

Ancient Greek Objects



Silver DEKADRACHM of Syracuse (405-380 B.C.)

Worth 10 drachmai.

On the front is probably the head of the nymph Artemis-Arethusa. There are dolphins around the edge.

On the rear is a four-horse chariot. The charioteer is crowned with a wreath by NIKE, which means 'victory.' Below the ground, armour and weapons can be seen.



Silver TETRADRACHM (277-239 B.C.)

Worth 4 drachmai. From the reign of King Antigonos 'Gonatas' of Macedon. 'Gonatas' is a nickname, meaning something to do with knees (perhaps 'knock-kneed' or 'knee-cap protector'), referring to a piece of armour.

On the front is a Macedonian shield with a head of PAN, clearly showing goat-horns. On the rear is ATHENA, holding a spear and a shield. To the left is a small helmet with a crest, to the right are the initials W W (of King Antigonos).



Terracotta figure of a bull

1st/2nd/3rd century B.C. The horns have been lost, but from the shape, we think this is a bull. It was made in a two-part mould, each half made separately, then joined together. There is a crack along this joint. The white areas are traces of white slip (runny clay). Traces of red paint can be seen on the head.



Mirror

This would have been shiny when new. It was kept polished to reflect well. It is probably made of bronze. Other mirrors were made from copper.



Sling bullet

1st/2nd/3rd century B.C. These were mass-produced in a mould. The lines around the edge are where the two halves of the mould joined. The inscription includes the letter A. Bullets usually carried witty slogans, like 'A present from _____,' or even perhaps a general's name. Made from lead.



Lamp

From Cyprus, 2nd or early 1st century B.C. This lamp would have been made on a potter's wheel, with a hole cut through the side and a nozzle stuck on. You can see that the clay has gone black where the wick burned. The small hole at the top helped to stop the oil evaporating and kept mice and insects out of it.



Lamp

Athenian, 5th century B.C. This lamp is older than the previous one - it is shallower. The hole through the centre allowed the lamp to be put on a lamp-stand. It has two nozzles, so it could be used to burn two wicks at once. Some ancient lamps are known to have had as many as several hundred wicks.



Terracotta head

3rd century B.C., made at a Greek city in Southern Italy. The face on this woman's head was made in a mould, then details were added, i.e., the large discs of clay at the ears and the diadem (crown) across the front of the head. The woman has an elaborate hairstyle. The head is broken from a fuller length figure. Traces of red paint can be seen, and the original white slip (runny clay). The head may have come from Pompeii.



Figurine fragment

This figurine is wearing a diadem or headdress and has an interesting hairstyle. It was made in a mould and the white deposit is modern plaster. The broken edge has been ground flat, for mounting on a modern base.



Terracotta brazier fragment (2nd century B.C.)

The bearded head was one of three, which were spaced around the top of a terracotta brazier (like a barbecue). The three heads supported pots placed above the fire.



Stone hand

This is a right hand, made from marble. The little finger is missing. We do not know what the hand is holding - do you?



Tortoise

6th-5th century B.C., made from terracotta. Tortoises were found in Northern Greece. The head is broken, but traces of white slip and dark brown paint are visible.



Jug (4th century B.C.)

This small jug, an OINOCHOE, shows the head of a woman wearing a headdress of some sort. It was made on a potter's wheel, not a mould.

The jug starts with a red background which is covered with black, except for a panel for the decoration. This was painted in, using the paint to give the details. There is a TREFOIL mouth to the jug, made by pinching in the rim.



Dish

End of the 4th century B.C. This dish was originally covered by black glaze. The decoration was produced by a mixture of three methods:

1. The palmettes (floral patterns) were made using a stamp, not properly pushed onto the unfired pot each time.
2. The S-shaped design has been made by using a roller with this design cut on it, in reverse (like a pastry cutter).
3. Freehand lines were drawn to join the palmettes.