed in tombs or worn by the living – a suspension hole in this one suggests the latter. When inscribed with hieroglyphs, they could also be used as seals; if inscribed with the name of a king they could be given as signs of royal favor and especially powerful amulets.

Unidentified artist
Sudanese, Late Napatan period, Twenty-fifth
dynasty, reign of King Piye
Cippus Amulet of Pataikos, c. 740-713 BCE
pale green and mottled beige faience
Ackland Fund, 62.19.3



- This small amulet includes many figures. The central figure is a dwarf who was associated with the god Ptah. A scarab is on his head, two baboons on his shoulders, two lions by his feet, and he stands on crocodiles. Affixed to his back is a lion-headed goddess, the goddess Sekhmet.
- The amulet came from Queen Nefru-ka-kastha's tomb in a royal cemetery in the Kingdom of Kush in the Sudan. Queen Nefru-ka-kastha was one of the wives of King Piye.
- Because there are so many figures represented in this amulet, it was especially powerful. The central figure is generally associated with protection and he wears a protective aegis on his chest. Several of the figures around him protected against snakes.

Unidentified artist
Egyptian, New Kingdom, Eighteenth
dynasty, early Amarna period
Princess with a Musical Instrument,
c. 1360-1350 BCE
white sandstone
Ackland Fund, 67.29.4



- This sculpture was made during the reign of King Amenhotep IV, who changed his name (to Akhenaten), changed religious practices, moved the capital, and prompted substantial changes in artistic style. The facial features of the woman in this sculpture are typical of that style, including an elongated head, slanted eyes, and irregular body proportions.
- A daughter of King Akhenaten, recognizable as a princess by her distinctive hairstyle, plays a musical instrument. Women played these instruments in temple rituals. This kind of figure is typical of scenes in which the royal family worships the god Aten.
- Tool marks on the back of this sculpture prepared it to be affixed to a wall. Sculptures carved in low relief were often used to adorn exterior walls. Those features, together with the relief's style and subject suggest it may have been from a building in the capital, el-Amarna.

Unidentified artist
Egyptian, Ptolemaic period (305 – 30 BCE)
Ibis
wood and bronze
Ackland Fund, 63.11.1



- The ibis, distinguished by its long, curved bill, was valued for its ability to eat snakes. Ancient Egyptians associated ibises with Thoth, the god of learning and knowledge and the inventor of language and writing. Thoth was often represented as an ibis or as a human with the head of an ibis.
- In 332 BCE Alexander the Great conquered Egypt. After his death, a series of kings named Ptolemy ruled, and that period is known as the Ptolemaic period. During this period, the cult of Thoth was more popular than ever before.
- This ibis came from an important center of worship of Thoth, at Tuna el-Gebel, at Hermopolis West. It originally stood on a base and functioned as a votive offering to Thoth.

Unidentified artist
Roman
Lion-Footed Cauldron Leg, 1st century CE
bronze
The William A. Whitaker Foundation Art
Fund, 80.33.1



- This is one of three legs that originally supported a vessel such as a large cauldron or a water heater. Another leg, identical to this one, is in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. They may have come from the same object.
- Although there are no obvious joins, the leg may have been cast in separate pieces and then assembled. The leg is hollow with an opening at its top behind the palmette form but the long, curved form makes it difficult to examine the interior for signs of joins.
- Lion-footed designs for furniture can be traced back to ancient Egypt and they were also popular in Greece during the sixth and fifth centuries, though usually simpler than this one in form.