LIGHT ON STONE
GREEK AND ROMAN SCULPTURE IN
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY
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Photographs by Joseph Coscia, Jr.
Text by Elizabeth J. Milleker

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Frontispiece: View of the Mary and Michael Jaharis Gallery, looking south

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Director’s Foreword

When the Metropolitan Museum's Grand Vaulted Gallery opened in 1999, renovated and reinstalled thanks to the generosity of Mary and Michael Jaharis, the Museum's collection of Classical sculpture appeared transformed. The space runs like a spine through the galleries located just to the south of the Great Hall. Light pours down through clear skylights in the soaring vaulted ceiling onto the ancient statuary. This light — ever changing with the weather, times of day, and times of year — appears to bring the statues to life and to resculpt them with shifting shadows and highlights.

It seemed a good idea to record some of these effects, and this photographic essay attempts to give an impression of this changing atmosphere. Some photographs capture the same statue under varying conditions; some show the gallery itself with ambient light flooding a number of works. It is hoped that these impressions through a photographic eye will lead to a renewed appreciation for Classical sculpture and for its display in a museum setting.

I would like to thank Elizabeth J. Milleker, Associate Curator in the Department of Greek and Roman Art, who first came up with the idea for this book and has written the accompanying text, and Joseph Coscia, Jr., Associate Chief Photographer in the Museum's Photograph Studio, whose evocative photographs have brought the concept to fruition. The extraordinary generosity of Mary and Michael Jaharis not only has given us the renovated Grand Vaulted Gallery but also has made this publication possible.

Philippe de Montebello
Director
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Acknowledgments

The idea for this book originated in conversations with my friend the photographer Scott Houston, who has been taking pictures of shifting light on Greek and Roman sculpture at the Metropolitan Museum for many years. The project has benefited from the encouragement, expertise, and efforts of many people. Special thanks are due to Philippe de Montebello, the Museum’s Director, for his vision and support, and to John P. O’Neill, Editor in Chief, and Carlos A. Picón, Curator in Charge of the Department of Greek and Roman Art, for their continuing interest. We are extremely grateful to Mary and Michael Jaharis, whose generosity has supported the renovation of the Grand Vaulted Gallery as well as this publication, which attempts to evoke its beauty.

It has been a pleasure to work with Joseph Coscia, Jr., Associate Chief Photographer in the Museum’s Photograph Studio. He has selected and photographed statues and reliefs in the Greek Galleries, conveying his own perception of the works and interpreting them in the context of light and shadow, bringing the sculpture to life. Barbara Bridgers, Manager of the Photograph Studio, gave encouragement and support throughout the duration of this project. Robert L. Goldman made the digital scans of the photographs, and Eugenia Burnet Tinsley produced the digital prints.

In the Editorial Department my thanks go to Emily Walter, an exceptionally thoughtful and challenging editor, to Ellen Shultz for her fine editorial assistance, and to Gwen Roginsky and Peter Antony, who coordinated and supervised the production of the book. Bruce Campbell is responsible for the elegant design.

Elizabeth J. Milleker
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LIGHT ON STONE

“Stone the solid, yet the habitat of soft light like the glow of flesh, is the material, so I shall maintain, that inspires all the visual arts. Marble statues of the gods are the gods themselves. For they are objects as if alive which enjoy complete outwardness.” — Adrian Stokes
This book is about light on marble sculpture. The photographs collected here were taken in the new Greek Galleries at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. They capture reliefs and statues bathed in sun, veiled in shadow, or brightly struck by lamps at night. The play of light brings this sculpture to life, revealing undulations of the surface while infusing the crystalline stone.

In 1999 the Museum’s collection of Archaic and Classical Greek art was reinstalled in seven completely refurbished galleries. Natural light plays an important role in this display. In three galleries along Fifth Avenue it floods through high windows onto original marble sculpture of the sixth, fifth, and fourth centuries B.C. In the adjacent Mary and Michael Jaharis Gallery — one of the great Beaux-Arts spaces in New York — with its soaring barrel-vaulted ceiling, limestone-covered walls, and long vista, light pours down through clear skylights onto Roman statues in marble that copy Greek works in bronze. Subject to the movement of the sun and the passage of clouds, the light in these galleries is ever changing, and it animates the sculpture in a way that brings to mind the powerful Mediterranean light that originally bathed these works.

