

Dreamer Dog's Ancient Greek Egg Artistry



Σειρήνας μὲν πρῶτον ἀφίξειαι, αἳ ῥὰ τε
πάντας ἀνθρώπους θέλγονοιν, ὅτις σφεας
εἰσαφίκηται. ὅς ἀϊόρεϊν πελάση καὶ φθόγγον
ἀκούσῃ Σειρῶν ὑήπια τένα
οἴκαδε νοστήσει.









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Dreamee Dog painted Easter egg masterpieces with the Greeks. The Romans and later generations were heavily inspired by the masterworks of Ancient Greece. The Greeks are known for their advances in astronomy, geography, philosophy, theater, history, and advanced mathematics, including geometry and the Golden Ratio. The Greeks constructed monumental temples and were brilliant navigators, having sailed widely in the Mediterranean Sea. Did you know the Ancient Greeks had a version of a computer? It's called the Antikythera Mechanism and was used to aid in navigation.

Homer (c. 8th century BCE) – Homer was a Greek poet and author of the Iliad and the Odyssey. These epic poems would have been originally sung to music and tell the stories of the Trojan War, the fall of Troy, and the wanderings of Odysseus. These myths were very important to the Ancient Greeks, and featured prominently on their artwork. The egg depicts Odysseus and the Sirens from an Attic red figure Stamnos, 480 to 470 BCE. The ancient Greek text behind Homer is from the Odyssey; Book 12, line 39. “Next you will come to the Sirens who beguile all men that approach them. Whoever encounters them unawares and listens to their voices will never joy at reaching home, his wife and children to greet him.”

Herodotus (c. 484 to c. 425 BCE) – Herodotus, who is called the Father of History, wrote the Histories. This work included stories about famous kings and important battles, like the battles of Marathon, Thermopylae, and Salamis during the Persian Wars. He traveled the Greek speaking world extensively, and even wrote about the famous Oracle at Delphi. This oracle was consulted frequently by envoys from all Greek City-States. The egg depicts an Attic red figure Hydria with Apollo, the Greek god of prophecy, the sun, and music, seated on a tripod by the Berlin Painter, 490 BCE. The tripod was used by the Oracle when she spoke her prophecies in the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. The background is the Temple of Aphaia at Aegina. This temple was the first time the Greek artists filled an entire pediment with sculptural figures.

Pericles (c. 495 to 429 BCE) – Pericles was an Athenian general and political leader during the Golden Age of Athens. He led Athens during the Second Persian War and the Peloponnesian War. Pericles acquired the funds to construct the current temples and Propylaea, or entrance gate, on the Acropolis in Athens after the city was destroyed by the Persian army in 480 BCE. He constructed new monuments to Athena, the patron goddess of Athens. The Athenians held a procession to Athena each year to bring her statue a new chiton or dress. The egg shows the Chios Kore, 510 BCE. This is a typical example of an Archaic Period statue. The statue was carved from Parian marble and shows remains of the paint the Greeks used on all of their marble statuary. The background is the Parthenon. The Parthenon was a temple dedicated to Athena Parthenos and had a large ivory and gold statue of Athena by the sculptor Phidias. The sculptures on the outside of the building would have been brightly painted with reds and blues.

These reliefs can be seen today at the British Museum in London. You can see a replica of the Parthenon temple and the statue of Athena in Nashville, Tennessee.

Plato (428 or 424 to 347 BCE) – Plato was an Athenian philosopher and a student of Socrates. Plato founded the Academy where he instructed students. He also transcribed many of Socrates' lessons. Many philosophers originally taught at the gymnasium. The gymnasium was where Greek men went to exercise, discuss politics, debate philosophical ideas, and train for the Panhellenic Games. Each year, all the Greek City-States set aside disputes to attend one of 4 games at sanctuaries important to all Greeks. These were Olympia, Nemea, Delphi, and Isthmus. Olympia and Nemea were dedicated to Zeus, the king of the gods. Delphi, or the Pythian, games were celebrated in honor of Apollo. The Isthmian games were in honor of Poseidon. The egg depicts the Charioteer of Delphi, known as Heniokhos, 478 to 474 BCE. The charioteer is a bronze sculpture with onyx eyes, copper lips, a silver headband, and an inscription on the base. This was a votive offering to Apollo for having won the chariot race and would have included a chariot and horses. Chariot racing was incredibly important to both the ancient Greeks and the Romans. The background is the Sanctuary of Apollo in Delphi and includes the round Temple of Athena Pronaia.

Aristophanes (446 to 386 BCE) – Aristophanes was an Athenian comedic playwright. Each year, plays were performed in Athens at the Great Dionysia, a festival in honor of the god Dionysus. Eleven of the 40 plays written by Aristophanes survive today. The other surviving examples of Greek theater are tragedies by Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides. Greek theater related stories from their myths, including those of the heroes of the Trojan War. The egg shows an Attic white ground kylix by the Pistoxenos Painter with Aphrodite, goddess of love, on a Swan, 460 BCE. The details feature a golden-brown glaze and purplish-red clay for the cloak and borders of her chiton. The background depicts the Theater at Epidaurus. This theater is famous for its acoustics and nearly perfect symmetry. Greek theaters were typically built into hillsides. The theater, like temples and the Agora or marketplace, was an essential aspect of the Greek city. The tragedy mask is a larger-than-life size bronze votive offering possibly by Silamion from the 4th century BCE. The second mask is a terracotta mask of Dionysus from the late 4th century BCE. It was recently discovered on the acropolis of the ancient city of Daskyleion in Western Turkey.

Alexander the Great (356 to 323 BCE) – Alexander the Great was the king of Macedon. As king, he conquered parts of Asia Minor, Egypt, Afghanistan, and India. He expanded the reach of Greek culture and started the trend of Hellenism, or love of Greek things. Hellenistic art is known for ultra realism. Alexander was one of the first westerners to see the Indus River. The egg depicts the Lion Hunt Mosaic, which shows Craterus and Alexander during a lion hunt from the House of Dionysos, 320 BCE. This pebble mosaic was part of the floor of the andron, or men's banquet hall. The andron was where Greek men gathered for banquets, or the symposium, to discuss politics or philosophy. Unlike the Romans or Etruscans, Greek women were not permitted in the andron and were kept in the upper story of the house. The background is the House of Dionysos in Pella. Pella was Alexander's capital city.

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