

GREEK FROM THE BENAKI MUSEUM IN ATHENS TREASURES



5 May – 4 September 2005

EXHIBITION ORGANISED BY THE
POWERHOUSE MUSEUM IN ASSOCIATION WITH
THE BENAKI MUSEUM, ATHENS.

BENAKI  MUSEUM

National partner

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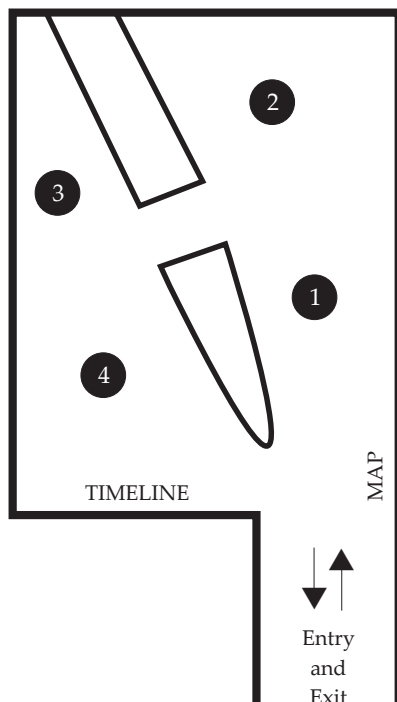
INTRODUCTION

Greek treasures presents a stunning selection from the collection of the Benaki Museum in Athens. This renowned museum was founded by the Benaki family from the collection formed principally by Antonis Benaki (1873–1954). The scope of the collection reflects Antonis Benaki’s love of Greece, but also the many years he spent living among the Greek diaspora of Egypt.

The Benaki Museum opened in 1931, housed in the original family mansion. Since then the Benaki collection has developed into one of the most extensive of its kind in the world, and is now presented in four specialist branch museums.

Like the Benaki Museum, this exhibition is organised chronologically. There are four sections, spanning eight thousand years of Greek history:

1. The Greek and Roman period: 6000 BC – 4th century AD
2. Byzantine period: 5th – 15th century
3. Post-Byzantine period: 16th – 18th century
4. Neohellenic period: 19th century



SYLLABUS LINKS

Primary Creative Arts K–6

The diverse range of objects in this exhibition is an opportunity for Creative Arts students to explore both making and appreciating art forms.

Primary Human Society and its Environment K–6

This exhibition offers Human Society and its Environment students a unique opportunity to investigate the myths of ancient Greece as well as gain insights into the everyday life of adults and children in Greece.

Secondary Visual Arts/Textile and Design 7–12

This exhibition will be of particular interest to students of Visual Arts and Textiles and Design. It is suitable for Design and Technology Years 7–10, Design and Technology Stage 6, Visual Arts Years 7–10 and Visual Arts Stage 6.

Secondary History 7–12

Students of History will be able to investigate societies and civilisations of the past, with special emphasis on the Greece elective of the syllabus. An excellent resource for investigating and constructing history, the exhibition spans a period of 8000 years.

Secondary Ancient History 7–12

For students of Ancient History, the exhibition is a rare opportunity to see a range of objects from the ancient Greek world, including some of the earliest pottery from about 5800 BC.

Secondary Modern Greek language

A special supplement is included for students of Modern Greek (Beginners and Advanced).

Tertiary

This exhibition will be of interest to students of fine arts, design, ceramics, textile and design, fashion, interior design, graphic design, industrial design and jewellery as well as students of history and Modern Greek.

THE GREEK AND ROMAN PERIOD 6th millennium BC – 4th century AD

The Neolithic (or 'new stone') Age began about 6500 BC. It marked the birth of permanent settlements, in which people cultivated the land, domesticated animals and fashioned tools and clay vessels. During the succeeding Bronze Age (3200–1200 BC) and Iron Age (1200–900), metals were introduced and the Greek script was created.

By the sixth century BC the Greek world comprised a large number of independent city-states and colonies along the Mediterranean coast. Led by Athens, these states combined to defeat the invading forces of Persia in 479 BC. This victory established the pre-eminence of Athens, whose extraordinary artistic and architectural achievements in this period include the Parthenon.

Athens' empire was short-lived, however. In the mid-fourth century power shifted to the northern centre of Macedonia and the Hellenistic Empire of Alexander the Great, which stretched from Egypt to India by Alexander's death in 323 BC. Continual conflicts between the kingdoms of Alexander's successors led to their conquest by the Romans in 168 BC. But although the centre of the ancient world shifted to Rome, Greek cities and culture flourished under the patronage of Roman emperors, particularly Augustus (27 BC–14 AD) and Hadrian (117–38 AD).

