

ANCIENT BRONZES

A Guide to the Yale Collection

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P.O. Box 208271
New Haven, CT 06520-8271

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Yale University Art Gallery
Ancient bronzes; a guide to the Yale collection /
Matthew M. McCarty
ISBN 0-89467-964-3

1. Bronzes, Ancient. 2. Bronzes—Connecticut—New Haven.
3. Yale University Art Gallery. I. McCarty, Matthew M.
- II. Title.

NK7907.Y35 2006
733.074746'8—dc22 2006012589

PREFACE

IN THE THIRD OR FOURTH CENTURY A.D., the author Callistratus wrote a description of a bronze statue of the wine god Dionysos, cast more than five hundred years earlier by the Classical Greek sculptor Praxiteles: "The hands of Praxiteles created works which were fully alive. Though [the statue of Dionysos] was bronze, it nevertheless blushed . . . and the bronze, though in reality being quite hard, nevertheless, being softened into flesh by art, evaded the touch of the hand. The bronze, like an actor, gave every indication of human emotion." While largely a rhetorical exercise, this passage nevertheless conveys the fame and skill of some ancient artists whose names were passed down by the Romans as the names of Old Masters. Most bronzeworkers, particularly those who cast small pieces for everyday use, did not achieve such celebrity status; they were generally regarded as simple craftsmen, and they belonged to a relatively low class of society. Yet under the patronage of the god Hephaistos (the Roman Vulcan), these bronzeworkers created objects that were in some ways more important than such monumental sculptures.

Small bronze sculpture provides a window on the ancient world in a way few other objects do, for figured bronze objects were ubiquitous in ancient Mediterranean cultures. Whether they were offered at public sanctuaries, integrated into private cult, used as functional objects, or displayed simply as decoration or to induce conversation, bronzes were incorporated into almost every aspect of life. Bronzes are especially important for elucidating such areas as domestic religion, about which literary sources are nearly silent. In addition, such bronzes have a certain appeal to the modern viewer. They are small and delicate, crafted for human use and sculpted on a personal scale: they can be held in the hand.

The collection of ancient bronzes at the Yale University Art Gallery not only encompasses items representing most of the various uses to which such objects were put in antiquity but also contains pieces that cover the span of Greek

and Roman bronze production, from the eighth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. The collection thus provides insights both into particular aspects of life in the ancient world and into the stylistic development of sculpture. This guide seeks to examine individual bronzes at Yale as artistic creations, focusing on matters of style and technique, as well as to consider them within their historical, political, social, and religious contexts. Doing so will both acquaint the reader with the Yale collection and provide an introduction to the art and culture of the ancient Mediterranean.

I am grateful to many people whose support and counsel have made this book possible. Foremost among them are Susan B. Matheson, the Molly and Walter Bareiss Curator of Ancient Art at the Yale University Art Gallery, and Megan Doyon, senior museum assistant, for their thoughts, constant guidance, and assistance; Dr. Seán Hemingway, for his criticism on a draft of this text; Dr. Jasper Gaunt, for his critical eye and discussion of the objects; Dr. Stéphanie Boucher and Dr. Annemarie Kaufmann-Heinimann for confirming my thoughts on the Genius Cucullatus; Sarah Nunberg, for discussing the technical aspects of the objects with me; Joyce Ippolito and Sonia Shannon, for editing the text and designing the book, respectively; Anthony DeCamillo, Susan Cole, and Alex Contreras of the digital photography team, for their excellent work. I am also grateful to Betsy and Frank H. Goodyear, Jr., B.A. 1966, for supporting my research and writing, and to Jan Mayer, whose generosity made this publication possible.

Matthew M. McCarty



THE WORKING OF BRONZE

COPPER, ABUNDANT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, was one of the first metals shaped by humans. Sometime in the fourth millennium B.C., a copper-arsenic alloy was first used for tools and ornaments. Almost a thousand years later, this brittle material was supplanted by a stronger, superior alloy: bronze, made from copper and the far rarer metal tin. Although later replaced by iron for making weapons and some tools, bronze has maintained a privileged role as a metal used for sculpture to the present day.

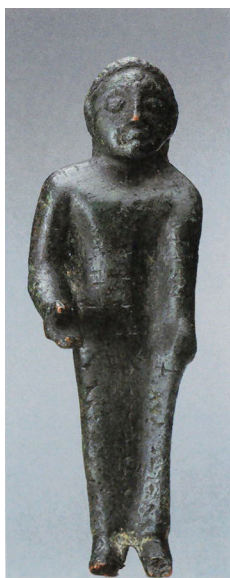
Bronze is indeed an ideal metal for artistic creation. It melts at a relatively low temperature—around 1000° Celsius—and provides a tensile strength that made the graceful compositions of ancient bronzes possible. The hue of bronze can be changed by altering the composition of the alloy, and it can approximate flesh tones, making it a particularly suitable material for human figures, as Callistratus's description of Praxiteles' Dionysos demonstrates. The dark, often green patinas seen on ancient bronzes were usually not intentionally put on the bronze surface by the ancient artists; the patinas developed over time, as the bronzes were naturally exposed to environmental elements, from the oxygen in air to the minerals in soil and water.

Creating a bronze sculpture, even on a small scale, is a multi-step, labor-intensive process. All of the bronzes discussed in this guide were made using the lost-wax casting technique, although other techniques were also employed in antiquity. Lost-wax casting involved carving a model in soft wax, usually around a clay core, of the figure to be produced. This model would generally have been almost as detailed as the final bronze sculpture and would at least have had the form of the final piece. Small strips of wax would then be added to the model to create a network of channels around the figure, through which bronze could later be poured and hot gases escape. Next, the wax figure would have been encased in a clay mold, with small pegs (chaplets) inserted to hold the clay core in place. The mold would then have been heated, hardening the

clay and melting the wax, which was then drained out. This created an empty cavity in the mold, into which molten bronze was poured via the channels left by the melted wax ribbons. Once the bronze had hardened, the clay mold could be broken away, freeing the cast sculpture.



Even the most careful casting, however, left undesirable marks on the surface of the object. Filling the casting channels with hot bronze, even though carefully measured to be the exact volume of the statue, meant that there would be small nibs where the channels joined the figure. If not all of the hot gas escaped through the vents in the mold, gas bubbles could leave flaws in the bronze ranging from small cavities to larger fissures. If the damage was too serious, the artist would have to start again from the beginning, creating a new mold; the old one would have been unusable after being broken away from the hardened bronze sculpture. In general, however, small blemishes were simply worked off the bronze surface after it had cooled: bumps were ground down, pockmarks and small holes patched. Abrasives were then used in most cases to create the smooth, polished surface seen on many ancient bronzes, including a Roman statuette of Hercules at Yale (top).



The final step in working bronzes was to add surface decoration, either as independent patterns, as on the garment of an Etruscan statuette of a woman (bottom), or to delineate certain features of a figure more sharply. This could be done either by tracing—using a chisel to push metal out of a particular area, creating a U-shaped furrow—or by engraving—using a sharper tool that would actually remove thin sections of metal, leaving a V-shaped groove.

