

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to the Museum of Classical Archaeology. The Museum is a unique collection of plaster casts of the most famous statues of ancient Greece and Rome; it is known worldwide. A visit offers a view of a whole host of sculptures, whose originals are spread all over the planet - from Tehran to California. Many of the statues are lifesize or bigger; and in combination with the layout of the gallery they provide an exciting environment for your pupils.

Your exploration of the Museum could centre on many aspects of life and thought in the ancient world, but could equally be used in relation to non-historical National Curriculum topics. Here are a few suggestions of themes you may want to investigate; you will find more information about practical arrangements, educational themes and sources of further information in the other notes included in this document. The majority are aimed at teachers of primary school children; but some of the material is relevant to older pupils.

Mythology

Perseus and Medusa, the Amazons and Herakles and many other mythological characters are present in the Museum, and the statues make these stories come alive. You will find them in architectural relief sculpture and in freestanding figures; they provide an inspiring starting point for role play, storytelling and creative writing. For an example, see the Farnese Herakles suggestion sheet.

Religion

The gallery contains images of all the major Greek and Roman gods - from Zeus (Jupiter) to Aphrodite (Venus). How did Greeks and Romans imagine their deities? How did they worship them? The statue of a Praying Boy, as well as the inscriptions on some of the early statues dedicating them to a particular god, could be used as a starting point for a discussion of religious worship. Was religion in the ancient world like religion in the modern world?

Sport in the Ancient World

Athletics and ball games were at least as important in Greece as they are today; after all, the ancient Greeks founded the Olympic Games. The collection invites you to explore the similarities and contrasts between the ancient and modern world of sport. You will find in the gallery a full size discus thrower and some small relief sculptures showing athletics and hockey players. They demonstrate how much modern athletics are influenced by ancient sport. On the other hand, as the sculptures from the temple of Zeus at Olympia itself show, religion was at the heart of ancient sport, unlike today.

Rome's Rulers

A splendid series of portrait busts of famous Roman emperors and politicians allows your class to speculate on the characters of the people who formed Rome. Do portraits reveal the personality of the sitter? Can pupils link up what they know of Julius Caesar or Nero to their portraits on display? How realistic do they think the portraits are?

Learning about the Past

The collection raises many important questions about how we go about reconstructing ancient societies, and about why we are interested in the past. What does the work of an archaeologist entail? How do we piece fragments of evidence together? And what are the pitfalls? For an example, see the Peplos Kore suggestion sheet.

We hope you find the information in this folder useful. It is also available on our web site, www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum. Do let us know if you have any suggestions and any good material that you have used with your class.

With best wishes for your visit,

The Curator and staff of the Museum.

Basic Information

Address

Museum of Classical Archaeology
Sidgwick Avenue
Cambridge
CB3 9DA

Telephone

John Donaldson, Assistant Curator: 01223 335153. **Email:** jd125@cam.ac.uk
Jacqui Strawbridge, Education Officer: 01223 767044. **Email:** js443@cam.ac.uk
(please note the Education Officer is part time, Tuesday to Wednesday only).

Fax

01223 335409

Web

www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum

Opening times

10am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Also, in university term time only, 10am to 1pm Saturdays.

Schools and educational groups are welcome between 10 and 5 but you MUST pre-book.

Please try and book as far in advance as possible to avoid disappointment.

A member of staff will then be available to let you in and be present throughout your visit. Many thanks.

Education services

When available we offer free teaching and talks and free workpacks for KS2.

Admission

Free, but donations are welcome.

How to book

If you are a schoolgroup it is a good idea to speak to the Education Officer in the first instance.

Please book your visit as far in advance as you can. This is helpful from your point of view and the Museum's, and is best done by phone or email. You will need to have ready your preferred date or dates; also give us an address and contact phone number - as well as the ages and number of pupils you expect to bring.

A group of no more than 20 is ideal, but a class size of the low thirties is our maximum; some schools manage their visit in shifts, which works well.

