

# ART EXPLORA FESTIVAL



CULTURAL  
ODYSSEY IN THE  
MEDITERRANEAN SEA

FESTIVAL ART EXPLORA

# EDUCATIONAL BOOKLET

As part of the immersive exhibition of the Art Explora Festival, we are offering teachers, education professionals and volunteers a teaching kit to help them build on their visit.

This kit provides keys to understanding the content of the visit as well as details on some of the works on display, allowing the reader to prepare their itinerary and to build activities suitable for all visitors.

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# PRESENTATION OF THE ART EXPLORA FESTIVAL PROJECT

The immersive experience you are about to enjoy is part of the **Art Explora Festival**, organised by the eponymous foundation. **It is a travelling cultural festival** that offers free, accessible and unique experiences to all audiences **aboard the world's first museum-boat** as well as on the quaysides and host cities.

**Supported by UNESCO**, the festival and its museum-boat will travel for 2 years, from spring 2024 to spring 2026, **to over 15 countries in the Mediterranean**, starting with the city of Valletta in Malta. The list of participating countries includes **France, Italy, Croatia, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Lebanon, Egypt, Malta, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Spain and Portugal**.

The festival will make one to two stops in each country,

travelling between ports of different sizes and with varying social contexts and demographics.

In order to foster large-scale dialogue around the **contemporary issues** of its various ports of call, the Art Explora Festival will bring together **artists, a collaborative curatorial team, cultural and educational organisations around the mutual understanding of a common heritage**, environmental conservation, as well as the promotion of both territories and cultural heritage.



The museum-boat

## DID YOU KNOW?

In addition to the immersive exhibition on board the boat, the Art Explora Festival puts women at the forefront to give them a voice and highlight their impact on our society: **66% of the exhibition curators are women, as are the majority of the artists whose work is on display.**

# PRESENTATION OF THE LOUVRE MUSEUM

As a privileged partner of the **Art Explora Festival**, the Louvre Museum will present an immersive exhibition entitled «**Present! Images, discourses and representations of women in the Mediterranean**».

This exhibition offers a **reflection on the role and representation of female figures in the Mediterranean world**, through an **educational and sensory experience** based on **digital audiovisual technologies**.

This immersive experience was developed by a **collaborative curatorial team** comprising prominent figures, artists and thinkers, including: **Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui** (choreographer), **Noëmi Daucé** (curator in the Department of Near Eastern Antiquities at the Louvre Museum), **Simone Fattal** (artist), **Nicolas Saada** (film director) and **Daniel Mendelsohn** (writer). Each of these individuals has integrated historical and contemporary reflections on Mediterranean lives into their own research.

## WHAT IS THE LOUVRE MUSEUM?

It is the **oldest and largest museum in France**, and the second largest museum in the world after the Hermitage in St Petersburg (Russia). **Originally built as a mediaeval fortress** at the **end of the 12th century** at the request of the King of France, Philippe Auguste (1165-1223), the Louvre became **the palace of French monarchs over time** (François I, Henri IV and Louis XIV, among others), and eventually became **a national museum in 1793**, shortly after the French Revolution (1789).

Occupying an exhibition area of **73,000 m<sup>2</sup>** (enough to fit 10 football stadiums!) and welcoming an average of **9 to 10 million people each year**, the Louvre Museum is considered a universal museum. In other words, it aims to offer an **exhaustive overview of all human artistic production**, from prehistory (the museum's oldest work, the Ain Ghazal statue, is around 9000 years old) to 1848.

## THE COLLECTIONS OF THE LOUVRE

In order to best exhibit its **35,000 works** of all types and from all geographical eras, the Louvre Museum is divided into **8 curatorial departments**. The works you will see in the immersive exhibition come mainly from the following departments: **Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities, Egyptian Antiquities, Near Eastern Antiquities, and Paintings**.

# PRESENTATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL BOOKLET

The teaching kit is designed to provide **keys to understanding** in order to prepare for the visit, based on a selection of works on display in the immersive exhibition.

As the exhibition is designed as a journey through the Louvre's collections, using this document will enable students to familiarise themselves with works that they will be able to identify and recognise during their visit.