Another form of surface decoration was inlaying. Other materials, such as glass or metal of a different color, were fitted into small holes left on the bronze for that purpose. Inlays provide tonality and ornamentation on the bronze, creating colorful contrasts that highlight particular areas. Such a contrast can be seen on the Roman statuette of a **Genius Cucullatus** (page 37), where a strip of copper indicates a colored band on his garment.

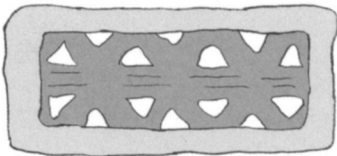
GEOMETRIC HORSE

AT THE END OF THE SECOND MILLENNIUM B.C., the collapse of the great Bronze Age Mycenaean civilization left mainland Greece in a dark age of impoverished regions competing against each other. In the Geometric period, from the late ninth through the eighth centuries B.C., Greek artists were caught between the memory of this heroic past, glorified by the poet Homer in song, and the reality of their contemporary culture. Artistic production was generally on a small scale, crafted by regional workshops, each with its own distinctive style, and favored a limited range of subjects, among which the horse played a very important role.

A solid-cast bronze horse at Yale, dated to the middle of the eighth century B.C., embodies the Greek Geometric style and, more specifically, possesses all of the qualities normally associated with horses produced by Corinthian workshops. It stands on a rectangular latticework base, pictured at right, with thin legs that culminate in wide, powerful flanks. A long tail arches out behind the horse. Between the fore and rear legs, its body becomes a thin cylinder. The neck and mane of the beast are reduced to a curved plane, its face to a raised trumpet-shaped tube. All of the forms are simplified to abstract, stylized shapes, yet the final effect is of a stately steed, with muscular thighs and a thin, well-exercised body.

The significance of the horse in Geometric Greece may be inferred not only from the sheer number of such small sculpted horses but also from the prominent roles horses play in Homer's epic poetry, composed around the same time as these bronze figures started to appear. In Book Two of the *Iliad*, as the poet catalogues the Greek armies, the finest horses are ranked among the most famous heroes. This heroism attributed to the beasts is captured in the Yale horse, with its elegant power and proudly reared head.

The importance of living horses is not confined to the Trojan War era that Homer describes; their importance in Geometric-period Greece must have

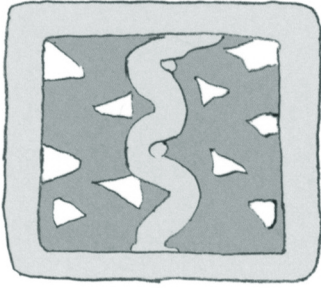


been a historical reality. Before the advent of coinage, the exchange of horses was an important aspect of the early Greek barter economy, and so horses became a symbol of wealth and nobility. Most bronze horses were either dedicated in sanctuaries or buried with their owners, honors usually reserved for valuable objects. These sculptures thus express their own worth through their form, their precious material, and their use.

GEOMETRIC BEETLE

THIS SOLID-CAST BRONZE BEETLE AT YALE is both an early Geometric Greek foray into cast bronze sculpture and also emblematic of how Greece was brought out of the post-Mycenaean Dark Ages into a period of artistic prosperity. The beetle's six spindly legs stand on a base pierced by an openwork pattern of zigzags, illustrated at right. Its almond-shaped body is patterned with incised lines that emphasize the contours and divisions in the insect's shell. Its head extends down at a diagonal from the front of its thorax, the mandibles curving outward from the head to create a crescent shape. Every aspect of the beetle is reduced to geometric forms, giving it a sense of abstract order; this effect is reinforced by the truly abstract motif of the base. Such traits were the hallmarks of the Geometric period.





Although the Geometric sculptural repertoire was generally limited, with animals like horses and bulls being particularly common, beetles are a rarity. Only five other examples are currently known; three of these have been excavated from the sanctuary at Olympia. These suggest a date for the Yale beetle of about 750–730 B.C. It has been suggested, based on the patterns of the bases of these Olympian beetles, that they were produced by a Lakonian craftsman. Since the design on the base of the Yale beetle also closely matches Lakonian patterns, and since Geometric beetles are so rare, it is possible that the same workshop also cast the Yale piece.

The rarity of these Geometric bronze beetles also raises the question of the origin of the subject. Both Egypt and Phoenicia had been producing images of scarab beetles long before the Greek examples. These eastern scarabs, used as talismans, jewelry, and seals, were connected to the cult of the sun god. Some such pieces, dating to the middle of the eighth century B.C., have been excavated from several Greek sanctuaries, including that of Artemis Orthia in Lakonia. The Geometric beetle is likely an adaptation of an eastern Mediterranean image by a Greek artist in a Greek style. As such, it demonstrates an important trading and artistic connection with the Near East, an influence that would help pull Greece out of the Dark Ages and encourage the fluorescence of Greek art.

GRIFFIN PROTOME

A BRONZE GRIFFIN PROTOME AT YALE illustrates the next step in the artistic exchange with the Near East. It contrasts sharply with the Geometric animals, showing greater technical casting skill as a hollow-cast bronze and also demonstrating the new artistic vocabulary that entered Greece in the Orientalizing period of the seventh century B.C.

In the late eighth and early seventh centuries B.C., Near Eastern objects were deposited in Greek sanctuaries with increasing frequency, indicating more regular trade relations. Merchants not only conveyed objects between the two cultures, but brought with the objects different ideas and artistic forms. Among these was a sense of the fantastic, captured visually by Near Eastern hybrid monsters such as those seen on Yale's reliefs from the palace of the Assyrian king Assurnasirpal II (ca. 883–859 B.C.). One of these creatures was the griffin, with its lion body, serpent neck, and head of a predatory bird. The vicious and magical monster must have created a striking and probably even terrifying impression on the Greek viewer, especially when cast as sculpture. Such exotic supernatural creatures quickly supplanted the more mundane animals of the Geometric period in art.

Griffin protomes, with heads rearing up, necks outstretched in a curved S-shape, and menacingly open mouths, served as attachments arranged around the rims of large bronze cauldrons. They were generally displayed in groups of three or six. The vessels that bore them were dedicated in sanctuaries across Greece both to win a god's favor and to show off the dedicator's wealth.

The griffin protomes as a group show clear stylistic and technical development over time. The earliest examples were stocky, created by hammering a sheet of bronze around a modeled core. These evolved into slender cast protomes that remained popular until about 550 B.C. Comparison with excavated pieces suggests that the Yale griffin is one of the later examples, cast at the end of the seventh or beginning of the sixth century B.C. on the island of Samos. This East Greek isle served as an important intermediary between mainland Greece and the Near East and was the site of a large sanctuary to Hera where bronzecasting took place.



RECUMBENT LION

WHILE MUCH OF THE WORK OF THE GEOMETRIC and Orientalizing periods focused on animals, by the Archaic period (ca. 650–475 B.C.), depicting the human figure became the overriding interest of Greek artists. Animals, however, remained important and were sculpted with great care, even if they were used largely as subsidiary decoration.