BYZANTINE PERIOD 5th – 15th century

The Byzantine Empire was originally known as the Eastern Roman Empire. Its capital was Constantinople, founded in 324 AD as the successor to Rome by Emperor Constantine the Great (324–37 AD). Constantine proclaimed Christianity the official religion and adopted Christian symbols as state emblems. Constantinople prospered and by the early sixth century was renowned for its jewelled and



Stone relief with soldier saints, 13th century AD.

luxurious art, combining influences from Late Imperial Rome and the Middle East.

In the mid-seventh century Constantinople held off the advance of the Arabs, but the empire was shattered by internal struggles over Iconoclasm – a major theological and political dispute about the correctness of venerating religious images – that lasted until 843. The victory of the 'iconophiles' led to the second Byzantine golden age, when the art of iconography flourished.

Rivalry between Byzantium and the West came to a head in 1054 with the Schism of the Orthodox and Catholic churches. But it was the loss of large territories after the Fourth Crusade (1204) that marked the final decline of the Byzantine Empire. Although the late Byzantine period was an exceptional cultural high point, the empire's borders continued to fall to hostile powers. In 1453 Ottoman Turk forces captured Constantinople and the remains of its once golden empire.

POST-BYZANTINE PERIOD

16th – 18th century

From the mid-15th century onward, the Greek world lost its political independence. It was divided under the sovereignty of the Ottoman Turks, who captured the Byzantine capital of Constantinople in 1453, and the western powers, notably Venice, who had been established in Crete, Cyprus and the various islands and coastal areas of the Aegean and Ionian seas since the Fourth Crusade of 1204.

The Orthodox Church was the only institution to survive after the end of the Byzantine Empire, thanks to the religious tolerance of the Muslim Ottomans. United around the church, the Greek community in Constantinople continued to play a leading role in the economic and cultural life of the Ottoman Empire. Of vital importance to the survival of Greek identity during this time of foreign rule was the flourishing of ecclesiastical art, which preserved much of the character of Byzantine aesthetics.

During the same period, active Greek communities developed throughout Asia Minor (Turkey), southern Russia, central Europe, northern Italy, as well as in cities such as Paris and London. Contacts between Greece and these communities abroad were close and fruitful, leading to improvement in Greek standards of living and education.

NEOHELLENIC PERIOD

19th century

In 1821, after 400 years of subjugation, the Greeks tried once again to free themselves from Ottoman rule. The revolution initially broke in the Peloponnese and central Greece and quickly spread across the whole Aegean to Crete and Cyprus. In 1822 the revolutionaries declared the independence of the Greek nation and consolidated their position with remarkable victories on land and sea.



A Greek boy by Alexandre-Marie Colin, about 1829–30.

In 1824 the tide turned against the revolutionaries. However the determination of the Greeks, combined with the intervention of European powers, brought an end to the conflict in 1827. Ioannis Capodistria was elected as president and his intense diplomatic efforts to secure Greek interests culminated in the formalising of the Greek state in the London Protocol of 1830.

Capodistria was assassinated in 1831 and the following year the European 'great powers' conspired to have Otto, youngest son of King Ludwig I of Bavaria crowned King of Greece. During his reign, Otto centralised state power and declared Athens the capital. The high-handedness of his administration, however, led to the bloodless revolution of 1843. A constitution was introduced but Otto was eventually expelled, and the monarchy abolished, in 1862.

PRIMARY FOCUS QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Find a children's toy in the exhibition. How would a child have played with it? Draw a modern-day example of this kind of toy.
2. Find the fish in the exhibition. What was it used for?
3. Find three objects which were used to hold water. How are their shapes different?
4. What is the name given to a person who makes pottery?
5. Find the child's tunic and compare it with your own coat. What are the similarities and differences?
6. Find objects in the exhibition which show animals (fish, birds, dolphins, lions, horses).