**In total, six «main» works from the Louvre Museum have been selected and discussed, addressing the following themes:**

- Mesopotamia, cradle of civilisation
- The invention of papyrus and its various uses in antiquity
- Women in ancient Egypt, between submission and freedom
- Etruscan civilisation: A cultural gateway
- The origins of Greek sculpture
- The Mediterranean Basin, land of conquests, alliances and exchanges

These themes are presented in chronological order, starting with the oldest Mediterranean civilisations and ending with the Roman conquest.

In addition, the main works are compared with other works from the Louvre **to illustrate the richness of the theme and to draw parallels with works from other periods or Mediterranean geographical eras.** These works, which come from several regions of the Mediterranean Basin (Palmyra, Byblos, Memphis, Thebes, Cerveteri, Athens etc.), **illustrate the continuity of economic, cultural, political, diplomatic and other exchanges in the Mediterranean, at least since antiquity.**

With women (real or divine) as central figures, the chosen works feature, for example, Enheduanna, the first poet in human history (23rd century BCE) and the renowned Greek poet Sappho (7th and 6th centuries BCE), the empresses Livia and Julia Domna, the mythological figures Medea, Leda and Europa, as well as the daily life of women (priestesses, wives etc.).

Finally, throughout the teaching kit, you will find learning activities to set for your groups, including a list of the necessary equipment, in order to complement the visit to the immersive exhibition. In addition, at the end of the presentation of each work, **the "Explore further" sections offer perspectives on more or less contemporary examples** (literature, music, poetry, visual arts etc.), in order to show that the works exhibited are still relevant today, while the **glossary** section will help to explain some of the terms used to your class.

