

ART, MYTH, AND PERCY JACKSON



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Things have gotten pretty crazy in the world of the Olympians. You see, Baubo, the minor goddess of humor, has gotten a little cocky ever since her children were granted a cabin at Camp Half-Blood. She has decided to test the campers by sending a Sphinx—the terrible, horrible, half-woman, half-lion creature that lives in the labyrinth—to the camp. Unless someone solves the Sphinx’s riddle, she will wreck havoc on the camp and tear it to shreds! Chiron has chosen YOU as the camper for this quest. You must solve the Sphinx’s riddle before it’s too late. Before you begin, read the prophecy that Rachel, the Oracle of Delphi, has given you:

***You will travel far below, passing by the Great Wall,
And despite your best efforts, no heavenly help will answer your call.
Searching through panes of glass and in a great hall,
Ancient artifacts will give you the knowledge to stand proud and tall.
But beware of look-alikes; their similarities may be your downfall.
You will find the answers you seek, but can you save them all?***

Here is the Sphinx’s riddle:

***Which creature
in the morning goes on four legs,
at midday on two,
and in the evening upon three,
and the more legs it has,
the weaker it be?***

To solve this riddle, you, the hero of this quest, must use quotes from the *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* pentalogy to find objects in the Museum. You will need to find each object in order to answer the Sphinx’s question. Hermes, the trickster, has teamed up with Baubo and created a secret code to help you solve the riddle. Once you have found all of the answers, insert them into Hermes’s coded puzzle to solve the riddle. Good luck!

Your search begins in the Ancient Greek gallery on the lower level of the Museum.

1 *“I stared at the horse who had just sprung from the wheelchair: a huge white stallion. But where its neck should be was the upper body of my Latin teacher, smoothly grafted to the horse’s trunk.”*

(The Lightning Thief, Percy Jackson and the Olympians book 1, p. 74)

A son of the Titans, Chiron the centaur is pretty old. So the sculpture of the famed teacher of the heroes is not pearly white but sea-green!

What is this sculpture of a centaur made of?



Greek, possibly Athenian: Statuette of a centaur, ca. 530 b.c. Gift of Damon Mezzacappa (1997-36)

2 *“[He] wore a dark blue pinstriped suit. He sat on a simple throne of solid platinum. He had a well-trimmed beard, marble gray and black like a storm cloud. His face was proud and handsome and grim, his eyes rainy gray. As I got nearer to him, the air crackled and smelled of ozone.”* *(The Lightning Thief, Percy Jackson and the Olympians book 1, pp. 339–40)*

In this little statue, the king of the gods isn't wearing his pinstriped suit. Instead, he has opted for the regal birthday suit. It looks like his lightning bolt has been seized once again. Swear on the River Styx that you'll take cover if it rains today. He's not going to be in a good mood!

Other than his lightning bolt, what is Zeus missing in this statuette?

His _ _ _ _ _

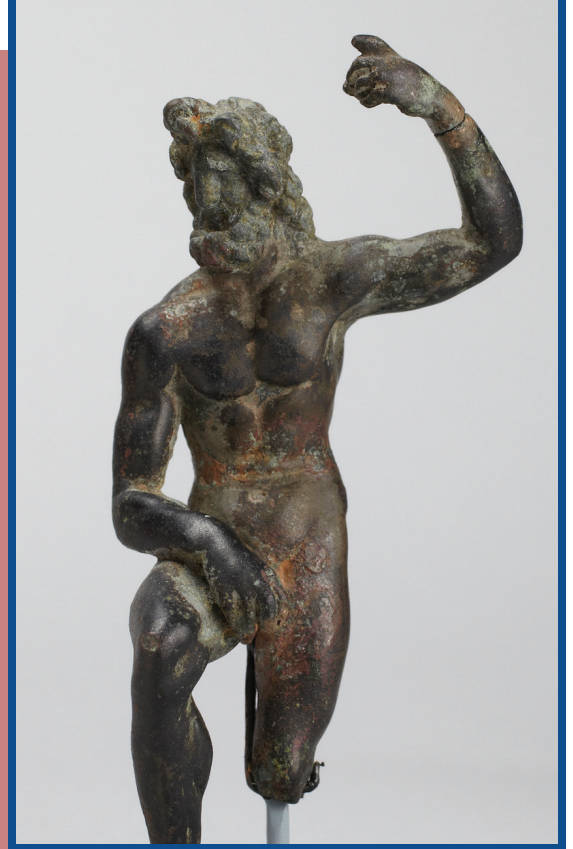
Greek: Zeus, ca. 460 b.c. Museum purchase, Caroline G. Mather Fund (y1937-343)