Toy horse, 5th-7th century AD



Fish-shaped perfume flask, 5th-6th century AD

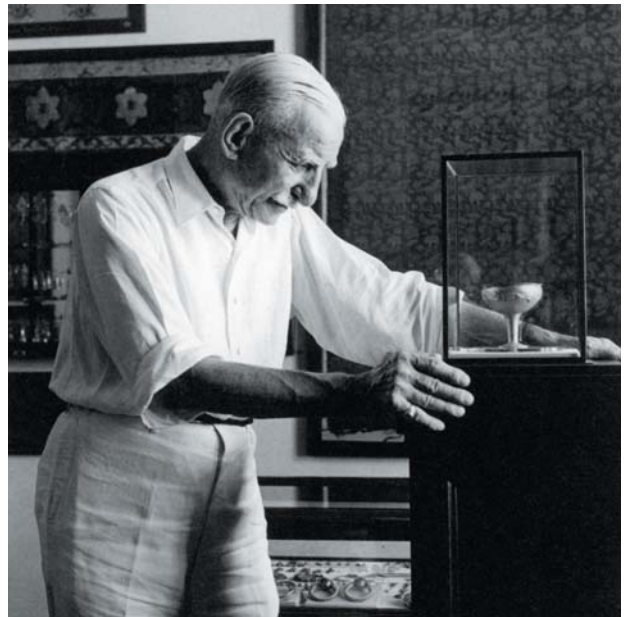


Icon painting of St George, second half of 15th century

7. Which saint was famous for slaying a dragon? Find two icon paintings in the exhibition which tell this story. Draw a picture of a dragon.
8. Find a mermaid in the exhibition (hint: look closely at the embroidery). Draw a picture of a mermaid.

SECONDARY FOCUS QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Find the Neolithic figurine-pendant. What was its significance for women? Research another sculpture, small enough to be carried or worn, that has a similar purpose.
2. Look at the figurine made in the Cycladic Islands about 2700–2300 BC. Find the clues which tell us that it once looked very different. Draw a picture of how it may have looked when it was first made.
3. What is obsidian and why was it a good material for making arrowheads and blades? Look at the arrowheads in the exhibition and explain how we know that they were burial offerings.
4. Find two examples of pottery with strong geometric motifs and patterns. Which other art forms from the same period utilised similar patterns and motifs?
5. Describe the precious object shown in the photograph with Antonis Benaki, the founder of the Benaki Museum.
6. What might be the purpose of the Phi and Psi figurines? Write the Greek letter Phi and Psi and compare them with the figurines.
7. What kinds of objects were sometimes used as weddings gifts? Why was Aphrodite a popular subject of wedding gifts?
8. Find the plaque with Aphrodite. What is special about it?
9. What kinds of objects were considered important for the protection of children. What might we use today for a similar purpose?



Antonios Benaki with the one-handed kylix, late 15th century BC



Female figurines, 14th–13th century BC

10. Find three objects with marine themes or subjects. Explain why the sea might have been important to the creator of this object.
11. Many items in the exhibition were believed to have magical properties. Find three examples and describe their use.
12. The bow fibula (a brooch used to fasten female garments) in the exhibition depicts the mythical Pegasus. Research this myth and write a brief outline. Design a storyboard for a short film or animation of the Pegasus myth.
13. Who was 'Paris' and what was he famous for?
14. What conditions are necessary for wooden objects to survive for very long periods of time?
15. Find examples of the fish motif and explain its significance.
16. What is a paradisaical landscape? Draw your own version of one.
17. Find three examples of egg tempera in the exhibition. Write a definition of egg tempera.
18. Why was coin jewellery popular during the Ottoman occupation?
19. Describe the filigree technique. Find three examples of this technique in the exhibition.
20. Which famous British poet was also a philhellene ('friend of Greece')? Find the object in the exhibition which depicts this poet.



Head of a statue of Paris, 2nd century AD



Wooden window shutters, 5th-7th century AD

FURTHER RESOURCES

Suitable for primary students

Clare, John D (ed), *Ancient Greece*, Harcourt Brace, San Diego, 1994

The Winged Sandals website provides accurate information about Greek mythology primarily targeted at 6–12 years olds. An invaluable tool for engaging a young audience, the website invites children to join Hermes on an adventure filled with animated stories and interactive games: www.wingedsandals.com.au

Suitable for secondary and tertiary students

Greek treasures: from the Benaki Museum in Athens, Electra Georgoula ed, Powerhouse Publishing, 2005

Boardman, John, *The Greeks overseas: their early colonies and trade*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1980

Coldstream, N, *Greek Treasures from the Benaki Museum in Athens*, Geometric Greece, Benn/London, 1977

Connor, Peter and Jackson, Heather, *A catalogue of Greek vases in the collection of the University of Melbourne at the Ian Potter Museum of Art*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 2000

Crane, Gregory (ed), *Perseus 2.0: interactive sources and studies on ancient Greek culture*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1996

Drees, Ludwig, *Olympia: gods, artists and athletes*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1968