Animating light is essential because Greek statues of the Archaic and Classical periods create a distance around them that is hard to penetrate. Serious and self-absorbed, they do not entice the viewer. Some seem enclosed within four sides, as though they were still contained within blocks of stone. Roman copies can appear cold in surface and frozen in motion. Classical sculpture is both too familiar and too remote. Its influence is so pervasive in Western European art and the culture that produced it is so little understood by most that the original works may seem bland and meaningless. Lined up like armies in the corridors of museums, these white figures sometimes seem like stone ghosts of a lost past.

It was not always so. Beginning in the Renaissance every educated person was steeped in the culture of the ancient world. As the French essayist Montaigne observed in the sixteenth century, “I was familiar with the affairs of Rome long before I was with those of my own house. I knew the Capitol and its position before I knew the Louvre, and the Tiber before the Seine.” For over three centuries Classical sculpture was considered the very pinnacle of art, indeed the embodiment of eternal truths. Ancient statues unearthed in and around Rome were restored and displayed in the palaces and country houses of the aristocracy, first in Italy and later throughout Europe and Great Britain. Knowledge of these works was disseminated through engravings and plaster casts. Generations of art students copied them in the academies, and painters and sculptors turned to them for inspiration.

Enthusiasm for ancient art reached its height in the mid-eighteenth century, as numerous, more or less systematic excavations brought a flood of antiquities to light. Although astonishing finds were made at Herculaneum and Pompeii, two cities that had been buried during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79, Rome and the region around it remained the most important center for the discovery of new statues. These were cleaned, restored, and prepared for sale in the workshops of expert sculptors. Some of the great collections were formed at this time by English and European aristocrats and rulers who flocked to Rome.

It was here that Johann Joachim Winckelmann, the founder of modern archaeology, settled in 1755 and soon became an international celebrity through his writings. Winckelmann’s most influential work, The History of Ancient Art, included a traditional account of Classical artists based on ancient literary sources, but it was his impassioned descriptions of statues, his enthusiasm for Greek rather
than Roman art, and his novel techniques of stylistic analysis that ensured his fame.

Winckelmann’s passages on the Laocoön conjure up a poetic vision of the famous marble statue in the Vatican in which general statements about Greek art, detailed description, and personal feelings are intermingled:

The general and most distinctive characteristics of the Greek masterpieces are, finally, a noble simplicity and quiet grandeur, both in posture and expression. Just as the depths of the sea always remain calm however much the surface may rage, so does the expression of the figures of the Greeks reveal a great and composed soul even in the midst of passion.

Such a soul is reflected in the face of Laocoön — and not in the face alone — despite his violent suffering. The pain is revealed in all the muscles and sinews of his body, and we ourselves can almost feel it as we observe the painful contraction of the abdomen alone without regarding the face and other parts of the body. This pain, however, expresses itself with no sign of rage in his face or in his entire bearing. . . . The physical pain and the nobility of soul are distributed with equal strength over the entire body and are, as it were, held in balance with one another.³

Such emotionally charged passages fired the imagination of Winckelmann’s contemporaries and were influential in spreading enthusiasm for ancient art. The same passionate feeling is expressed in a beautiful description of a statue that the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley saw in Florence in the early nineteenth century:

The countenance of Bacchus is sublimely sweet and lovely. . . . It has a divine and supernatural beauty, as one who walks through the world untouched by its corruptions, its corrupting cares; it looks like one who unconsciously yet with delight confers pleasure and peace. The flowing fullness and roundness of the breast and belly, whose lines fade into each other, are continued with a gentle motion as it were to the utmost extremity of his limbs. Like some fine strain of harmony which flows round the soul and enfolds it, and leaves it in the soft astonishment of a satisfaction, like the pleasure of love with one whom we most love, which having taken away desire, leaves pleasure, sweet pleasure . . . the Bacchus is immortal beauty.⁴

Winckelmann not only gave subjective feeling a new role in the appreciation of ancient sculpture, he also initiated a new method of stylistic analysis that was based on minute observation and the comparison of isolated parts. Then as now, many museums were poorly lit, and Winckelmann and his contemporaries studied sculpture by torchlight, sharply illuminating detail after detail as they circled a work.