Few early Archaic animals demonstrate the elegant grace of a small bronze lion that has been promised as a bequest to the Yale University Art Gallery. The recumbent beast, with forepaws outstretched and head turned to the right, shows an exquisite attention to patterning and ornamentation that places it alongside the finest works of the early Archaic period. The blocky, geometric limbs contrast with the flowing, abstract incisions that form the lion's mane on



the back of his neck. The incised lozenges below the chin of the lion indicate a shift in the texture of the mane. Around the lion's head, the mane becomes an offset ring with radial incised lines, creating a decorative collar. Although the Greek artist who sculpted this piece had in all likelihood never seen a real lion, he produced a stylized yet convincing representation of a majestic animal, whose tame demeanor contrasts with earlier and fiercer Orientalizing animals like the **Griffin Protome**. The particular treatment of the mane and limbs suggests that the lion was cast in a Lakonian workshop, and comparison with similar pieces implies a date for the piece in the middle of the sixth century B.C.

The bottom side of the lion is left hollow, and the edges of the underside display traces of a silver-colored metal, perhaps used as a solder to attach the lion to a vessel. A bronze cauldron in the Louvre, for example, is embellished with a series of recumbent lions attached around its rim. The slight curvature of this lion's body suggests that it was originally affixed to the curved rim or shoulder of a similar large bowl.

RAM-BEARER

LIVELIHOOD IN THE GREEK WORLD WAS BASED primarily on agriculture and animal husbandry. In rugged Arkadia, the importance of domesticated animals was commemorated by a series of bronze statuettes of shepherds carrying rams, perhaps as offerings, which were dedicated in a sanctuary on the slopes of Mount Lykaïos. While these are the best-known Archaic figures of shepherds, not all ram-bearer sculptures were Arkadian, nor were they all of simple shepherds; some depicted the god Hermes in his role as protector of flocks.

An Archaic bronze statuette of a nude ram-bearer (*kriophoros*) at Yale likely depicted either a peasant or Hermes. Since Greek art relied on a series of attributes to identify specific characters, the lack of such symbols here makes it impossible to establish this figure's identity. Both the messenger god and mortals are represented in Archaic art bearing animals and other offerings for sacrifice, while humans are shown engaging in pastoral activities. There is a small, round hole on the crown of this figure's head; this hole may have served to hold a separately cast set of wings, which would have identified the figure as Hermes. The striding legs of the Yale statuette are broken below the knees, leaving open the possibility that the figure once wore Hermes' winged boots. The right hand, extended forward, may have held Hermes' characteristic *kerykeion* (messenger's staff), or it may have held a plain shepherd's staff. With his left hand, the shepherd grasps a ram by the forelegs, carrying it over his left shoulder. This is an unusual way of showing a figure bearing an animal in Greek art, and it has only one published parallel from the same period; in similar statuettes, the ram is usually carried either over both shoulders or under the arm. The Yale ram-bearer's head looks straight ahead; his hair is parted at the center and pulled back over his shoulders, where it is bound in a loose bun at shoulder level. The treatment of the body indicates a date around 540 or 530 B.C., a date supported by the hairstyle, which went out of fashion a few years later, when it was replaced by a higher bun on the nape of the neck.

The turn of the ram's head to look backward is, like the way in which the ram is carried, unusual, but it has a clear visual purpose. Whereas the other Archaic shepherds and freestanding Archaic sculpture in general favored a frontal view, the artist who modeled the Yale bronze shifts the primary view to a profile by altering the position of the ram; only when seen from the side can the entire group be appreciated by the viewer. This subtle change may reflect the influence of graphic arts like vase painting, in which profile views were used almost exclusively for figures.



RUNNING GORGON

GORGONS, MYTHOLOGICAL BEINGS WHOSE terrible visages would literally petrify any viewer, are commonly depicted in the Archaic period. The monstrous daughters of a sea god and a sea creature, gorgons are best known for their confrontation with the hero Perseus. Sent to kill Medusa, one of the three gorgon sisters, Perseus could not look at her face except as reflected in his shield, lest he be turned to stone. The hideous ferocity of gorgons made them popular images to ward off evil in the ancient world. Large stone or terracotta gorgons were installed in the pediments of temples, faces of gorgons (*gorgoneia*) were painted on or attached to the shields of warriors, and, as was probably the case with the Yale bronze, gorgons were often included as attachments to metal vessels.

The Yale gorgon is depicted in the conventional Archaic running pose, both legs shown in profile with sharply bent knees. Her torso and face are turned frontally. She wears winged boots and a short tunic (*chiton*), belted with a pair of snakes that she grasps in each hand. The beautifully delicate folds of her garment stand in contrast to her bloated, hexagonal face, flanked by three tresses of hair on each side that fall forward onto her chest. Sharp fangs and a tongue protrude from her fearsome mouth. Two sickle-shaped wings curve up from her back, balancing the position of her legs to create a dynamic pinwheel composition. From her feet protrude two small tangs, which were used to fasten the gorgon to another surface, most likely part of a bronze vessel.

The Yale bronze, which can be dated to circa 540–520 B.C. by comparison with other examples, may have come from the handle of a mainland Greek volute krater, a deep bowl used to mix water and wine. Yet it is also possible that the gorgon was cast in South Italy. The Yale gorgon bears a close resemblance to two terracotta molds made locally near the Greek colony of Agrigento on Sicily, suggesting that the Yale bronze was also crafted nearby. The attribution to a Greek or Greek-influenced workshop in Italy may be strengthened by a



series of *dinoi*—deep, wide-mouthed bowls—from tombs in central and southern Italy. Such *dinoi* were used to hold cremated remains and were adorned with a series of figures attached around the shoulder, often by tangs or rivets. Their decoration generally included mythological monsters; like the Yale gorgon, many were worked partially in the round, but with the back left mostly flat. Although apparently no other published bronze gorgons survive as *dinos* attachments, they appear painted on the shoulders of Greek terracotta *dinoi*. It is thus possible that the bronze gorgon comes from such a South Italian vessel, the monster's horrid power employed to protect the remains of the deceased.

SATYR HANDLE

VESSEL ATTACHMENTS LIKE THE **RUNNING GORGON** were common in the Greek world; throughout the Archaic and into the Classical period, as the *symposion* (drinking party) became ever more important in aristocratic Greek life, painted vases and bronze vessels became ever more elaborately decorated.

This bronze handle, from the sharply curved body of a shallow basin, is one of the few extant early examples of a self-contained vignette on a Greek bronze attachment. Above a palmette, a satyr, a wild half-animal companion of Dionysos, and a maenad, an ecstatic female follower of the wine god, recline on their elbows as if at a *symposion*, each in the opposite direction. The maenad holds a cup (*kantharos*) of wine in her right hand, and her companion holds a wineskin in his left; both items attest the Dionysiac atmosphere of the scene. The satyr, his head turned to look behind him in a play of mock innocence, reaches to fondle the maenad's leg. With her free hand, she repels his advance.

Such behavior was common stock for depictions of these Dionysiac cohorts.