3 “The god sitting next to him was his brother. . . His skin was deeply tanned, his hands scarred like an old-time fisherman’s. His hair was black, like mine. His face had that same brooding look that had always gotten me branded a rebel. But his eyes, sea green like mine, were surrounded by sun-crinkles that told me he smiled a lot, too. His throne was a deep-sea fisherman’s chair. [. . .] Instead of a pole, the holster held a bronze trident, flickering with green light around the tips.” (*The Lightning Thief, Percy Jackson and the Olympians* book 1, p. 340)

Although the ocean is large, a statuette is small. Think Tom Thumb, not giant god, for this statue of Percy’s dad is not tall.

What should this statuette of Percy’s dad be holding?



Roman, Hellenistic or Early Roman: Poseidon. Museum purchase, Caroline G. Mather Fund (y1963-58)

4 “It doesn’t matter? From the waist down, my best friend is a donkey – [. . .] ‘Goat!’ he cried. ‘What?’ ‘I’m a goat from the waist down.’ ‘You just said it didn’t matter.’ ‘Blaa-ha-ha! There are satyrs who would trample you underhoof for such an insult!’” (*The Lightning Thief, Percy Jackson and the Olympians* book 1, p. 45)

Just because Grover isn’t a donkey doesn’t mean he can’t ride one! Keep your eyes peeled for this satyr riding a donkey. He’s painted on a clay vessel that used to hold oil.

Can you find the Greek name for this oil bottle?



Greek, Attic, in the manner of the Gorgon Painter: Black-figure “Deianeira” lekythos, with mounted satyr pursuing a nymph, ca. 580 B.C. Museum purchase, Fowler McCormick, Class of 1921, Fund and Carl Otto von Kienbusch Jr. Memorial Collection Fund (2007-39)

5 “I shook my head. ‘Look, if the thing I fought really was the Minotaur, the same one in the stories . . .’

‘Yes.’

‘Then there’s only one.’

‘Yes.’

‘And he died, like, a gajillion years ago, right? Theseus killed him in the labyrinth. So . . .’

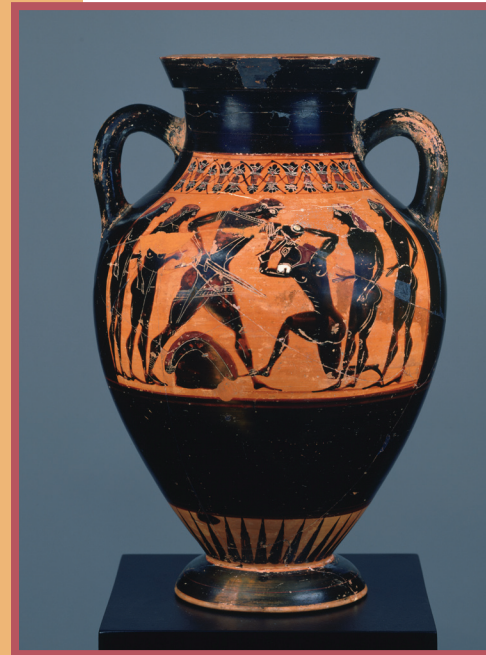
‘Monsters don’t die, Percy. They can be killed. But they don’t die.’”

(*The Lightning Thief*, Percy Jackson and the Olympians book 1, p. 86)

You’re on the lookout for an amphora, a large two-handled jar with a narrow neck, that shows Theseus defeating the Minotaur the first time around.

Percy used cunning to defeat the Minotaur. Look at this amphora. What weapon did Theseus use to cut off the head of the Minotaur?

A _ _ _ _ _



Greek, Attic, attributed to the Princeton Painter, made in Campania, Nola, South Italy: Black-figure panel amphora: *Theseus and the Minotaur*, ca. 545–535 b.c. Trumbull-Prime Collection (y168)

6 “I sliced the Hydra’s head clean off. It rolled away into the grass, leaving a flailing stump, which immediately stopped bleeding and began to swell like a balloon.

In a matter of seconds the wounded neck split into two necks, each of which grew a full-sized head. Now I was looking at an eight-headed Hydra.