# Themes for Reflection

1. MESOPOTAMIA, CRADLE OF CIVILISATION

2. THE INVENTION OF PAPYRUS  
AND ITS VARIOUS USES IN ANTIQUITY

3. WOMEN IN ANCIENT EGYPT,  
BETWEEN SUBMISSION AND FREEDOM

4. ETRUSCAN CIVILISATION: A CULTURAL GATEWAY

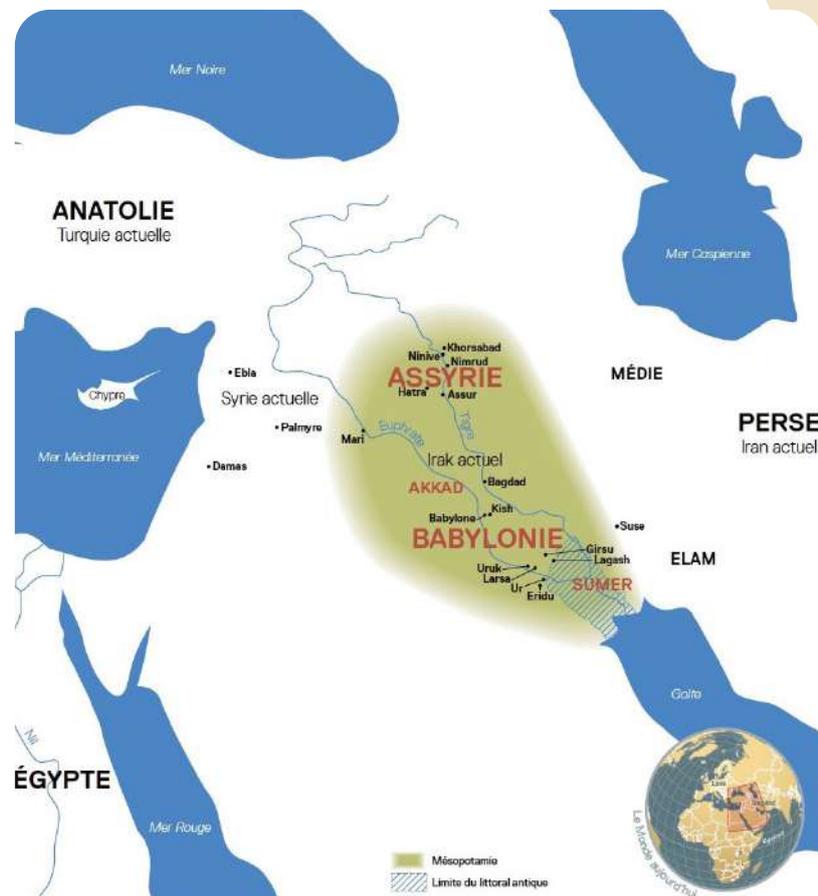
5. THE ORIGINS OF GREEK SCULPTURE

6. THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN,  
LAND OF CONQUESTS,  
ALLIANCES AND EXCHANGES

# 1. MESOPOTAMIA, CRADLE OF CIVILISATION

*Tablet of Enheduanna*





Map of Mesopotamia @Marie D'agostino

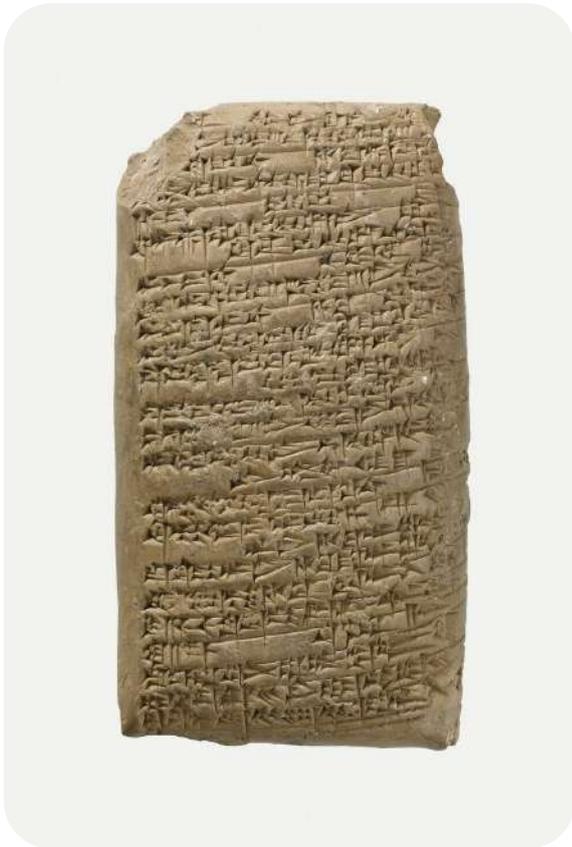
Located mainly in present-day **Iraq**, **Mesopotamia** (literally "the country between rivers") is considered **the cradle of humanity, economy and writing**. It was indeed in this part of the world that, at the end of the fourth millennium BCE, **the first cities (city-states\*) appeared, as well as humanity's oldest political and administrative systems**. The history of this crucial period is known thanks to **cuneiform tablets**, a number of which are on display in the Louvre Museum.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Developed by the **Sumerians\***, **cuneiform tablets** were **clay tablets inscribed using a reed pen** (sharpened reed). Given the wedged shape of the characters of this writing system, which is the **oldest in history**, historians called it "cuneiform", which refers to writing composed of wedge-shaped elements.

# PRESENTATION OF WORK #1:

## *Tablet of Enheduanna*



In the Department of Near Eastern Antiquities, the Louvre Museum houses a **clay tablet** (Fig. 1) that is only around 10 cm high. It bears witness to the **singular voice of Enheduanna** (2286–2251 BCE), **the first poet in human history**, a high priestess\* dedicated to the cult of Sin\* in the city-state of Ur\*.

The daughter of a king, Enheduanna is considered **the earliest known writer in history**. As a high-ranking princess, she composed **several divine hymns**, of which around 40 have been attributed to her to date and either glorify the gods or share moments from her life. Here she dedicates her hymn to Inanna, or Ishtar, goddess of love and war.

(Fig. 1) *Tablet of Enheduanna*, Iraq, 1894–1595 BCE, clay, H. 10.6 cm x W. 5.8 cm x D. 3.1 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

## THE VERY FIRST AUTOBIOGRAPHY?

This fragmentary text is the very **first expression of a poignant autobiography\*** (it is the first use of the personal pronoun “I”) **beyond its religious fervour**. Enheduanna evokes her exile, her remorse and **the loss of her priestly\*** functions in a metaphorical form\*. Indeed, after the death of her father, Enheduanna had lost her position as high priestess. **That is why she decided to invoke the help of the goddess Inanna (or Ishtar) with this hymn.**

# THE INVENTION OF CITIES AND WRITING



Here we see another Mesopotamian tablet (Fig. 2), which bears witness to the fact that, from the second millennium BCE, **writing had gone to become a medium of storytelling**. Before that, it was merely used as an accounting tool (to calculate sales or goods etc.) Written on this tablet is a story about the gods **Enki\*** and **Ninmah\***, who had rebelled against their thankless work of cleaning rivers and canals.