The lascivious, bestial satyrs are frequently shown on painted Greek vases trying to ravish maenads. They almost never achieve their desire, however; the maenads consistently thwart them, sometimes even violently.

What is not common is the representation of satyrs and maenads as semi-civilized, reclining symposiasts. Usually they are depicted dancing and carousing in the wilderness, as suits their characters. There was, however, a trend toward “civilizing” these and other mythical beasts at the end of the Archaic period. To convey the taming of such wild creatures, a few vase painters rendered scenes of satyrs and maenads reclining together. All of these images were painted around 510–480 B.C., which would suggest a similar date for the bronze handle; this date is confirmed by the shape of the handle itself.

The handle, perhaps like the **Running Gorgon**, was probably cast in a Greek colony in South Italy. Individual bronze figurines of stylistically similar reclining satyrs have been attributed to South Italian workshops. Likewise, the zig-zag fold down the leg of the maenad’s chiton is treated as a three-dimensional ribbon, a trait found on Archaic bronzes from the Greek colony at Locri, but rarely on mainland Greek bronzes.

HERMES/MERCURY

WHILE THE ARCHAIC PERIOD IS GENERALLY looked at in terms of regional workshops, the Classical period is often seen in relation to individual artistic personalities, an approach stemming from the influence of ancient writers on art. Of all the sculptors of ancient Greece, perhaps the most famous in antiquity was Polykleitos of Argos, active in the mid-fifth century B.C. He was credited by Roman authors such as Pliny the Elder with perfecting the art of sculpture through *symmetria*—harmonious, mathematical proportion. Polykleitos, whose art was at the pinnacle of Classical sculpture, was, and still is, admired for his graceful poses of figures caught between movement and rest, demonstrating subtle shifts in the body's weight and balance.

The later Roman admiration for Polykleitan form spawned an industry that both copied and adapted his works, on large scale and on small. Since no original work by Polykleitos survives, modern familiarity with the sculptor's style depends upon these later sculptures, which have been grouped according to the ancient descriptions of Polykleitos's major works. Among these, the most famous was the *Doryphoros* (spear-bearer), which was a visual expression of Polykleitos's *Canon*, the book he wrote to outline his principles of *symmetria*.

A bronze statuette of the god Hermes at Yale, transformed into the Roman Mercury by the purse he carries in his right hand, is based on the *Doryphoros*. Cast in the first or second century A.D., when Rome was experiencing an artistic revival of Classical Greek form, the bronze belongs to a series of Mercury statuettes produced across the empire in a Polykleitan style. Although it draws on earlier figures and styles, the Yale statuette demonstrates how Roman artists would freely adapt prototypes. While the figure follows the *Doryphoros* closely in pose and proportion, the purse in the right hand was a Roman addition, as was the *chlamys* (mantle) over the now-missing left arm. Among all of the extant Roman statuettes of Mercury that display Polykleitan traits, very few adapt Polykleitos's works in exactly the same way; some are even a pastiche

of the Doryphoros and one or more other sculptures. The Yale statuette is one of the more finely crafted extant examples, with red copper inlaid for the nipples and silver inlaid for the eyes.

Many of these small Polykleitan Mercury bronzes were kept by their Roman owners in household shrines (*lararia*). The statuettes of Mercury, as the god who presided over commerce, were even more common in these *lararia* than statuettes of the Lares from which the shrines derive their name: a testament to the practical interests of Roman religion.



ATHENA



AS PATRON GODDESS OF THE CITY, Athena enjoyed great popularity in the arts while Athens was preeminent in the Greek world, especially during the Periklean Golden Age of the mid-fifth century B.C. Her privileged position was particularly clear when, in 447/446 B.C., Perikles, as the leading politician of Athens, decided to build a grand temple to the goddess on the Athenian Akropolis: the Parthenon. To sculpt the cult statue of Athena, Perikles selected Pheidias, whose fame rivaled that of Polykleitos. The renown of Pheidias's *Athena Parthenos* in antiquity was great, both for the quality of workmanship and for the amount of precious gold and ivory used to make it. The colossal image served as a model for many later representations of the goddess in all sizes, from the time of its completion through the Roman period.

A small bronze statuette of Athena at Yale most likely adapts a figure of Athena carved within a generation of Pheidias's masterpiece. While this bronze was likely cast in the late fifth to the mid-fourth century B.C., it still displays the influence of the Parthenos, particularly in its pose and its spirit. Prior to Pheidias's work, most sculpture depicting Athena had shown her as *promachos*, "fighting in front," striding forward aggressively as goddess of war; much Archaic art concentrated on such energetic dynamism, as can be seen in the **Running Gorgon**. This bronze, however, like the Parthenos, represents Athena in a pose of rest and contemplation, as she puts her weight on her right leg, leaving her left knee slightly bent. While the colossal scale of the Parthenos lent it a majesty fit for the divine, there was another aspect of it that is captured even more clearly in small-scale adaptations like this bronze: the treatment of Athena's body as a self-contained physical mass, with a subtle shift of weight and head tilted in quiet introspection, humanizes the goddess. While Greeks had long expressed their deities in anthropomorphic form, the extension of the artist's interest in the human body to the sphere of the divine reflects the Classical confidence in man's abilities to judge and perceive the world around him on his own terms.

GOAT

GOATS HAVE A LONG HISTORY OF DEPICTION in Greek art. After the Bronze Age, they began to appear in the seventh century B.C., mainly on Rhodian and other East Greek painted vases under the influence of Near Eastern art, and give their name to the “Wild Goat” style of vase painting. In the early fifth century B.C., after the Battle of Marathon, the goat-legged god Pan became an important deity in the Athenian pantheon, as Greek victory over Persian forces was attributed to his help. The first representations of Pan on Athenian vases depict him as a full goat, often standing on two legs; only after about 480 B.C. did he acquire the part-human features that would characterize him throughout later Greek and Roman art. Goats were also depicted in other contexts; the second-century A.D. writer Pausanias records seeing several monumental statues of goats during his travels across Greece, generally given by cities as offerings to gods.

Unlike most other Greek sculptures of goats, themselves rare and usually carved in static poses, the bronze goat at Yale is full of vibrant energy as it rears up, forelegs tucked up against its chest. With their irregular swirling motion, the curving grooves that denote the long and heavy fur of the animal add to its liveliness and suggest that this is a wild goat. The slightly asymmetrical horns also increase the dynamism of the piece.

The closest parallels for the pose and treatment of the fur come from Attic grave stelai of the fourth century B.C. These reliefs depict two rearing goats facing each other symmetrically and butting heads. A similar date may be assigned to the bronze goat, whose vivacious spirit and patterning is found in other fourth-century sculpture.