Wheelchair access is available via a lift, but please notify us in advance if you require it.

When you arrive

The Museum is located in the Classics Faculty of the University on the Sidgwick Site. Your coach can usually drop off pupils near to the Museum, but parking is not available. Many coach drivers use a lay-by in Barton Road. Advise your party to leave as many coats and bags on the coach as possible.

When you arrive at the building, enter the foyer and go up the stairs on your left. The Museum is at the left at the top of the stairs. The foyer tends to be very busy with students on the hour in the mornings during University term - October and November; mid January to mid March; mid April to mid June. It is best to avoid that time of the day for your arrival if you possibly can.

Facilities

- *postcards and guidebooks*

We have a selection of postcards on sale for 25p each; and an illustrated guidebook at the subsidised price of £2.00.

- *cloakroom facilities*

There are toilets on the ground floor of the building; turn sharp right at the bottom of the stairs. They are also used by students — please do not try to send all your class at once. You may leave any coats and bags on shelves just inside the entrance to the Museum gallery, but there are no hangers or lockers.

- *refreshments*

If it is fine, you may eat packed lunches on the grass outside the building, but please keep noise levels down as people are working in the offices all around. We do not have a lunchroom. There is no café or catering facilities in the building.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR VISIT

Be realistic! Museums are tiring, and it is hard to concentrate for very long. Think carefully about the timing of your visit. And make sure that the children have *varied activities* to undertake.

The Museum is packed with sculpture, literally. There are about two areas in it where you can usually sit down a class all together on the floor: one is in front of the huge statue of Herakles in Bay K, see the suggestion sheet; the other is in the area that displays the sculpture from the sanctuary of Olympia, Bay C. Here you could discuss the Olympic games and sports in general in the ancient world. Or you could build on the myth depicted in the pediment or gable of the temple of Zeus; it shows the god Apollo stopping a famous mythical brawl, when the half-horse, half-man Centaurs got drunk at a wedding feast and tried to carry off the female guests.

For most of the visit, they will find it easiest to work in small groups. The Museum is big and varied enough for them to have plenty of tasks to do without getting in each other's way. This is where the pre-visit is especially helpful. You will find that, although some of our statues line the walls, most allow children to walk all around them; this itself can be the focus for some group work. Were the statues made to be seen from all angles? Some of the statues even make a point of getting you to go behind them — see the Farnese Herakles suggestion sheet.

Ask your pupils to record their own experiences in the Museum, by drawing and writing notes. Some form of recording will make pupils more alert during their visit and can be the basis for follow-up work in the classroom. There's lots of creative writing and drama that can come out of Greek mythology.

Preparing your visit and following it up back at school makes it a more rewarding experience for your class. For further tips see "Preparing your Visit". Being aware of other visitors in the Museum, such as the general public and students and those who come to draw, helps us to maintain a good atmosphere for everyone. See "Preparing your Visit".

THE MUSEUM OF CLASSICAL ARCHAEOLOGY AND ITS PLASTER CASTS

The Museum of Classical Archaeology is one of the greatest collections of plaster casts in the world. Everything here is an exact copy made from a direct mould of a major work of Greek or Roman sculpture. Many young children are not particularly interested whether the casts are original or not; after all, the casts themselves are extraordinarily impressive. But others are keen to know why they are not "real" and why they are in the Museum. Here's the history.

The Cambridge collection of plaster casts was gathered together in the 1870s and 1880s, when the University first started teaching Classical Art and Archaeology. At that time there were no slides or lavish colour illustrations. So obtaining accurate plaster casts of sculpture was about the only (and most economical) way of providing material for teaching — simply for knowing what ancient sculpture looked like. In other words, this has always been a TEACHING COLLECTION. You can see a nineteenth century lecturer using the casts as his visual aids in one of the photographs on display on the landing outside the Museum.