Auguste Rodin understood how such lighting could dramatize the expressiveness of sculpture. The critic and journalist Paul Gsell, whose conversations with Rodin were published in 1911, described how the artist held a lamp as he walked around a Greek statuette of Aphrodite:

As it revolved, I continued to note lots of imperceptible projections within the general form of the belly. What at first glance had seemed simple was in reality something of unequaled complexity. I confided my observations to the master sculptor. He nodded his head, smiling. “Isn’t it marvelous?” he said. “Admit that you did not expect to discover so many details. Look! Look at the infinite undulations of the valley between the belly and the thigh. Relish all the voluptuous curvatures of the hip. And now, there, in the back, all those adorable dimples.” He spoke softly, with a devout ardour. He bent toward this marble as if he were in love with it. “This is real flesh!” he said.⁵

The same kind of searching light is cast on the sculpture photographed in this book. It dances on the marble surfaces, sometimes illuminating the whole work, sometimes casting shadows that transform it. Isolated details dominate some views, the very space around the statue
vibrates in others, but in every case the object is seen anew and seems to come to life.

This is as it should be, for the Greeks themselves from the earliest times appear to have sought and valued an impression of lifelike vitality in their art that could border on the magical:

In the production of statues [Daedalus] so surpassed all other men that later generations preserved a story about him to the effect that the statues he created were exactly like living beings. For it was related that they could see, and walk, and preserved so completely the disposition of the entire body that the statue which was produced by art seemed to be a living being.6

Thus Diodorus Siculus, writing in the first century B.C., described the potent effect of the earliest Greek sculpture. The artists who carved the marble kouroi, those statues of young men that seem so primitive and stiff to us, must have attempted to create such an impression. Though they borrowed the stance of their figures from Egyptian works not fully detached from rigid blocks, they took infinite pains to make their statues stand alone, with all the accumulated weight of the stone falling through narrow ankles to the feet — a tour de force rarely attempted since. Greek sculptors gradually incorporated more and more details of the body's structure in their work, until all the intricate interconnections of bones, muscles, tendons, and veins could be used to animate the surface. By the mid-fifth century B.C. they had mastered the representation of movement as well and could create an astonishing illusion of naturalistic appearance.

Although we associate white marble most closely with Greek sculpture, bronze was the medium of choice for freestanding figures in antiquity. It allowed for intricate details and the depiction of a wide range of movement. Moreover the material itself, an alloy of copper and tin, had a golden color when freshly cast that resembled flesh bronzed by the sun. Other inlaid metals could heighten the coloristic effect: silver for white teeth, copper for red lips, nipples, and, if a wound were shown, drops of blood. Naturalistic, doll-like eyes composed of such materials as bone, ivory, glass, or stone were usually inset in the face, surrounded by a bronze fringe of lashes. The lifelike power of such statues was evoked by Callistratus, writing in the third or fourth century A.D.:

Indeed the hands of Praxiteles wrought works which seemed thoroughly alive. There was a grove, and in it stood an image of Dionysus in the form of a youth of such delicate softness that the bronze seemed to change its form to that of flesh; and the body was so supple and relaxed that it seemed to be made of some other material and not bronze.7

This power can still be felt in the few bronze statues that survive from antiquity. I myself have seen a teenage Italian boy confront one of the bronze warriors recently pulled from the sea near Riace, in southern Italy, as though it were a live, challenging presence.

The Romans admired Greek bronze statues in the same way that we have admired the sculpture of the Italian Renaissance. They copied and adapted them in marble in order to decorate their private villas and public baths, theaters, gateways, and fountains. These marble copies fill our museums and give a pale reflection of the liveliness and beauty of their lost bronze prototypes. Damaged by the centuries, altered by the taste of the generations that found and restored them, they can appear lifeless indeed. Yet even the dullest of copies set high in a niche was originally painted. The hair, features, flesh, and drapery on all marble sculpture in antiquity were colored, and the effect was probably as startling and lifelike as the brightly colored Madonnas and saints one encounters in churches today.

A sense of liveliness evokes transience, yet the impression of a permanent underlying order is always discernible in Greek sculpture of the Archaic and Classical periods. This order is achieved through the carefully planned organization of each work into a design in which the forms acquire a typical and generalized aspect and the formal interrelationship of all the parts is clearly perceptible.
Design of course is essential to all works of art, but for the ancient Greeks it corresponded to their drive to discover an ordering pattern beneath the flux of everyday experience — a drive that led to the development of philosophy and the study of natural sciences beginning in the sixth century B.C.