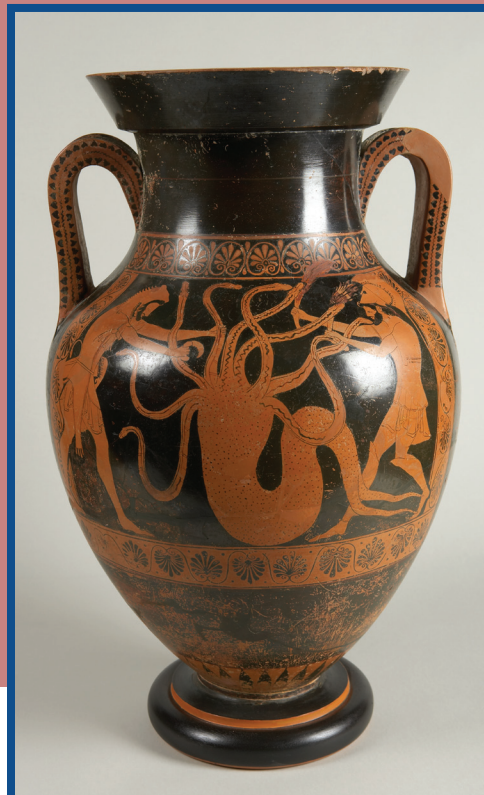
[...]

‘Fire!’ Annabeth said. ‘We have to have fire!’

As soon as she said that, I remembered the story.

The Hydra’s heads would only stop multiplying if we burned the stumps before they regrew. That’s what Heracles had done, anyway.

But we had no fire.” (*The Sea of Monsters*, Percy Jackson and the Olympians book 2, p. 145)



Herakles—you might know him by his Roman name, Hercules—was a tricky guy. His battle against the Hydra was one of twelve labors (or jobs) that he had to perform. Find the amphora with Herakles and the Hydra painted on it.

Who is helping Herakles defeat the Hydra?

_ _ _ _ _

Greek, Attic, attributed to the Pezzino Painter: Red-figure amphora with *Herakles and Hydra*, ca. 510–500 b.c. Collection of Shelby White and Leon Levy (L.2004.40)

The next few objects in your search can be found in the Roman gallery.



Roman: Mosaic pavement: drinking contest of Herakles and Dionysos, early 3rd century A.D. Gift of the Committee for the Excavation of Antioch to Princeton University (y1965-216)

F “I ran through D names from Greek mythology. Wine. The skin of a tiger. The satyrs that all seemed to work here. The way Grover cringed, as if Mr. D were his master. ‘You’re Dionysus,’ I said, ‘The god of wine.’” (*The Lightning Thief*; Percy Jackson and the Olympians book 1, p. 70)

Percy is certainly not the first hero to have unpleasant thoughts about Mr. D! Take Herakles, for example. Can you believe that Herakles, a hero, thought that he could out-drink the god of wine? Go on, see for yourself!

This large mosaic (small pieces of stone or glass put together like a puzzle to make an image or design) came from a Roman villa. It was on the floor of the dining room, which was called a

8 “Instead I looked to one side and saw one of those glass spheres people put in gardens—a gazing ball. I could see Aunt Em’s dark reflection in the orange glass; her headdress was gone, revealing her face as a shimmering pale circle. Her hair was moving, writhing like serpents. Aunt Em.

Aunt ‘M.’

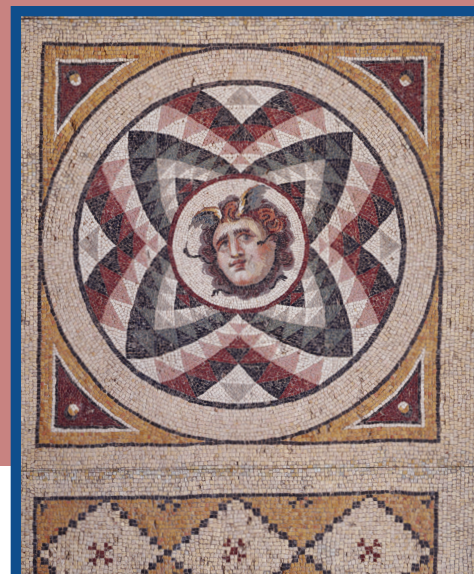
How could I have been so stupid?

Think, I told myself. How did Medusa die in the myth?