Durando, Furio, *Splendours of ancient Greece*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1997

Hanfmann, George, *Classical sculpture*, George Rainbird, London, 1967

Richter, Gisela, *A handbook of Greek art*, De Capo Press, New York, 1987

Russo, Lucio, *The forgotten revolution: how science was born in 300 BC and why it had to be reborn*, Springer, Berlin, 2004

Sealey, Raphael, *A history of Greek city states ca. 700–338 BC*, University of California Press, 1976

Mark Whittow, *The making of Byzantium, 600–1025*, University of California Press, 1996

Websites

Benaki Museum in Athens: www.benaki.gr

Perseus, an evolving digital library of ancient Greek culture: www.perseus.tufts.edu

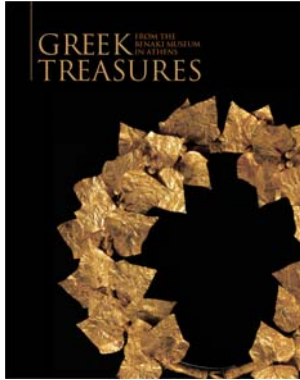
A virtual gallery of the ancient Greek world: www.museum.upenn.edu/Greek_World/Index.html

Please note

The websites referred to in these notes were available and suitable at the time of publication. We advise teachers to check sites before recommending them to students.

GREEK TREASURES

FROM THE
BENAKI MUSEUM
IN ATHENS



Available in the Powerhouse Museum Shop or by mailorder
(www.powerhousemuseum.com/publish)

RRP \$44.95, 264 pages

members price \$35.95

special price from the Powerhouse Shop and mailorder \$39.95

For more information on the exhibition
Greek treasures: from the Benaki Museum in Athens,
visit the Powerhouse Museum's website
<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com>

For more information about education support
or your booking, contact Education and Visitor Serv-
ices at the Powerhouse Museum:

Telephone — (02) 9217 0222

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The Powerhouse Museum, part of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, also including Sydney Observatory, is funded by the NSW government.

ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS OF MODERN GREEK

All answers should be in Greek.

COMPOSITE VESSEL, 2300–2000 BC

Beginners

Complete the following passage using the words provided.

Βλέπουμε _____

_____ που τα κρατάει

ένα _____. Είναι

στολισμένα με _____ σχήματα. Είναι

από την πρώτη _____ περίοδο.

(βάζα, ανθρώπινα, τρία, χερούλι, κυκλαδική)



Advanced

List two uses for this object.

a. _____

b. _____

FIGURINES, 14TH–13TH CENTURY BC

Beginners

a. What two letters of the Greek alphabet remind you of these figurines?

b. Answer true or false:

Αυτά τα αγαλματάκια είναι στολισμένα με:

_____ τρίγωνα _____ γραμμές _____ κύκλους



Advanced

a. Do these objects represent male or female figures? Explain your answer.

b. From what material do you think these figurines are made from and what is their possible use?

SKYPHOS (CUP), ABOUT 540 BC

Beginners

a. List two colours found on this object.



b. How many figures are represented on this object?

c. List three words which best describe:

i. the figures represented in the centre of this object;

ii. the figures closest to the handles.

d. Tick the correct statement:

Αυτό το αντικείμενο είναι:

- τετράγωνο με ένα χερούλι
 στρογγυλό με ένα χερούλι
 στρογγυλό με δύο χερούλια
 τρίγωνο χωρίς χερούλι

Advanced

a. Describe possible uses for this object.

b. Describe how the images on this object can tell us about life in ancient Greece.

BOAT-SHAPED EARRINGS, 550–500 BC

Beginners

Find the Greek equivalent for the words provided.



Η εικόνα αυτή μας δείχνει

ένα _____ (pair) _____ (golden) _____ (earrings) σε σχέδιο _____ (of a ship).

Advanced

Using the words provided, complete the following sentence.

Τα αντικείμενα αυτής της εικόνας είναι ένα

_____. Έχουν ασυνήθιστο _____ που θυμίζει _____.

(για, σχέδιο, καράβι, γυναικείο, τρυπημένα, αυτιά, κόσμημα)

IVY WREATH, 1ST CENTURY BC

Beginners

Circle the correct answer.



a. The shape of this object is:
(τετράγωνο – τρίγωνο – κύκλος – οβάλ)

b. The material it is made from is:
(δέρμα – χαλκός – ασήμι – χρυσός)

c. This wreath is decorated with many:
(λουλούδια – φρούτα – ζαφείρια – φύλλα)

Advanced

Using the words provided, complete the following sentences.