(Fig. 2) *Sumerian myth of the creation of man, including musicians*, Iraq, 1800–1700 BCE, clay, H. 14.3 cm x W. 10.8 cm x D. 3.7 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

# WRITING AS A MEANS OF UNIFYING PEOPLES



Pictured here is a stele with an image of **Ishtar** (Fig. 3) (Akkadian goddess\*), who would gradually come to be associated with the Sumerian goddess **Inanna**. This stele therefore illustrates the **unification of cultures and the process of assimilation\***, notably by sharing the same writing. Indeed, **it happens that in Sumerian mythology a single goddess bears two different names, while having the same functions**, as shown by Ishtar and Inanna, **who are both goddesses of love and war**.

(Fig. 3) *Ishtar of Arbela\**, Syria, between the 9th and 7th centuries BCE, stone, H. 121 cm x W. 82 cm x D. 30 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.



(Fig. 4) *Mattei Athena*, Italy, 130–90 BCE, marble, H. 230 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.



(Fig. 5) *Aphrodite*, Italy, 25–50 CE, marble, H. 149 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

These two statues of Greco-Roman goddesses show how the **mentioned ancient Mesopotamian religious figures (Inanna/Ishtar) were assimilated by Greco-Roman cultures, with these deities being given the same attributes and sex, even though their name and appearance changed**. In fact, it was from Ishtar/Inanna, the Mesopotamian goddesses of love and war, that the Greeks and Romans derived the goddesses **Aphrodite** (goddess of love) and **Athena** (goddess of war).

# EXPLORE FURTHER

To explore further, you can use the examples below as starting points (with the option to look for other references in class):

## MAY ZIADÉ

**May Ziadé** (1886-1940) was a Lebanese-Palestinian writer, poet and essayist. **As a pioneer of Oriental feminism and of the revival of Arabic literature**, her favourite themes were nostalgia, the dread of time passing and melancholy.

- You could read an excerpt from "Tristesse" ("Sadness"), a poem from her collection "Fleurs de rêve" ("Flowers of a dream"), published in 1910 under the pseudonym **Isis Copia**, as a class.

## MAHMOUD DARWICH

**Mahmoud Darwich** (1941-2008), Palestinian writer and poet, known for his work on the subject of exile. You could read an excerpt from "To My Mother" (1966), a poem in which the poet addresses his feelings of nostalgia for his childhood, as a class.

## OROUBAH DIEB

**Oroubah Dieb** (born in 1968) is a **Syrian visual artist** who graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts in Damascus in 1991 and **whose recurring subjects have been exile, refugee camps, women and children since she left her native country because of the war**.

- You could show one of her works (such as «Displacement I», 2020, mixed media collage) in class, and ask the class to describe the emotions they feel, as well as the story being told by the artist.