The Museum was originally housed in a specially fitted-out building in Little St Mary's Lane, Cambridge. But in the early 1980s it was moved to its new building on the University Sidgwick Site, along with the University Classics Faculty, where every aspect of the classical world is taught and studied. The collection continues to be used by students in their work on ancient art.

The Museum is still organised largely as it was in the original Victorian gallery. It starts from the earliest Greek statues, which are stiff, unnaturalistic and formal, through the increasing naturalism of fifth century sculpture, and ends with the "decadence" of Rome. Many scholars still accept the broad outlines of this scheme; but it is easy to see how it is rooted in Victorian ideas of evolution.

Not to mention that the collection was assembled in a period that valued Greek sculpture over Roman. In fact there is a sting in the tail: if you look carefully at the labels of many of the casts, you will see that many of the "Greek" pieces are in fact casts of sculptures made in the Roman period, which *copied* earlier Greek masterpieces that no longer survive.

Most primary school children will probably relate best to the Museum as it is laid out: with its clear progression from Greek to Roman. Older children may find it challenging to think about the process of copying that lies behind the collection; to reflect that most of what we know of Greek sculpture, in fact comes from Roman copies or adaptations of Greek sculpture.

PREPARING YOUR VISIT

Preparing yourself

The most important thing to do is to familiarize yourself with the collection. The *best way* is to make a pre-visit. In university term time the Museum is open on Saturdays from 10.00 - 1.00; please ring to check. In your pre-visit, you should aim to *select a few objects* to be the focus of your tour. There are around 450 pieces in the Museum, so selection is crucial! You should also think about how the children will be divided into groups and what equipment they will need to bring with them, such as clipboards and pencils.

You may also find useful the 122-page Museum Guidebook, which contains a general introduction to Greek and Roman sculpture, a glossary and many illustrations. You can buy this at your pre-visit; the price is £2.00. You can also buy it by post for £3 including postage. Please make cheques out to 'The University of Cambridge'.

Alternatively you may choose to make a virtual visit on the web at <www.classics.cam.ac.uk/museum>; this site gives you a good deal of background information on the collection and a full listing of the casts in the museum. It will help you make your selection.

Other books you may find useful:

N. Spivey, *Understanding Greek Sculpture* (Thames & Hudson paperback, 1997). As the author is an ex-curator of the Museum, many of the examples are drawn from our collection.

L. Burn, *Greek Myths* (British Museum Publications paperback, 1990). A clear short account of major mythical themes and stories, illustrated with Greek sculpture and vase painting.

P. Cartledge (ed.), *Cambridge Illustrated History of Ancient Greece* (Cambridge University Press, 1998)

M. Beard and J. Henderson, *A Very Short Introduction to Classics* (Oxford UP paperback, 1995). Starting off from a visit to the British Museum, it works out to look at all aspects of Classics — from mythology to Latin.

Preparing your pupils

For many of your pupils this will be their first visit to a museum and it is good to discuss beforehand what museums are about and why they are important. They will also need to understand about appropriate behaviour in the museum. Please explain that the objects in the Museum are precious and that, therefore, running in the Museum is not allowed. The casts will get damaged by being bumped or pushed, and plaster is much softer than stone.

Please make sure that your children understand that casts are valuable and must not get marked with fingermarks. Many are also very fragile. Pencils too should be kept well away from the surfaces of the sculptures.

Remember that many people use the Museum; students to learn about antiquity, others to draw or generally enjoy the casts and atmosphere of the Museum. Please do not disturb them.

Pupils enjoy their visit much more if they have some background knowledge of Greek and/or Roman civilisation. Ask them to search in the school or public library for books on archaeology and the Greeks and Romans. Many excellent ones are now available, for example:

S. James, *Eyewitness Guides: Ancient Rome* (Dorling Kindersley)

J. Macintosh, *Eyewitness Guides: Archaeology* (Dorling Kindersley)

S. & P. Harrison, *BBC Fact Finders: Ancient Greece* (BBC Publications)

J. & L. James, *Digging Deeper: The Greeks* (Heinemann)

WHAT DID GREEK SCULPTURES REALLY LOOK LIKE

Did Greek sculptures really look like the plaster casts you see in the Museum? Yes and no ...

