

Greek / Roman Notes

Warwick Vase:



Regarding the heads on the Warwick Vase what is the significance of the one head which appears to be that of a woman or a young boy: One Guide said that she had heard that it was said to be that of Emma Hamilton (which would make it much later than the rest). The question arose as to whether Sir William was married to Emma at the time the vase was reconstructed. Several Guides felt that the face was very similar to Emma's in the Romney painting. There seems to be no documentation, but it makes a nice story.

Greek Horse Bit:



The horse bit in the Greek case looks a fierce piece of work; was its purpose to anger the horse: It is etruscan and there are some even harsher ones than this. It was necessary to prevent the horse pulling sideways to get a straight path run by the team of horses. Not much work has yet been done on the way the Ramasses worked. The vase drawings don't really help and some look very odd. Someone is now doing research on mules to try to find out if and how the harnesses worked. The Mycenaean Chariot for example with the band across the horsed chest does in fact work, allowing it to pull without its breathing being obstructed. The Luristan horse pieces also look horrific.

Greek and Roman Glass items:



There are a few glass items from around 1000 B.C. but very little later than that. Did very little glass survive: From 1500 B.C. onwards glass was made on a clay core using a bronze rod and then the clay was extracted. Around the time of the change from BC to AD glass was blown and the Romans had glass blown on an industrial scale in Syria. We have very little early Egyptian glass here; later Egyptian pieces were also done on a clay core and have an iridescence which is irreversible and will peel off.

Sheeps Head Rhyton:



How would the sheep's head rhyton be rested when it was full of liquid, would it have a stand of some kind: No, there were no stands. It could possibly have been hung on to a peg. There are many animal head rhytons in the Collection, especially in the Chinese section.

Roman Cruet:



What condiments would be put in the Roman cruet: Certainly oil and salt, but otherwise it is difficult to say. It is known that the Romans grew and made use of various herbs. In this connection there is a fish dish with a depression in it for the sauce.

Water Pitchers:

How were the water pitchers with the pointed conical bases rested; were there rings for this purpose: There would have been rings of pottery or wood, but the points would have gone into the sand and they could be stood up in this way. We have no rings in the Collection.

Bell-Krater:



The bell-krater, South Italian. The ancient Greeks would usually have quite a sediment at the bottom of the krater and would attempt to throw this through a metal circle as a kind of game.

Bust of Hermes:



How would the eyes in the bust of Hermes have been shown when it was first made? - Eyes would have been inlaid... probably of stone or rock crystal.