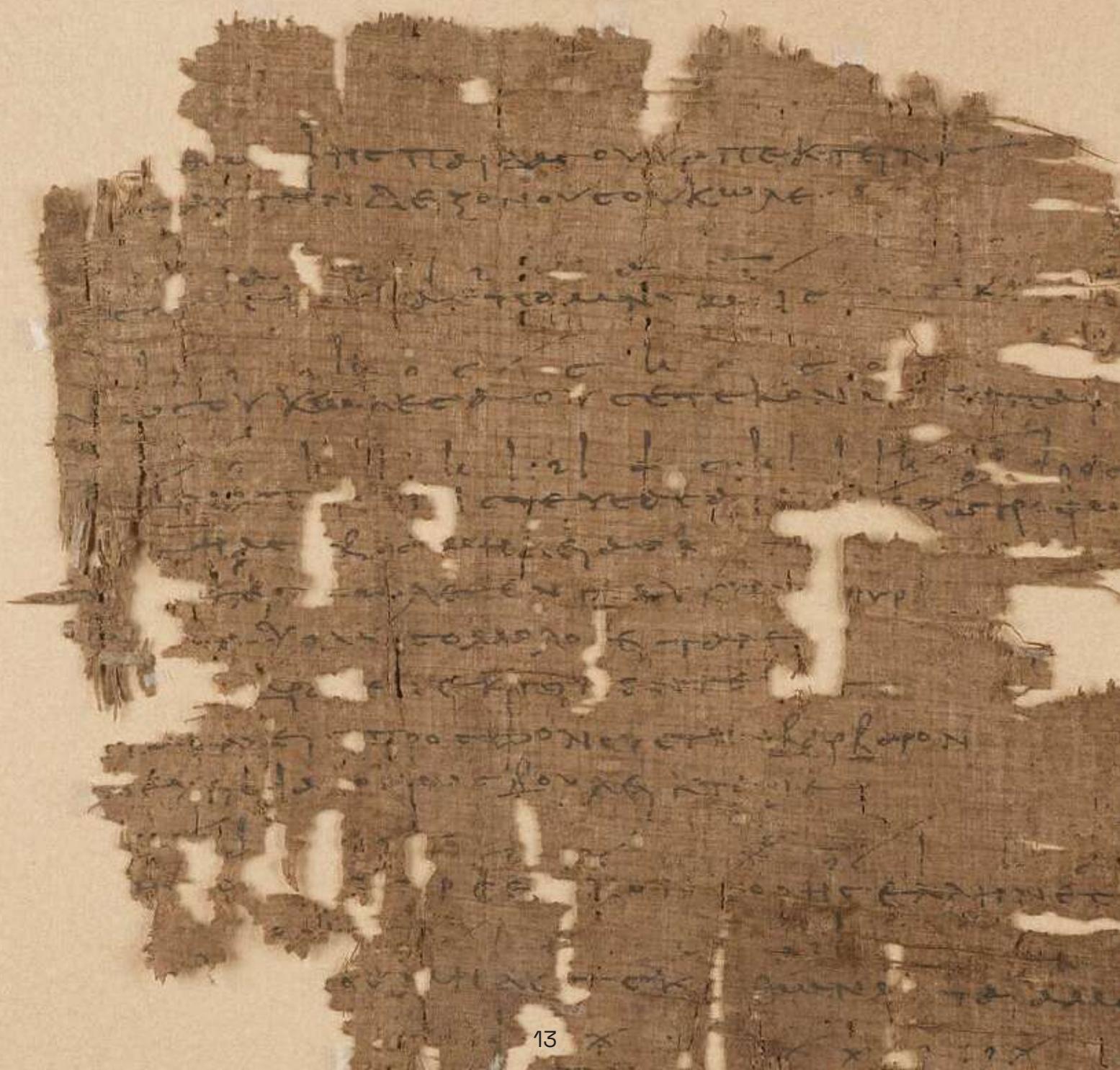
## SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY (AGES 6–15):

Design a stele in tribute to a chosen deity and draw it in large format, following the characteristics of a stele. As a reminder, a stele is an upright monument depicting one or more figures, either from the waist up or from head to toe, with inscriptions indicating their identity or containing prayers.

Equipment: A4 or A3 sheet of paper, pencils, coloured pencils, felt-tip pens

# 2. THE INVENTION OF PAPYRUS AND ITS VARIOUS USES IN ANTIQUITY

*Score from Medea by Carcinus the Younger on papyrus*



Considered **one of humanity's oldest writing media** and used for over 40 centuries, papyrus was used not only for hieroglyphs, but also for **hieratic, demotic, Greek, Coptic, Latin and Arabic writing**. A convenient writing medium, its ease of use saw it replace the clay tablets used at the time in Mesopotamia.

The papyri\* that have survived reflect the rich heritage of ancient civilisations, thanks to their many uses, including for legal and administrative texts, correspondence, literature, encyclopaedias, hymns and funerary texts.

## LITTLE GLOSSARY OF FORGOTTEN WRITING SYSTEMS!

**Hieratic:** ancient Egyptian writing system, which allowed scribes to write quickly by simplifying hieroglyphs with the use of symbols.

**Demotic:** cursive writing (handwriting with joined-up letters) system used from the 7th century BCE in Egypt to simplify hieratic writing.