Colours

We usually think of ancient statues as made of clean, white shiny marble. That is how most of them survive — and that is how most of our casts look. But originally many of them were painted. No one knows exactly how completely they were coloured - all over wash? Just the details highlighted? Did fashions change over time?; nor how bright and gaudy the colours were. We have experimented with repainting two of our casts as they might once have been.

The most famous one is in Bay A. The so-called Peplos Kore, "the maiden wearing a dress". It was carved in the sixth century BC and once stood on the Athenian Acropolis. It still retains some traces of paint, on which we have based our reconstruction.

Your class might like to imagine what ancient Athens might have looked like if all sculptures were like this. They could try painting their own versions. Notice the little umbrella that we have restored on the sculpture's head; there is a hole in the original. This may well have been to protect the head from bird droppings!

Materials

Most of the sculptures that survive are made of marble; but originally there were probably almost as many made of bronze, as well as a few in gold, ivory and silver. But the vast majority of bronze statues were later melted down. Many of the most famous ancient masterpieces may have ended up as tools or armour or jewellery.

We have a few bronze-painted casts in the Museum to give you some idea of what there must once have been.

FARNESE HERAKLES

BAY K, 277

About the Statue

The Farnese Herakles was found in the Baths of Caracalla in Rome and is probably a Roman copy of a 4th century BC statue by the famous Greek sculptor Lysippus. The exaggerated muscles suggest that this copy was a free interpretation rather than a mirror image of the original.

Preparation

Tell your pupils the story of Herakles before coming to the gallery. You may find that some of them know part of the myth already, for example from the Disney movie, and have ideas about what sort of character he is and what it means to be a hero. A book you might want to consult, for example, is *Greek Myths* by L Burn (British Museum Publications paperback, 1990).

Learning from Objects

The Farnese Herakles tells its own story. Guided by detailed questions your pupils discover the clues it contains as to the identity and fortunes of this character. For example:

— *What sort of person is this?*

Answers will probably focus on his size and strength.

— *Is he an ordinary person like you and me?*

No, he is much more impressive.

— *Is he young or old?*

He is probably not very young because he has lines on his face. He looks tired and is leaning on his stick. He has clearly just finished a very exhausting job.

— *Who is this person? Try to find three clues.*

He carries a club, the skin of the Nemean lion, and hidden behind his back, three of the apples of the Hesperides. Note how the sculptor has, as it were, saved this clue for the last and invites the spectator to explore the back of the statue. There is no doubt - this is Herakles!

Discussion point: name a modern hero, someone who has achieved something extraordinary. Answers could include pop stars, football players, politicians, etc.