“All things are numbers,” said Pythagoras, perhaps the most influential of those early thinkers. In the relations between numbers Pythagoras and his followers discovered the laws of musical intervals and, by extension, arrived at the idea that numbers constitute and limit everything in the universe, from physical phenomena to abstract entities such as the soul or justice. The Pythagoreans viewed the world as a harmony of consonant numbers. This belief, that an underlying order and correspondence exist in the universe that can be comprehended through number and proportion, had a profound influence on Greek thought. “Measure and commensurability as it turns out are everywhere identifiable with beauty and excellence,” wrote Plato in the fourth century B.C.

One can sense a controlled intensity in much Greek art that derives from symmetria, the exquisitely adjusted proportionate relationship between the constituent parts of a given work. An invisible, intellectually conceived framework appears to underlie and inform Greek statues of the Archaic and Classical periods. The earliest large-scale stone statues produced by Greek sculptors were based on formulas and proportional systems adopted from Egyptian workshop procedures. During the sixth century B.C., artists were satisfied with a single formula for the stance of a standing male figure, even as they adjusted proportions and refined surface details. By the fifth century B.C., having mastered the naturalistic representation of the human figure, sculptors began to develop ever more subtle proportional systems for the construction of statues. The most famous of these was elaborated by the sculptor Polycleitos in a treatise known as the Canon (Rule). A description of his work survives in the writings of the physician Galen, who lived in the second century A.D.: “Beauty, he feels, resides . . . in the commensurability of parts, such as the finger to the finger, and of all the fingers to the metacarpus and the wrist (carpus), and of these to the forearm, and of the forearm to the arm, in fact of everything to everything.” Such a network of closely calculated numerical relationships must have imparted a cohesive tension and sense of coiled energy to the bronze statues for which Polycleitos was famous; it can still be felt in the marble copies made for admiring Romans.

In Greek statues of the Archaic and Classical periods, taut carefully designed underlying structures clothed in vivid sensory detail exerted a potent force whereby gods, heroes, and men appeared at a pinnacle of physical beauty and spiritual excellence. Despite the damage and alterations wrought by time, the marble statues in the new Greek galleries retain much of that animating power, especially when struck by the ever-changing light. The Greek word for marble — marmoros — also means shining. One of the earliest Greek words for statue — agalma — also means delight. We hope that the photographs in this book evoke that radiance and elicit that delight.

8. Plato Phêdo 64E, quoted in Pollitt, Ancient View of Greek Art, p. 17.
Notes on the Plates

1—5.
Marble statue of a kouros

Greek, Attic, ca. 580 B.C.
Said to be from Attica
Height 1.84 m (6 ft. 1 in.)
Fletcher Fund, 1932 (32.111)

This is one of the earliest large-scale marble statues of a human figure carved in Attica, the region around Athens. The rigid stance, with left leg forward and arms at the side, derives from Egyptian art. The pose provided a clear, simple formula for representing man that was used by Greek sculptors throughout the sixth century B.C. In this early figure, almost abstract, geometric forms predominate, and anatomical details are rendered in beautiful, analogous patterns.

The statue marked the grave of a young Athenian aristocrat. During the sixth century B.C. lavish funerary monuments were set up by the aristocratic families of Attica. Some graves were marked by statues of a nude kouros (youth), others by a tall shaft or stele, such as can be seen in the background of plates 1 and 2. Each monument had a base inscribed with an epitaph, often in metric form, that commemorated the dead. Most elaborate grave monuments of the sixth century B.C. — the so-called Archaic period — were set up for the young, who had died before they could marry and have offspring to preserve their memory. The monument itself and its epitaph assured that the deceased would be remembered and thus achieve a kind of immortality. Tombs of the aristocracy were set up in private burial grounds along the roadside on country estates or near Athens. Often the monument itself addressed the passerby, as in the epitaph on a base now in the Epigraphical Museum in Athens: “Let everyone, whether townsman or stranger from abroad, before he pass, mourn [name] of noble birth and illustrious descent; his death is a blow to the city, his departure from the earth a great loss to the city.”

Although he appears to move forward with implacable military bearing, the New York Kouros may have been a young athlete. Unlike other contemporary cultures the ancient Greeks regularly represented male figures in the nude, as Greek youths trained for and competed nude in athletic events. Ancient sources tell us that this tradition was initiated at one of the earliest Olympic games, when a victorious runner lost his loinclout. Nudity also had a connotation of heroic excellence. The beauty of a perfectly proportioned, well-trained body was considered an outward manifestation of the striving for excellence that marked a hero.