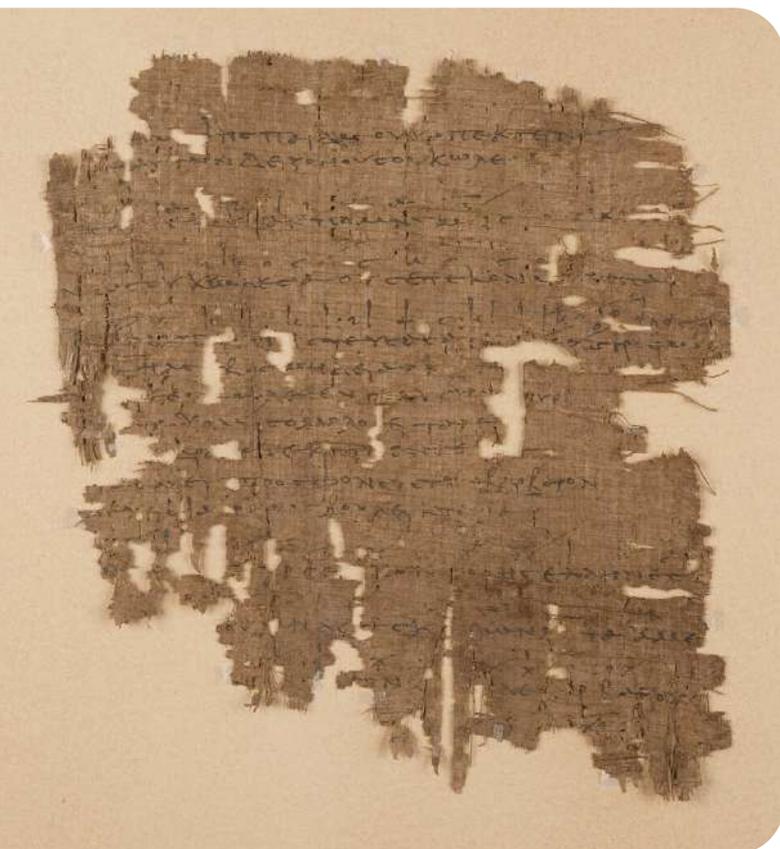
**Coptic:** writing and language derived from demotic, using the ancient Greek alphabet, and the predecessor of the language of modern-day Egypt.

# PRESENTATION OF WORK #2:

## *Score from Medea by Carcinus the Younger on papyrus*

Small in size and rediscovered around twenty years ago among a collection of Arabic, Coptic, demotic and Greek papyri, **this is an exceptional document in terms of the history of literature and music** (Fig. 6). This papyrus features 22 lines of text and music, meticulously drawn using a very fine reed pen dipped in carbon ink. **This is a copy that was made by an experienced hand and without any crossings-out**, perhaps by an artist who brought together famous arias and bravura pieces. **This papyrus thus attests to the practice in Greco-Roman Egypt of copying pieces from the classical repertoire (text and music).**

In this case, it is an excerpt from a tragedy\* **from the 4th century BCE**, entitled Medea\* and composed by **Carcinus the Younger\***. The discovery of a musical papyrus is significant, because among the hundreds of thousands of Greek papyri that are recorded to date, only just over a hundred are musical fragments. **These scores are therefore the only way to learn about Greek music in its most tangible form, because we have not found any instruments or musical treatises from that time.**



(Fig. 6) *Score from Medea by Carcinus the Younger on papyrus*, Egypt, 100–199 CE, papyrus, H. 13 cm x W. 12 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.



(Fig. 7) *Literary papyrus; Didot papyrus*, Syria, 170–160 BCE, papyrus, W. 107 cm x H. 16.7 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

This is a fragment of literary papyrus from the **2nd century BCE**, discovered in **Memphis\*** (Fig. 7). Written in Greek, it includes several excerpts from tragedies and literary texts. Among them are eight verses from *Medea*, a tragedy by Euripides\*, as well as some lines on the myth of the abduction of Europa\*.

## THE REPRESENTATION OF MUSIC IN ANCIENT ART

**As far back as we look, music seems to have always existed**, even before the invention of musical instruments, whether it be made using the clapping of hands, pieces of wood or stones. With the idea of rhythm, musical practice was certainly very quickly codified, **because it was a question of making the gods, the powerful and, finally, the people dance**. It was the Greeks in particular who were the first theorists and who attached a primordial importance to this art form; more so than to poetry or dance, for example. All that is known about music among the Greeks comes from **theoretical works on music**, works by poets and writers, as well as **depictions on vases**. In fact, we can see the important role of music among the Greeks from **pieces such as the Delphic Hymns\* to Apollo and the Ode to Aphrodite composed by Sappho (or Sapho), the greatest female Greek poet of antiquity**.



(Fig. 8) A female Greek lyric poet born on the **island of Lesbos** in the northern Aegean Sea. Her poems are almost entirely monodic\* and her only complete poem is the one addressed to Aphrodite. **Most of her poems are known to us thanks to papyri discovered in the 19th century**, in the fragments where she speaks only of her family and friends.