Because it shows no evidence of being attached to a vase, this statuette probably served as a votive offering. Such offerings could be dedicated as permanent mementos of the ephemeral slaughter of an animal. Votives could also be given to gods in place of a live sacrifice, to win the deity's favor or to give thanks for help received. Goats were one of the most common types of sacrificial victim

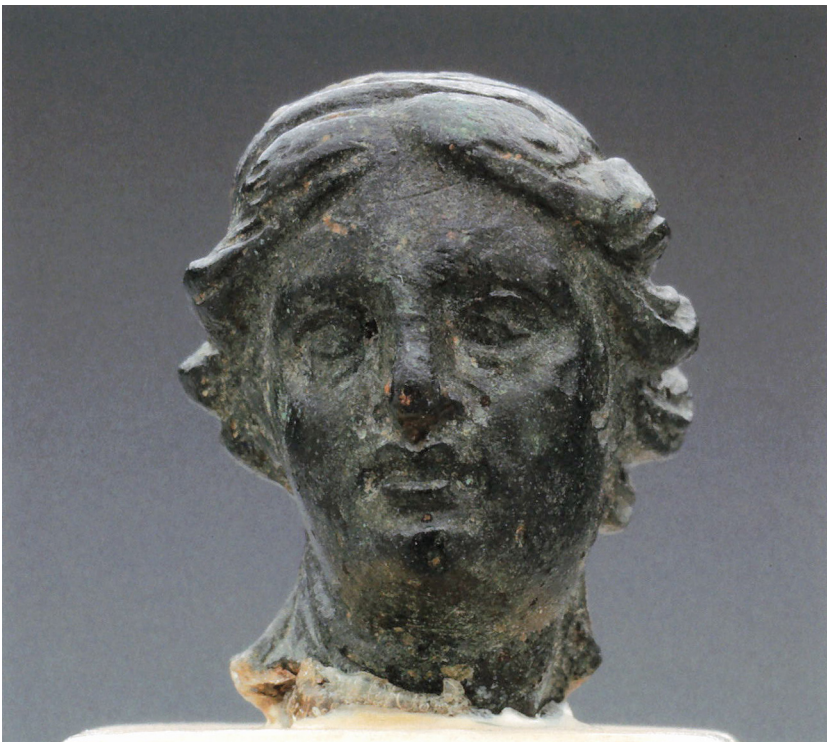


to many gods, as bones excavated from temples across the Greek world show. Yet depictions of goats are relatively rare in sanctuaries; they are outnumbered by votive statues of bulls, which were actually immolated less frequently but were more expensive and more prestigious offerings. The size and high quality of this bronze goat may have been intended to add to the value of the piece, making it a more respectable gift for its honorand.

HEAD OF APHRODITE

WHEREAS THE **Polykleitan Hermes/Mercury** draws on a Classical style and sculptural model, this tiny but carefully worked head of a woman demonstrates a closer adaptation of an earlier work, in this case one of the most famous fourth-century cult statues.

The round, fleshy bronze head turns to the right, inclining slightly to one side. She has plump, slightly parted lips and a narrow, straight nose. Her wide eyes sit below gently arched brows and a high, pointed forehead. Her hair, parted at center, rolls down either side of her face along a fillet in thick, ropelike twists and is bound in a bun at the back of her head. A few incised wisps of hair escape down her cheeks and the nape of her neck. A small earring is incised and shown hanging from her left ear.



The hairstyle and features of the Yale head derive from the Aphrodite of Knidos, sculpted by Praxiteles in the mid-fourth century B.C. and the first cult statue to show the goddess nude. Many copies of this work, made through Late Antiquity, exist in every medium from marble to terracotta to bronze. Like many other works, including the **Polykleitan Hermes/Mercury**, the Knidian Aphrodite underwent adaptations and modifications over time, inspiring other nude and seminude Aphrodite “types.” The treatment of the hair on the Yale head as ropy, cascading bunches is comparable to marble and terracotta sculpture dating from the second and first centuries B.C., as are the rounded, slightly open lips, suggesting that this is a Hellenistic adaptation of Praxiteles’ work that likely depicts Aphrodite.

The wide circulation of statuettes like the one from which the Yale head comes ensured that certain features, including the figure’s coiffure, would have been recognizable to the ancient viewer as belonging to an Aphrodite type, regardless of whose body they were placed on. The creation of this distinguishable iconography was seized upon by the Ptolemaic queens of Egypt, who, in their portraiture, associated themselves with the goddess of beauty and fertility by adopting Aphrodite’s hairstyle and other attributes, paving the way for later Roman portraits that directly assimilated individuals to gods.



TYCHE

ART WAS CERTAINLY NOT CONFINED SOLELY to the domestic and religious spheres of life; it also played an important political role in the ancient world. Major monuments were often erected to celebrate important historical events, and the large-scale prototype for a bronze statuette of Tyche (Fortune) at Yale was one such sculpture.

After the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C., the Greek world that he had unified quickly fragmented as his generals—the *diadochoi*—took control of different regions of the eastern Mediterranean. This was the dawn of the Hellenistic age, a period of intense and violent competition among the newly formed Greek kingdoms. In this environment of warfare and struggle, Tyche became an important deity, both on a personal and on a civic level. She was often credited with victory, or blamed for defeat. Following a successful campaign, Seleukos I Nikator, the diadach who ruled much of the Near East, commissioned the sculptor Eutychides of Sikyon to erect a victory monument honoring Tyche in the recently founded city of Antioch. This monument took the form of a young woman seated on a rock over a swimming personification of the River Orontes, upon whose banks Antioch was built. Her mural crown denotes her role as protector and personification of the city. Important because it is connected with the founding of Antioch in 300 B.C. and is thus one of the few firmly dated pieces of Hellenistic sculpture, the Tyche of Antioch survives only in depictions on coins and in Roman-period copies.

The Yale bronze Tyche is one such copy, and probably dates from the mid-second century A.D. At that time, Eutychides' Tyche gained new popularity following the erection of a copy of the statue in the theater of Antioch by the Roman emperor Trajan (r. A.D. 98–117). Although the Yale bronze was cast more than four centuries after Eutychides' original, it preserves many traits of the early Hellenistic work. The pose, for example, with crossed legs and twisted torso, penetrates into three dimensions; there is no viewpoint that visually flattens the pyramidal Tyche. Yet the Roman copyist has also taken liberties



with this bronze; most notably, he has removed the swimming Orontes from the composition, leaving only Tyche. This removes the geographic specificity of the statue while maintaining an easily recognizable iconography. Such generic Tyches in the same pose were used in many Roman cities—on official coinage, in painting, in sculpture, and in other minor arts—and examples survive from sites including Dura-Europos in Syria, excavated by Yale in the 1920s and 1930s. This statuette was likely intended to honor or to influence the fortune of the owner's city, whether Antioch or elsewhere, and demonstrates the importance of local, civic pride in the midst of the larger Roman Empire.

DWARF & ROOSTER

HELLENISTIC ART EXPERIMENTED NOT ONLY WITH new forms but also with new subjects. Among the best-known genres is the Hellenistic grotesque, with its figures of dwarves, people with misshapen faces, aged characters, and hunchbacks, of which this bronze dwarf at Yale is an example. Different theories have been proposed as to why this type of subject emerged, including an interest in going beyond Classical “perfection” to a keener observation of the surrounding world, seen here in the care taken to demonstrate the dwarf’s proportions, aging flesh, bald head, and facial features. Yet this statuette may also be closely tied to a particular ruler and a festival he instituted.