6.
Marble finial in the form of a sphinx

Greek, Attic, ca. 530 B.C.
Said to be from Attica
Height of sphinx 74 cm (29 1/2 in.)
Munsey Fund, 1936, 1938 (11.185d)

This sphinx originally crowned the tall grave marker visible in the background to the right of the kouros in plates 1 and 2. A plaster copy has been set on the monument itself.

The sphinx, a mythological creature with a lion’s body and a human head, was known in various forms throughout the eastern Mediterranean region from the Bronze Age onward. The Greeks represented the sphinx as a winged female and often placed its image on grave monuments as a guardian of the dead. This sphinx retains traces of red, black, and blue pigment, reminding us that all stone sculpture and architecture in antiquity was brightly painted.

The seductive predator sits alert on her pedestal. Her eyes seem to bulge with transfixed awareness. Her lips are curled in a half smile — the so-called Archaic smile, which animates most of the faces of statues carved during the sixth century B.C.

Sphinxes could be cunning and dangerous. Their name was sometimes said to derive from the Greek verb sphingin — to bind or hold fast. A number of late Archaic vases show them pursuing a fleeing youth or clutching their prey. The sphinx
near Thebes posed a riddle to every youth who passed: What goes on four feet in the morning, two feet at noon, and three feet in the evening? She killed all those who failed to answer, until Oedipus replied “Man” and caused her death.

7.
View of the Mary and Michael Jaharis Gallery

Almost all the marble statues in the central area of the Mary and Michael Jaharis Gallery were carved during the Roman period, from the first century B.C. through the third century A.D. They are copies or adaptations of bronze statues made by Greek artists some five hundred years earlier, during the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Such works provide our only tangible evidence of masterpieces by famous Classical sculptors. All but a few ancient bronze statues have been lost or were melted down to reuse the valuable metal.

8, 9.
Fragments of a marble copy of the Diadoumenos by Polykleitos

Roman, Flavian period, A.D. 69 – 96
Copy of a Greek bronze statue of ca. 430 B.C. attributed to Polykleitos
Height 1.85 m (6 ft. 1 in.)
The head, arms, and legs from the knees down and the tree trunk are ancient. The rest of the figure is a plaster cast taken from a marble copy of the same statue type that was found at Delos and is now in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens.
Fletcher Fund, 1925 (25.78.56)

This statue represents a diadoumenos — a youth adorning his head with a fillet, or ribbon, after victory in an athletic contest. The original bronze probably stood in a sanctuary, such as that at Olympia or Delphi, where games were regularly held. The Greek sculptor Polykleitos of Argos, who worked during the mid-fifth century B.C., was one of the most famous artists of the ancient world. His figures were carefully designed, with special attention paid to proportion and stance. The figure’s thorax and pelvis tilt in opposite directions, setting up rhythmic contrasts in the torso that create an impression of organic vitality. The position of the feet — poised between standing and walking — give a sense of potential movement. This rigorously calculated pose, which is found in nearly all works attributed to Polykleitos, became a standard formula used in Graeco-Roman and later Western European art.

10 – 12.
Marble statue of a wounded Amazon

Roman, Imperial period, 1st or 2nd century A.D.
Copy of a Greek bronze statue of ca. 430 – 425 B.C.
Height 2.03 m (6 ft. 8¼ in.)
The lower legs and feet have been restored with casts taken from copies in the Staatsliche Museum zu Berlin and the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen. Most of the right hand, the end of the left forearm, the lower part of the pillar, and the plinth are eighteenth-century marble restorations.
Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1912 (32.11.4)

In Greek art the Amazons, a mythical race of warrior women from Asia Minor, were often depicted battling such heroes as Herakles, Achilles, and Theseus. This statue represents a refugee from battle who has lost her weapons and bleeds from a wound at her right breast. Despite her plight, her face shows no sign of pain or exhaustion. She leans lightly on a pillar and rests her right arm gracefully on her head, in a gesture often used to denote sleep or death. Such emotional restraint was characteristic of Classical art of the second half of the fifth century B.C.