Το _____ αυτό που βρέθηκε στη _____ και αποτελείται από χρυσά _____ ήταν βασιλικό _____. Δηλαδή το _____ μόνο _____ και δεν το χρησιμοποιούσαν για τη _____ των _____.

Ολυμπιακών Αγώνων.

(φύλλα κισσού, Μακεδονία, στέψη, κόσμημα, στεφάνι, ηρώων, φορούσαν, βασιλείς)

PECTORAL CROSS, 13TH–14TH CENTURY BC

Beginners

Find the best match for the words in column A with the words in column B.



A

διπλός
χρυσό
γαλάζια

B

πέτρα
σταυρός
κόσμημα

Advanced

Select the correct time period for this object. Explain your selection.

- a. Ελληνορωμαϊκή αρχαϊκή περίοδος.
b. Ελληνορωμαϊκή κλασσική περίοδος.
c. Ελληνιστική
d. Ρωμαϊκή
e. Βυζαντινή

GLAZED BOWL, ABOUT 1200 BC

Beginners

a. List four colours you can find in this object.



b. Answer true or false, the image represented on this object depicts:

- i. μια βασίλισσα
- ii. μια χορεύτρια
- iii. ένα στρατιώτη
- iv. έναν τραγουδιστή

Advanced

a. Select the correct answer. This object is made from:
Χαλκό – ασήμι – πηλό

b. Describe the image on this object.

c. Select the correct answer. This object was possibly used as:

- i. ένα κύπελο
- ii. ένα πιάτο
- iii. ένα βάζο
- iv. μια λεκάνη

GOSPELBOOK COVER, 1721

Beginners

Use the correct article and adjective to complete the following sentences and then select the sentence which best describes this object.



_____ εικόνα. _____

_____ ευαγγέλιο. _____

_____ πίνακας. _____

(το, χρυσή, ένας, ασημένιο, μια, χάλκινος)

Advanced

Using the words provided, complete the following passage:

Αυτό το _____ είναι ένα _____ της μεταβυζαντινής _____. Στην μια _____ του έχει την _____ και στην άλλη την _____. Είναι φτιαγμένο από _____, _____, _____ και _____.

(περιόδου, πλευρά, αντικείμενο, Σταύρωση, ευαγγέλιο, ξύλο, βελούδο, Ανάσταση, χαρτί, ασήμι)

FRAGMENTS OF A PAINTED CHEST, 18TH CENTURY

Beginners

List all the colours you can see in this object.



Advanced

Describe what the two women depicted on this object are wearing.

CHAIN PECTORAL ORNAMENT, SECOND QUARTER OF 19TH CENTURY

Beginners

Complete this sentence with the correct adjectives and nouns.

Η εικόνα μας δείχνει ένα

_____ κολιέ, με

αλυσίδες, _____ σειρές κοράλια και

_____ πέτρες.

(γυάλινες, ωραίο, ασημένιες, τρεις, τέσσερις)



Advanced

Describe this object and its possible use.

'A GREEK BOY' BY ALEXANDRE-MARIE COLIN, ABOUT 1829-30

Beginners

Choose the correct adjective to complete the passage.

Στην εικόνα αυτή βλέπουμε

ένα _____ τσολιά.

(μικρό – μεγάλο)



Η στολή του αποτελείται

από:

_____ φέσι. (κόκκινο – άσπρο)

_____ γιλέκο (μαύρο – κόκκινο)

_____ πουκάμισο (άσπρο – πράσινο)

_____ φούστα (κίτρινη – άσπρη)

_____ καριοφύλι (καινούριο – παλιό)

Τσαρούχια με _____ φούντες. (γαλάζιες – κόκκινες)

Advanced

Select the correct word to complete the following passage.

Το χρώμα που έχει το φέσι της στολής του τσολιά

_____ (α. ζωγραφίζει

β. Συμβολίζει) το _____ (α. αίμα

β. Ιδρώτα) των _____ (α. Ιταλών

β. Ελλήνων) που χύθηκε στα χρόνια της

_____. (α. ελευθερίας β. σκλαβιάς)

Η φούστα της _____ (α. στολής

β. αλλαξιάς) έχει _____ (α. λίγες

β. Τετρακόσιες) πιέτες που συμβολίζουν τα

τετρακόσια _____ (α. βάσανα

β. χρόνια) της δουλείας. Η στολή αυτή μας

θυμίζει την _____ (α. ισπανική

β. σκωτσέζικη στολή).