The dwarf, who turns his head to face a rooster held in his right hand, belongs to a series of similar bronzes apparently deriving from the same large-scale prototype. Although the Yale dwarf is missing his left hand, it probably originally held a wine jug (*lagynos*), a feature still preserved in the other examples. The posture, position of the legs, sagging flesh, and loincloth are closely tied to those of another well-known Hellenistic sculptural type, the Seneca/Old Fisherman. Comparison with this and other sculptures suggests that the prototype for the dwarf was created at the end of the third century B.C. in Alexandria, Egypt. The Yale bronze itself displays several unique stylistic traits, particularly in the loose folds of flesh at the dwarf's left side, which may suggest that it was cast in the early second century B.C.

The two objects originally held by the dwarf are both connected to Dionysos. Cocks were common sacrificial offerings to the god, and the *lagynos* held wine, sacred to him. A later Roman figure of **Pan** at Yale carries similar objects, a cock and a wine amphora, as gifts to the god, strengthening the connection between the dwarf and Dionysos.

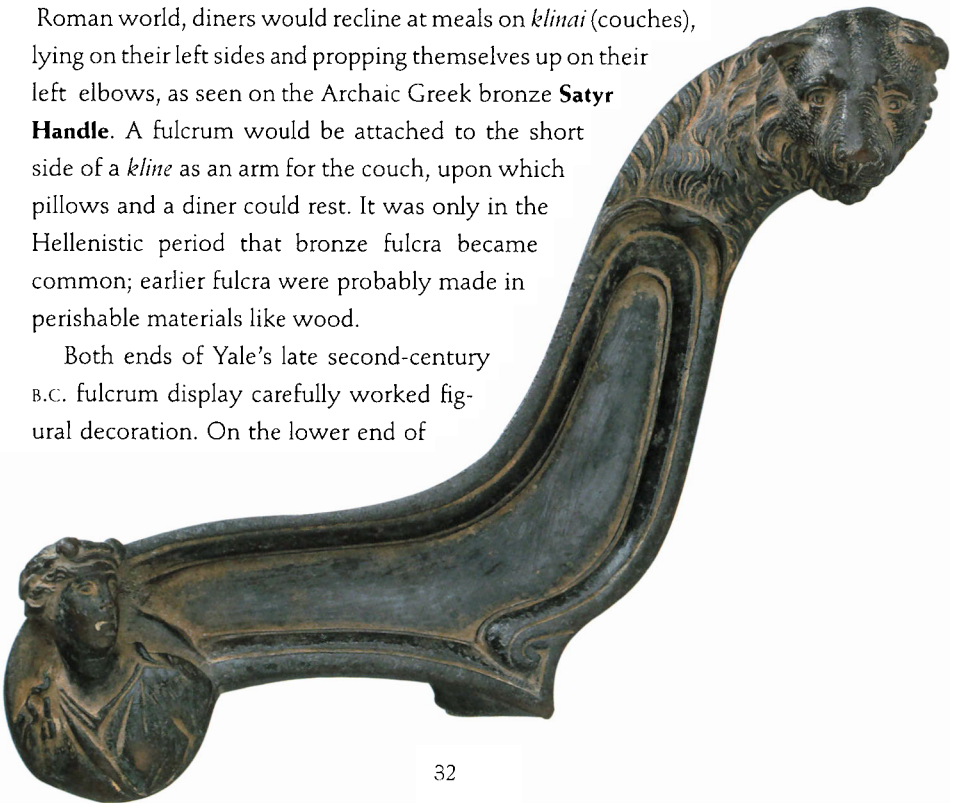
The original large-scale model for the dwarf bronze may have been linked to a festival instituted by Ptolemy IV, a member of a Hellenistic Greek dynasty ruling Egypt, during his reign (221–205 B.C.). The Lagynophoria, a jubilee named after the type of wine jug carried by the dwarf, honored Dionysos as well as Ptolemy himself, who as ruler was worshipped as a “New Dionysos.” Dwarfes had always been closely associated with the Egyptian royal house, an association that continued to the last Ptolemies. The choice of this grotesque as the subject of the statue, and the offerings he bears to Dionysos, may have emphasized the ruler-cult aspect of the Lagynophoria. Like the **Tyche**, this figure thus demonstrates the bond between politics and art in the Hellenistic world.

FULCRUM

DINING AND DRINKING PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE in the Graeco-Roman world as events for displaying cultural identity and values. In the *symposion* (or Roman *convivium*) people could discourse intellectually on Homer or play raucous drinking games, enjoy theatrical or musical productions, or engage in sexual activities. The social aspect of the meal was emphasized by the lavish attention paid to both the decoration of objects used in the *symposion* and to the decoration of the dining rooms themselves.

Such care in creating an appropriate atmosphere through décor extended to the furniture used. In the Greek world, and then later in the Hellenized Roman world, diners would recline at meals on *klinai* (couches), lying on their left sides and propping themselves up on their left elbows, as seen on the Archaic Greek bronze **Satyr Handle**. A fulcrum would be attached to the short side of a *kline* as an arm for the couch, upon which pillows and a diner could rest. It was only in the Hellenistic period that bronze fulcra became common; earlier fulcra were probably made in perishable materials like wood.

Both ends of Yale's late second-century B.C. fulcrum display carefully worked figural decoration. On the lower end of



the S-shaped fulcrum, within a medallion, an ivy-wreathed bust of Dionysos turns his head sharply to the left, imitating Hellenistic portrait styles, to look up the body of the fulcrum. The central boomerang-shaped depression in the piece probably originally held a figural inlay, likely in a precious material, but such inlays are rarely preserved. Above this, the fulcrum itself becomes the neck of a Molossian hound, a prized hunting and guard dog, craning to look back at Dionysos. The neck fur begins at the base of the neck with stippling and becomes more plastic as it moves up the neck, showing the gradual transition from furniture to animal, perhaps a visual play on the combination of civilized refinement and bestial wantonness embodied by the symposion and also seen in the **Satyr Handle**.

Both god and hound are appropriate guests at a drinking party and are commonly found on fulcra. Dionysos was the god of wine and entertainment, and hounds are frequently shown in painted symposion scenes, reclining on the floor under their master's kline. With its careful workmanship and choice of subjects, the Yale fulcrum would have both fit with and helped to reinforce the atmosphere of the symposion.

LAR



WITHIN THE ATRIUM OR KITCHEN OF A Roman house, there was usually a household shrine, the *lararium*. Often embellished with architectural features, with painting, or with both, these shrines held various statuettes, usually of gods, such as the **Polykleitan Hermes/Mercury**. The Lares, the divine figures at the center of Roman domestic religion, gave their name to the shrine. Conceived of in symmetrical pairs, the *Lares familiares* were protectors of the household, while their counterparts, the *Lares compitales*, were responsible for crossroads. Following the emperor Augustus's reorganization of worship of the Lares in 7 B.C. to associate them with the imperial cult, both painted and sculpted figures of them became more common in private homes, often displayed alongside figures of the emperor's *genius* (spirit).