The original bronze statue may have stood in the precinct of the great temple of Artemis at Ephesus, on the coast of Asia Minor, where the Amazons had legendary and cultic connections with the goddess. Pliny the Elder, writing in the first century A.D., described a competition held in the mid-fifth century B.C. between five famous sculptors, including Phidias, Polykleitos, and Kresilas, who were to make a statue of a wounded Amazon for the temple. This statue type is generally associated with that contest.

13.
Upper part of a marble statue of the goddess Athena

Roman, Imperial period, 1st or 2nd century A.D.
Copy of a Greek statue of ca. 460 – 450 B.C.
Height 1.31 m (4 ft. 3½ in.)
Rogers Fund, 1924 (24.97.15)

In ancient Greece, Athena was the preeminent protective goddess of cities, with a temple set high on the citadel or
acropolis. She was represented as an armed maiden, and the head of this statue probably once supported a bronze helmet. The goddess also presided over many of the activities that ensure civilized living. Intelligent and helpful, Athena was the patroness of such essential skills as weaving, carpentry, shipbuilding, and the cultivation of olive trees.

14 — 16.
Marble statue of a wounded warrior

Roman, Antonine period, A.D. 138 — 92.
Copy of a Greek bronze statue of ca. 460 — 450 B.C.
Height 2.21 m (7 ft, 3 in.)
Frederick C. Hewitt Fund, 1925 (25.116)

The subject of this statue has not been identified with certainty. The nude warrior wears a Corinthian helmet, and held a shield on his left arm and probably a spear in his raised right hand. He stands with his feet carefully placed on a sloping surface. The figure must have some association with the sea, since a planklike form surrounded by waves is carved on the plinth of a second copy in the British Museum, London. It has been suggested that he is the Greek hero Proteus, who ignored the oracle’s warning that the first Greek to step on Trojan soil would be the first to die in battle. This statue might represent Proteus descending from the ship, ready to meet his fate. Following the discovery of a wound carved in the right armpit, the figure was reinterpreted as a dying warrior falling backward and identified as the famous statue of a wounded warrior by the sculptor Kresilas, who worked in the fifth century B.C. Many other identifications have been suggested to explain the unusual stance and unique iconography of both this statue and of the copy in London, but none has been generally accepted.

17.
Marble head of a bearded deity

Roman, Imperial period, 1st — 2nd century A.D.
Copy of a Greek bronze statue of ca. 450 — 425 B.C.
Height 36.9 cm (14 ½ in.)
Rogers Fund, 1913 (13.231.2)

This beautiful head gives a sense of the serene grandeur that marked images of the gods during the High Classical period in Greece. The most famous of these was the gigantic gold-and-ivory statue of Zeus at Olympia made by Phidias during the third quarter of the fifth century B.C.

18.
Marble head of a youth

Roman, probably Claudian period, A.D. 41 — 54.
Copy of a Greek bronze statue of ca. 450 B.C. attributed to Polykleitos
Height 29 cm (11 ½ in.)
Rogers Fund, 1907 (07.286.116)

This head is associated with the statue of a nude athlete who probably held a diskos. The famous Greek sculptor Polykleitos sought to depict his figures with vigorous, mathematically based proportions. “Perfection comes about by little by little through many numbers,” he is reported to have stated. Some idea of his attention to the smallest details can be seen in the precise design of each lock of hair on the youth’s head.

19 — 21.
Marble torso of a youth

Roman, Late Republican period, 1st century B.C.
Height 83.8 cm (33 in.)
Rogers Fund, 1917 (17.230.21)

In Rome during the first century B.C. the Greek sculptor Pasiteles and his followers created innovative, erotically charged works that appealed to their Roman patrons by combining stylistic elements typical of Greek sculpture of the first half of the fifth century B.C. with an excessively soft and nuanced rendering of the flesh. The relative lack of organic definition in this suave, seductive torso of an adolescent boy suggests that it may be such a work rather than a true copy of a Classical Greek sculpture.

22.
Marble head of an athlete

Roman, Antonine period, A.D. 138 — 92.
Copy of a Greek bronze statue of ca. 450 — 425 B.C.
Height 34.3 cm (13 ½ in.)
Rogers Fund, 1911 (11.210.2)

This head of a youth wearing a fillet must have belonged to a statue of a victorious athlete. He probably rested one arm
lightly on his head; the remains of a rectangular support can still be seen among his curls. The execution of Roman copies often conformed to contemporary taste, and the contrast between the polished flesh and the deeply drilled hair on this head, as well as the romantic dreaminess of the expression, would have held special appeal for patrons in the second century A.D.