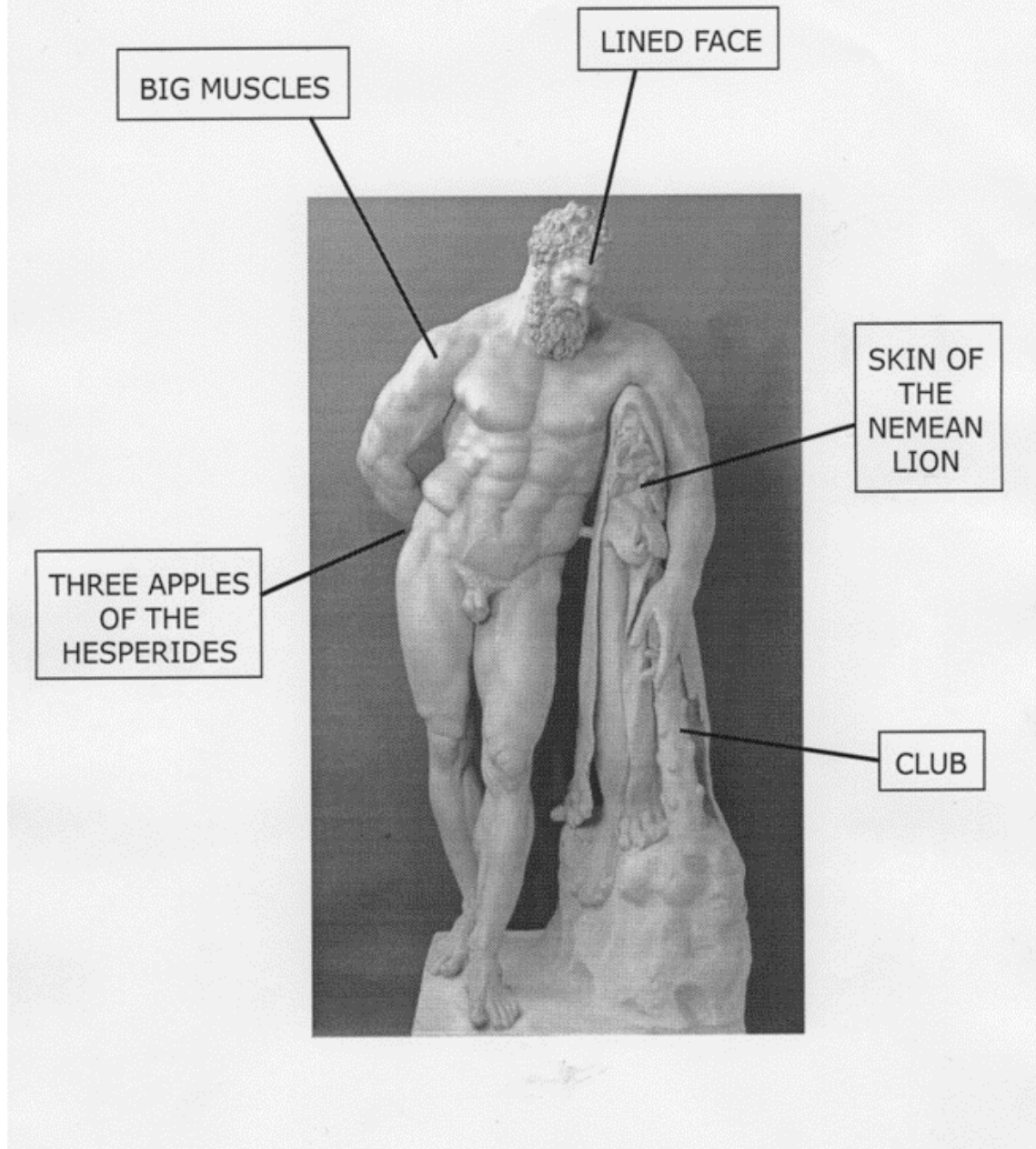
The Myth of Herakles

Once upon a time, according to ancient Greek myth, lived a race of half-gods. They did not live forever like the gods, but were stronger, more courageous and more beautiful than humans. They were called *Heroes*. One of the most remarkable among them was Herakles. Just what an extraordinary child he was became clear when Hera, the wife of the chief god Zeus, tried to take revenge for the affair that Zeus had with Herakles's mother. She sent two snakes to Herakles's cradle to kill him, but he grabbed one in each hand and strangled them. Hera did not give up. When Herakles had grown into a fine young man and happily married, she sent a spell of madness. In his frenzy he killed his wife and six children. When he recovered he was horrified by what he had done and asked the gods to forgive him. Zeus advised him to find King Eurystheus who would set him some extremely difficult tasks: the Twelve Labours of Herakles. These included a visit to the underworld where the dead live and from where no-one had ever returned alive; cleaning a stable that was so mucky that it took two rivers to wash out the dirt; and killing the Nemean lion. Herakles shot his arrows and used his club, but the lion's skin was too tough. In the end he strangled the fierce lion with his bare hands. The most difficult labour was to fetch the Apples of the Hesperides from a place in the west that no-one knew. Herakles accomplished all these tasks and Zeus was so impressed that he decided that Herakles could live forever with the gods on Mount Olympus.