Statuettes of Lares were cast from the first century B.C. to the end of the fourth century A.D., when the Christian emperor Theodosius outlawed their worship as idolatry. During the period of their popularity, they were produced in many provincial workshops and kept by Romans across the empire as symbols of their participation in Roman religious traditions, often connected closely with partaking in Roman political life.

The Yale Lar, as with most other Lares, is depicted as a dancing youth, stepping forward, toes *en point*. His short, belted tunic flares out on either side, conveying his dancing motion. With his right hand, his arm bent forward at the elbow, he pours a libation from an offering dish (*patera*). His left arm reaches up above his head, and in his hand he holds a dolphin-headed rhyton, a ceremonial drinking vessel. His expressionless face is encircled by a thick crown of hair, rendered as a series of elongated arches that capture the energy of his movement.

GENIUS CUCULLATUS

THIS FIGURE OF A SHORT, BEARDED MAN wearing a heavy cloak with a tall, pointed hood shows how Roman art adapted older styles for new subjects. The man's cloak envelops and conceals him, obscuring the form of the body beneath. The arms under the cloak and the line of closure down the center of the garment create the only modeled forms that break up the otherwise flat monotony of the cloak's surface. Small strips of red copper inlay, which run from the bottom of the cloak over the shoulders and up the hood, also add visual variety to his dress. Beneath the cloak, two legs, modeled as cylinders without substructure, end in small boots. The face of the man, with his set expression and deep eyes that stare straight ahead, displays a quiet aloofness.

The figure itself, with its calm dignity, is Classical Greek in spirit. The drapery, as a smooth and simple surface, is even evocative of the Severe style in Greek sculpture. These qualities might suggest a date in the early or mid-fifth century B.C.

Yet the cloak with pointed hood suggests a later date. The earliest examples of similar mantles in Greece date from the third or second century B.C. and depict Telesphoros, the divine son of the healing god Asklepios. It was originally suggested that the Yale bronze might represent Telesphoros, who enjoyed popularity well into the Roman period. Telesphoros is always depicted as a barefooted child, however, whereas the Yale man is older, bearded, and wearing boots. On the other hand, there is a small group of second- to third-century A.D. cloaked men, both bearded and unbearded, mostly from the northern part of the Roman Empire, that are often associated with a Celtic deity and referred to as *genii cucullati* (cloaked *genii*). Some of these even have the points of their hoods drawn out into long pins that seem to be part of the costume and which may have supported candles; many related figures were used as lamps. It is likely, despite the stylistic aspects that could point to an earlier date, that the Yale cloaked man falls into this group and was cast in the second century A.D.



The inlays support this date; although bronzes were inlaid with other metals centuries earlier, the inlaying of narrow red copper strips on garments became more common in Roman times and was used on other figures like **Lares**. The bronze figure, then, is a fusion of Greek style with Roman provincial iconography and technique and shows how traditional art forms could be adapted to accommodate foreign religions under the empire.

PAN WITH AMPHORA

THE ROLES OF GODS WITHIN THE GRAECO-ROMAN pantheon underwent many changes over the course of history; as a result, the iconography of the gods also changed. The half-goat god Pan, for example, began as a minor pastoral deity and then later became more commonly represented as the carousing companion of Dionysos. Eventually, the imagery associated with Pan even became used to depict the hoofed and horned Christian devil, the epitome of sinful Dionysiac overindulgence. During the Hellenistic and Roman periods in particular, this sort of iconographic borrowing became commonplace as a way of adding particular nuances of meaning to works of art, as can be seen from many of the bronzes in the Yale collection. Yet in some cases, the reuse of existing sculptural schemes and poses blurs the line between what may be copies of earlier works, like the **Tyche**, more loose adaptations of styles, like the **Polykleitan Hermes/Mercury**, and original creations that recombine existing types into something new, as with a small figure of Pan at Yale.

The statuette depicts a potbellied Pan whose massive and furry thighs stand atop goat hooves. His semi-bestial bearded and horned head is tilted downward and to his right. With his left hand, he braces an amphora of wine against his left shoulder, while in his right hand, dropped down by his knee, he holds a cock. In this particular statuette, Pan is thus portrayed as the companion of Dionysos, carrying offerings to the wine god.

Several similar statuettes of Pan carrying amphorae have been found, and it has been proposed that this type of statuette was copied from a large-scale Hellenistic original, given the popularity of Pan imagery at that time. Specific traits have precedents in Hellenistic sculpture; an early Hellenistic Eros has an amphora perched on his shoulder in a manner very much like the Pan. Nevertheless, this specific amphora-bearing Pan type seems to be a Roman creation. The heavy thighs of the figure and its squat form contrast with the more elongated features of Hellenistic Pans and have the closest parallels in Roman



painting from Pompeii and on Roman carved marble sarcophagi. In addition, the amphora carried by the Yale figure, with its high, pointed handles and flat shoulder, most closely approximates the form of third-century A.D. wine amphorae. Rather than copying a Hellenistic work, then, the artist who cast the bronze Pan has simply used a recognized scheme for Pan's body and added Dionysiac objects in an appropriate manner that recalls other sculptural types, creating an image that is a characteristically Roman recombination of understandable attributes.

HERCULES WRESTLING THE NEMEAN LION

FROM THE ARCHAIC PERIOD ONWARD, images of Hercules' first labor, wrestling with the Nemean Lion, were extremely popular in art. As with any images, though, the cultural atmosphere surrounding them affected how the different representations would have been understood. A sixth-century B.C. image of Hercules and the lion on an Attic cup, perhaps associated with the rule of the Peisistratid tyrants in Athens, had a different meaning for its audience than a third-century A.D. Roman sarcophagus sculpted with Hercules' labors, there tied to funerary ideology and beliefs about victory over death.

A bronze statuette at Yale of Hercules wrestling the Nemean Lion may have been understood in still other ways. With its immediate and exaggerated energy, its disregard of Classical proportions, and the unnatural discrepancy of scale between the two figures, the bronze is most closely related to fourth-century A.D. depictions from the Roman Near East and North Africa. The deified hero Hercules enjoyed immense popularity in this part of the empire through the third and fourth centuries, and statuettes of him were found in many household shrines. At the same time, as the Roman Empire became officially Christianized, old pagan symbols began to acquire new meanings; the image of Hercules' first labor was no exception.

The Christianized Hercules became emblematic of the doctrine of suffering through toil and temptation, choosing virtue over vice, and being rewarded with immortality. To a Late Antique Christian viewer, the Yale Hercules would have carried all of this ideology, particularly as Hercules, wearing a victor's fillet, seemingly effortlessly triumphs in the struggle, in contrast to earlier images that show a more heated contest.

The statuette could also be understood in other ways through Christian doctrine and imagery. The depiction of this struggle could be conflated to the biblical story of Samson wrestling with a lion, as happens in a wall painting in a Christian catacomb on the Via Latina in Rome. In the fourth and fifth centuries

A.D., images of early martyrs being attacked by lions were popular on North African terracotta vessels. The struggle of Hercules with the lion, one of the most popular heroic labors depicted in the Late Antique period, could even be emblematic of the triumph of these martyrs and, by extension, the whole Christian religion, over the toils of earlier Roman oppression.