But I couldn’t think. Something told me that in the myth Medusa had been asleep when she was attacked by my namesake, Perseus. She wasn’t anywhere near asleep now.” (*The Lightning Thief*; Percy Jackson and the Olympians book 1, pp. 179–80)

Can you find this gorgon monster? Be careful. She is staring down at you from up above. I hope you brought your compact mirror!

How many snakes are popping out of this mosaic Medusa’s hair?



Roman: Mosaic pavement: head of Medusa, late 2nd century A.D. Gift of the Committee for the Excavation of Antioch to Princeton University (y1965-212)

9 ‘Percy, you know how Athena was born?’
‘She sprung from the head of Zeus in full battle armor or something.’
[...]
‘I was a brain child,’ Annabeth said.
‘Literally. Children of Athena are sprung from the divine thoughts of our mother and the mortal ingenuity of our father.’” (The Battle of the Labyrinth, Percy Jackson and the Olympians book 4, pp. 196–97)

Lucky for Athena that her kids spring from her thoughts, because all we’ve got is her helmeted head!

What else is missing from Athena’s face?

Her _ _ _ _

Roman, Julio-Claudian: *Helmeted head of Athena*, ca. 50 A.D. Gift of Mrs. M. E. L. Joline in 1914 (y178)

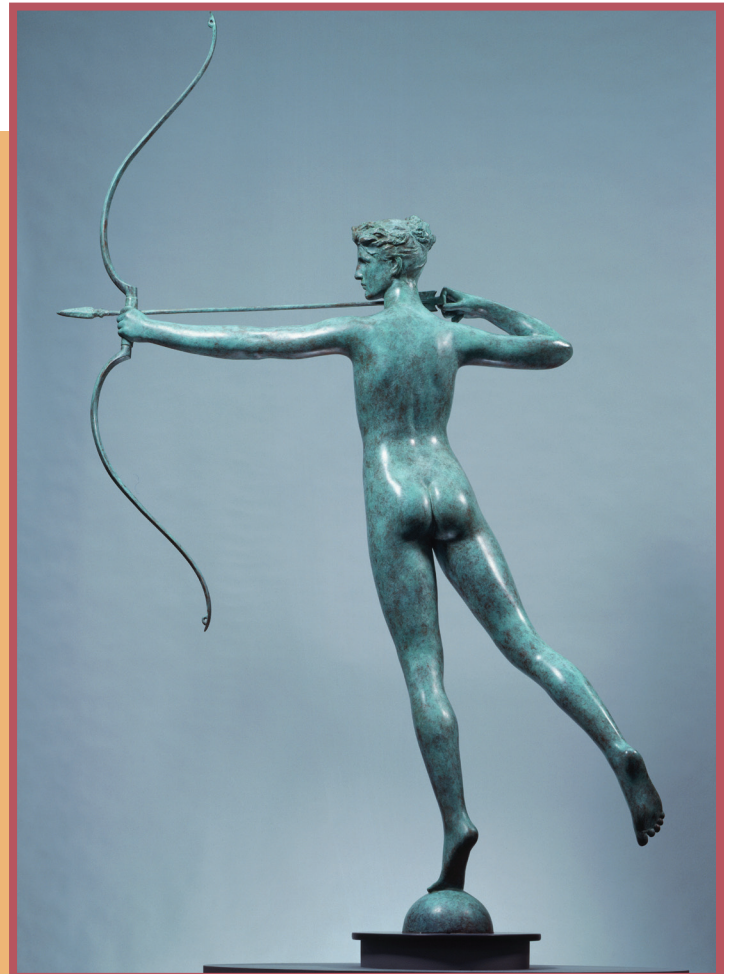


The last object in your search is upstairs, in the gallery of American Painting and Sculpture.

10 “The young girl looked at me, her eyes colder and brighter than the winter moon. ‘I am Artemis,’ she said. ‘Goddess of the Hunt.’” (The Titan’s Curse, Percy Jackson and the Olympians book 3, p. 28)

Hunt for her you must! You will not find this goddess down below, but rather up above. While more lovely than intimidating, this maiden goddess looms green and large.

What do you think Artemis (also known by her Roman name, Diana) is standing on? Here’s a clue: Pay close attention to the first sentence of the quote above.



Augustus Saint-Gaudens, American, 1848–1907, cast by Bedi/Makky Art Foundry, Brooklyn, founded 1920s: *Diana*, cast 1987. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Alex J. Ettl (y1990-62)