23–25.

Marble relief with a dancing maenad

Roman, Augustan period, 27 B.C. – A.D. 14
Copy of a figure from a Greek relief of ca. 425 – 400 B.C. attributed to Kallimachos
Height 1.43 m (56 1/8 in.)
Fletcher Fund, 1935 (35.11.3)

Dionysos is the god of ecstatic intoxication, whereby one achieves a heightened state of consciousness through wine and dance. It is a group phenomenon, and its mythological expression is the rowdy band of satyrs and maenads that always accompanies the god. The divine madness of this maenad is conveyed through her swirling drapery, which billows around her, revealing every curve of her body. She carries a thyrsos, the tall fennel stalk topped with ivy leaves and berries that is always associated with Dionysos. This figure is extracted from a famous Greek relief of the late fifth century B.C. with a procession of six to nine dancing maenads. Shown alone or together, copies of this group proliferated in the Roman period, dancing across marble wall panels, kraters, candelabra, altars, and sarcophagi.

26, 27.

Marble statue of Aphrodite

Roman, Imperial period, 1st – 2nd century A.D.
Copy of a Greek bronze statue of the late 5th century B.C. attributed to Kallimachos
Height 1.51 m (59 3/4 in.)
Purchase, 1932 (32.11.3)

Aphrodite, the embodiment of sexuality and procreative force, was born from the sea. Here the goddess seems to move forward with an energy that brings to mind images of Nike, goddess of victory, or figureheads from the bows of ships. A fine linen chiton clings to her magnificent body, and her right arm was originally raised to lift a cloak, which hangs in rhythmic folds behind her.

28 – 30.

Marble statue of Eirene (Peace)

Roman, Julio-Claudian period, A.D. 14 – 68
Copy of a Greek bronze statue of 375/374 – 360 /359 B.C. by Kephisosotos
Height 1.77 m (5 ft. 9 1/4 in.)
Rogers Fund, 1906 (06.311)

Eirene, daughter of Zeus and Themis, was one of the three Horai (Seasons), maidens closely associated with the fertility of the earth and the nurturing of children. In the original bronze statue Eirene was represented as a beautiful young woman holding a scepter in her right hand and carrying the young child Ploutos (Wealth) and a cornucopia on her left arm. Eirene’s matronly dignity is enhanced by her conservative dress. She wears a peplos, a simple sleeveless garment composed of a length of woven material folded over at the top, pinned at the shoulders, and belted in at the waist with a cord, here concealed by the complex folds of the overfall. A cloak pinned on Eirene’s shoulders falls in graceful catenary curves at her back. The figure brings to mind images of Demeter, the goddess of agricultural plenty and mother of Ploutos.

The original bronze was erected in the Agora, or marketplace, of Athens between 375/374 and 360/359 B.C. Rarely can an ancient monument be dated so precisely. We know from literary sources that the cult of Eirene was introduced to Athens in 375/374, and six Panathenaic amphorae dated to 360/359 show an image of the statue. In the second century A.D. the Greek traveler Pausanius saw the work in the Agora and reported that it was by the sculptor Kephisosotos.

31, 32.

Marble statue of a woman

Greek, second half of the 4th century B.C.
Height 1.68 m (5 ft. 6 3/8 in.)
Gift of Mrs. Frederick F. Thompson, 1903 (03.12.17)

The lively, varied manner in which the texture of the clothing is rendered suggests that this is an original Greek statue
rather than a copy or an adaptation made during the Roman period. The crinkly linen of the chiton and the heavier wool of the cloak are carefully differentiated, and the upper part of the dress is firmly held in place by a cord crossed in the back and slipped over the arms. This over-life size figure probably represents a goddess, and in the absence of other attributes the shoulder cord may offer a clue to her identity. Although the huntress Artemis is often shown with such a cord, this more matronly figure may represent Themis, a goddess associated with custom and law. The head and neck were carved separately, with a rounded tenon that was set into the cavity at the top.