Back at school: creative writing and storytelling

Ask your pupils, inspired by Herakles's adventures, to think of a thirteenth labour that Herakles could have performed. They could use their suggestion in creative writing or storytelling.

THE FARNESE HERAKLES



THE PEPLOS KORE

BAY A, 43 & 43a

About the Statue

Kore means young woman and is pronounced "koray". She is named after the dress she wears, a peplos. It was made of wool and fastened with a belt and pins on the shoulders. The Peplos Kore was made around 530 BC and stood, with many others, on the Acropolis in Athens. There she was discovered in 1884, amongst the rubble left by the Persian destruction of the Acropolis in 480-479 BC.

Preparation

Introduce your pupils to archaeology and ask them which materials preserve well — wood, leather, metal, stone, wool, bone? How does this affect our ideas about people in the past. Do we know about all the objects people used in the past, or just particular ones? Do objects look the same after having been buried for hundreds of years? We have to ask ourselves all these questions in our archaeological detective work!

Learning from Objects

The gallery contains two plaster casts of the Peplos Kore, one painted and one unpainted. Contrasting these two images reveals how ancient objects sometimes looked very different from what we would expect.

- Have a careful look at the two images of the Peplos Kore and ask your pupils which one looks more like a Greek statue.

Explain that the painted statue is more accurate. Up to the 19th century it was thought that Greek statues were white. Many of the sculptures people knew had been above ground for many centuries and the paint had faded, being exposed to sunlight, weather and oxygen. Gradually more and more statues were found on which traces of paint were visible, just like the Peplos Kore. Although the evidence was clear, specialists refused to accept this idea for some time. They preferred their own image of Greek statues: pure, shiny and white! Even today visitors to the gallery are sometimes shocked by the bright colours used on this statue.

- Spot all the differences between the two versions of the Peplos Kore:

(1) One is completely painted, including her skin. Have a good look at all the detail; the peplos for example is decorated with a band of white and green patterns. Scientific evidence suggests that the dress may have been decorated with even more complicated motifs, such as chariot races.

(2) The painted Peplos Kore wears earrings, headdress and pins on the shoulders made of metal, probably bronze. Many Greek statues were decorated with metal jewellery, or carried metal weapons like spears and shields. Usually these are lost, as they were robbed or knocked off.