SUGGESTED READING

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NOTES

Cover: *Goat* (detail); Greek; ca. 4th century B.C.; H. 18.7 cm.; Ruth Elizabeth White Fund. 2004.81.2

Frontispiece: *Running Gorgon* (detail); Greek, Lakonian or South Italian; ca. 540–510 B.C.; H. 8.9 cm.; Ruth Elizabeth White Fund and Gift of Cornelius C. Vermeule in memory of Emily T. Vermeule. 2002.95.2

p. 1 Passage from Callistratus, *Descriptions* 8, trans. J. J. Pollitt, *The Art of Rome*, ca. 753 B.C.–A.D. 337 (Cambridge, 1983), 227.

p. 3 *Fulcrum* (detail); Graeco-Roman; ca. 150–100 B.C.; H. 10.2 cm.; Maitland F. Griggs, B.A. 1896, Fund. 1966.105

p. 5 (top) *Hercules*; Roman; ca. 100 B.C.–A.D. 50; H. 9.0 cm.; Gift of Emily T. and Cornelius C. Vermeule. 1998.80.6

p. 5 (bottom) *Standing Woman*; Etruscan; ca. 6th–5th century B.C.; H. 7.7 cm.; Gift of Ruth Elizabeth White. 1988.80.32

p. 7 *Horse*; Greek, Corinthian; ca. 750 B.C.; H. 6.9 cm.; Gift of Jan Mayer. 2001.36.1. Drawing of base by S. B. Matheson.

p. 8 *Beetle*; Greek, Lakonian or Aetolian; ca. 750–730 B.C.; H. 2.7 cm.; Stephen Carlton Clark, B.A. 1903, Fund; 1981.1.2. Drawing of base by S. B. Matheson. For the bronze beetles from Olympia, see W. Heilmeyer, "Frühe Olympische Bronzefiguren: Die Tiervotive," *Olympische Forschungen XII* (Berlin, 1979): 190–91, cat. nos. 948–50, pl. 21. See also K. Schefold, *Meisterwerke Griechischer Kunst*, exh. cat. (Basel, 1960), 126, cat. no. I 54. For the comparable base, see J.-L. Zimmermann, *Les chevaux de bronze dans l'art*

- grec géométrique* (Mainz, 1989), 205, no. 30, pl. 79.
- p. 11 *Griffin Protome*; Greek, Samian; ca. late 7th–early 6th century B.C.; H. 14.1 cm.; Director's Fund and Rebecca Darlington Stoddard Fund. 1977.56
- p. 12 *Recumbent Lion*; Greek, Lakonian; ca. 570–530 B.C.; H. 5.4 cm.; Promised Bequest of Jan Mayer, RR2004.5533.1. For the cauldron in the Louvre, see A. de Ridder, *Les bronzes antiques du Louvre II* (Paris, 1915), 101, no. 2600, pl. 93.
- p. 15 *Ram-bearer*; Greek, Lakonian or Corinthian; ca. 540–530 B.C.; H. 8.5 cm.; Gift of Thomas T. Solley, B.A. 1950. 2002.15.12. For the single bronze with a similar pose, see E. Petrasch, *Bildkatalog: 400 ausgewählte Werke aus den Schausammlungen* (Karlsruhe, 1976), 49.
- p. 17 *Running Gorgon*; Greek, Lakonian or South Italian; ca. 540–510 B.C.; H. 8.9 cm.; Ruth Elizabeth White Fund and Gift of Cornelius C. Vermeule in memory of Emily T. Vermeule. 2002.95.2. For the matrices from Agrigento, see P. Marconi, "Plastica Agrigentina I," *Dedalo* 9 (1928/29): 592–93.
- pp. 18–19 *Satyr Handle*; Greek, South Italian; ca. 500–480 B.C.; H. 12.7 cm., estimated DIAM. of vessel 30 cm.; Ruth Elizabeth White Fund. 2004.81.1
- p. 21 *Polykleitan Hermes/Mercury*; Roman; adaptation of a Greek original by Polykleitos (ca. 430 B.C.); ca. 1st or 2nd century A.D.; H. 11.1 cm.; Stephen Carlton Clark, B.A. 1903, Fund. 1981.1.1
- p. 22 *Athena*; Greek; adaptation of a late Classical original (ca. late 5th century B.C.); ca. mid-4th century B.C.; H. 10.8 cm.; Gift of Ruth Elizabeth White. 1988.80.10
- p. 25 *Goat*; Greek; ca. 4th century B.C.; H. 18.7 cm.; Ruth Elizabeth White Fund. 2004.81.2
- pp. 26–27 *Head of Aphrodite*; Greek; adaptation of a Greek original by Praxiteles (ca. mid-4th century B.C.); ca. late 2nd–1st century B.C.; H. 1.7 cm.; Gift of Molly and Walter Bareiss, B.S. 1940. 2001.28.1
- p. 29 *Tyche*; Roman; adaptation of a Greek original by Eutychides (ca. 296–293 B.C.); ca. 2nd century A.D.; H. 15 cm.; Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., B.A. 1913, Fund. 1986.65.1.
- p. 30 *Dwarf with Rooster*; Greek, Alexandrian; copy of a Greek model (ca. 221–205 B.C.); ca. early 2nd century B.C.; H. 6.9 cm.; Ruth Elizabeth White Fund. 2001.34.1. For Ptolemy IV and the Lagynophoria, see H. Wrede, "Matronen im Kult des Dionysos: Zur Hellenistischen 'Genreplastik,'" *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung* 98 (1991): 163–88.
- p. 32 *Fulcrum*; Graeco-Roman; ca. 150–100 B.C.; H. 10.2 cm.; Maitland F. Griggs, B.A. 1896, Fund. 1966.105
- p. 34 *Lar*; Roman; ca. mid–late 1st century A.D.; H. 10.0 cm.; Bequest of Chester D. Tripp, B.S. 1940. 1976.40.1
- p. 37 *Genius Cucullatus*; Roman, Gallic or Germanic; ca. 2nd century A.D.; H. 12.0 cm.; Gift of Thomas T. Solley, B.A. 1950. 2002.15.13. For similar figures, see W. Deonna, *De Telesphore au moine bourro* (Brussels, 1955).
- p. 39 *Pan with Amphora*; Roman; ca. 3rd century A.D.; H. 6.2 cm.; Gift of Ruth Elizabeth White. 1988.80.35
- p. 41 *Hercules Wrestling with Nemean Lion*; Roman, North African or Near Eastern; ca. 4th century A.D.; H. 16.7 cm.; Maitland F. Griggs, B.A. 1896, Fund. 1960.57. For the catacomb, see A. Nestori, *Repertorio topografico delle pitture della catacombe romane* (Vatican City, 1975), 213.

font: Stempel Schneidler with Trajan display

designer: Sonia Shannon

editor: Joyce Ippolito

printer: Thames Printing, Inc.

photographers: Anthony Decamillo, Susan Cole, and Alex Contreras

ISBN 0-89467-964-3



3 008946 796435