35, 36.
Marble stele of a little girl

Greek, ca. 450 — 440 B.C.
Found on the island of Paros
Height 80 cm (31⅛ in.)
Fletcher Fund, 1927 (27.45)

During the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. many Greek graves were marked by a rectangular stone stele decorated with a relief representing the deceased. The gentle gravity of the child on this relief is beautifully expressed through her sweet greeting to her pet doves. Her peplos is unbelted and falls open at the side, while the folds of her drapery clearly reveal her stance. The body is that of a child, but the head is proportionately larger and has the features of a much older girl. It brings to mind the serene, idealized faces of the maidens depicted in low relief at the head of the procession on the Parthenon frieze. This grave marker was found on Paros, one of the islands in the Aegean where fine marble was plentiful. Many of the most skillful stone carvers came from these islands, and the sculptor of this stele could have been among the artists who congregated in Athens during the third quarter of the fifth century to decorate the Parthenon.

37.
Marble stele of a young woman

Greek, Attic, ca. 400 — 390 B.C.
Said to be from near Koropi, in Attica
Height 1.78 m (70¾ in.)
Fletcher Fund, 1936 (36.11.1)

The young woman leans against the anta of her grave stele in a pose that may have been inspired by a famous contemporary statue of Aphrodite. Like the child with doves on the stele found on Paros, the little girl, her hair cut short in mourning, wears an ungirt peplos that is open at the side. She holds a jewel box and may be a younger sister of the deceased or a household slave.

Many of the finest Attic grave monuments stood in a cemetery situated in the outer Kerameikos, an area on the northwest edge of Athens, just outside important gates of the ancient city wall. At the end of the fifth century B.C., Athenian families began to bury their dead in simple stone sarcophagi placed in the ground within grave precincts
enclosed by stone walls. Many precincts were arranged in man-made terraces buttressed by a high retaining wall that faced the cemetery road. Marble monuments belonging to different members of a family were placed along the edge of the terrace rather than over the graves themselves.

The name of the person being commemorated was always inscribed on the grave monument, and a relief showed an idealized image of the deceased. Sometimes aspects of the person’s life were evoked by the addition of a servant and possessions, such as a jewelry box, a wool basket, or a dog.

38 – 41.

**Marble stele with a family group**

_Greek, Attic, ca. 360 B.C._

*Height 1.71 m (67 3/4 in.)*

_Rogers Fund, 1911 (11.100.2)_

For most of the fifth century B.C., grave markers in Attica were completely undecorated, probably because of sumptuary laws that prohibited lavish funerary display. When gravestones with sculpted reliefs again made an appearance in Attica, during the last third of the century, they were widened to accommodate a seated person or more than one figure. The scene was frequently surmounted by a pediment, sometimes with supporting pilasters flanking the figures. During the fourth century the monuments were again enlarged, with up to five figures shown in high relief inside a deep three-dimensional niche, or naikos. Toward the end of the century, some figures were completely freestanding within a covered naikos.

Since the framing niche that once surrounded this marble grave monument is missing, there are no inscriptions that might identify the deceased. Both the seated man and the veiled woman behind him stare straight ahead, as though the young woman at the left who gazes down at them were invisible. Is she the dead daughter for whom they mourn? Does she mourn for her dead father? Or is she the sole survivor of the group? Despite its ambiguity and solemn sadness, the relief conveys an intense, though restrained, sense of family unity. Indeed, most Attic grave monuments of the fourth century B.C. seem to celebrate this very stability and continuity. Carved by a master, this grave stele is one of the most magnificent examples that has survived from the Classical period.

42. 43.

**Marble stele of a woman**

_Greek, Attic, mid-4th century B.C._

*Found at Acharnæ, in Attica, before 1827*

*Height 1.22 m (48 3/4 in.)*

_Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1948 (48.11.4)_

This over-lifesize figure of a deceased woman carved in high relief assumes almost heroic or divine proportions. Seated on a throne-like chair, she draws her cloak up over her head in a gesture that denotes preparation for departure — whether from her house or from life itself.

44.

**View of a grouping of marble funerary monuments in the form of monumental vases**

During the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. memorials to the dead sometimes took the form of monumental marble vases. Most, like the three visible to the left in this gouping, were in the shape of lekythoi. This was appropriate, for the lekythos — a vase used exclusively to hold oil — played an important part in funerary preparation and ritual. The ovoid vase to the right resembles a loutrophoros, a vessel used to carry water for the bridal bath as well as for funeral rites. All bear scenes or decoration in low relief and carried inscriptions naming the deceased.