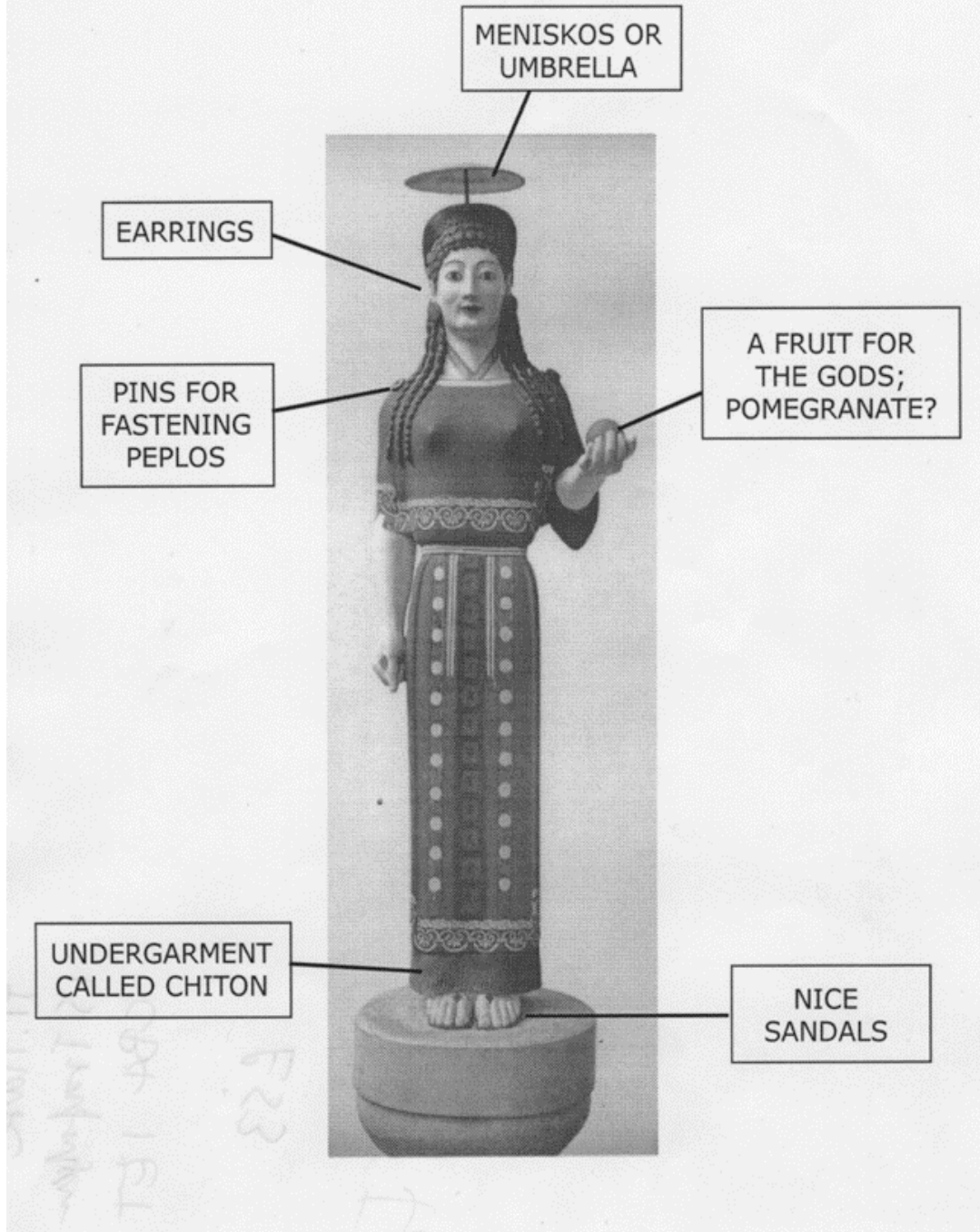
(3) The Peplos Kore's left arm was made separately and carried a fruit, such as a pomegranate, as a gift to the gods.

(4) The statue was equipped with a small umbrella, called a meniskos. Did it protect the sculpture from the weather or bird droppings?

Back at School: Art Work

Draw and colour a Greek statue. You could add details with, for example, aluminium foil. Bring all these Greek statues together on one large piece of paper or on a wall, and discover what a Greek sanctuary full of statues may have looked like.

THE PEPLOS KORE



WHAT STOPS THE SKY FROM FALLING?

BAY B, 98C

About the sculpture

Here is another representation of the Apples of the Hesperides myth, from the temple of Zeus at Olympia. Herakles, in the middle, is holding up the sky on his shoulders. He is doing this so that Atlas (right), who normally does the job, can fetch the Apples of the Hesperides for him. Being a superhuman Titan, Atlas can hold the sky up on his own; Herakles is a mortal man so needs a helping hand from the Goddess Athena, on the left.

Discussion point

Some Greek scientists developed extremely accurate theories about astronomy. For example, Aristarchus said the earth moved round the sun, rather than the other way round. Other Greek astronomers correctly said that the earth was a sphere, accurately calculated the movement of the moon and planets, could predict eclipses, and worked out the length of a year with remarkable accuracy. Most of these achievements were forgotten for hundreds of years.