(Fig. 8) *James Pradier, Sappho*, France, 1848, plaster, H. 41.6 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

Another work that we can link with music is this figurine of a young girl dancing (Fig. 9). Discovered in Athens, not far from the cave dedicated to Pan\* and the nymphs, this painted terracotta figurine would represent a nymph\* (associated with Pan) or a maenad\* (associated with Dionysus\*, or even Aphrodite). The vivacity of her pose (head tilted, the mantle taut, left arm bent back) attests to the artist's desire to reflect the dancer's energy and movement.

(Fig. 9) *Figurine of a young girl dancing, called the Titeux\* dancer, Greece, 375–350 BCE, terracotta with traces of paint, H. 21 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.*



## FROM LAUGHTER TO TEARS: THE EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS

In whatever form ancient or mediaeval poems have survived (complete or fragmentary), **they reflect the movement of souls and expressions, intimately linked to religion in the ancient worlds.** The same is true of joy, which in both the Egyptian and Greek worlds was in part a collective experience. **In ancient Egypt, the celestial and nurturing goddess of joy and music Hathor\*** presided over ceremonies and festivities held in her honour.

Between 2200 and 1900 BCE, a local dynasty restored the lustre of the city of **Byblos**, present-day **Jbeil** in Lebanon. It was there, in the sanctuary of the great goddess, that small gold masks (Fig. 10) depicting the goddess with a human face were discovered.

(Fig. 10) *Mask of the goddess Hathor in gold, Lebanon, 1200 BCE–324 CE, gold, H. 12.8 cm x W. 11.6 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.*



## DID YOU KNOW?

**The distinctly universal themes of loss and heartache are also feelings that permeate the female poetic production of the Mediterranean Basin.** This can be seen in the collections of the Louvre through the various representations of mourners (Isis\* mourning Osiris\*), the funerary portraits that preserve the memory of the deceased and the funerary reliefs with the inscription «Alas!» from the site of Palmyra in Syria.

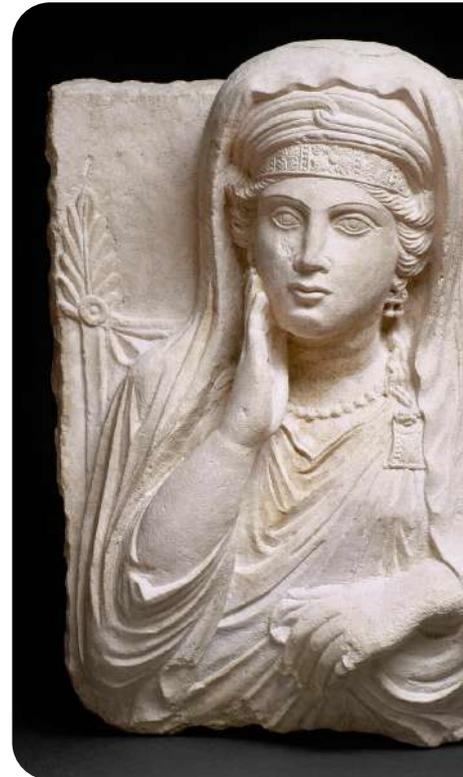


**This rare example of an earthen sculpture** (Fig. 11) could be the goddess Isis mourning her brother and husband Osiris, with her hand on her head as a sign of lamentation\* (the arm folded over the head indeed reflects the typical gesture of mourning).

(Fig. 11) *Painted terracotta female mourner*, Egypt, 1550–1425 BCE, terracotta, H. 24.3 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

Another example is this funerary relief (Fig. 12) depicting the bust of a woman, dressed in a tunic and a mantle held by a trapezoidal fibula\* surmounted by a lion's head, who is holding her hand to her cheek as a sign of affliction\*. When the Palmyrenes commemorated the deceased, they used this type of individual stele with an epitaph\* adorned with the name of the deceased, their ancestry, and the typical expression: "Alas!".

(Fig. 12) *Ummayat, daughter of Yarhai. Alas!*, Syria, 100–200 CE, limestone, H. 53 cm x W. 43 cm x D. 21 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.



Considered one of the most beautiful expressions of Greek sculpture, these small polychrome figures\* were precious objects used in temples and houses as decoration or as funerary objects. This figurine depicts a female professional mourner (Fig. 13), a person hired to feign grief at a funeral.

(Fig. 13) *Tanagra\* figurine*, Central Greece, 600 BCE, clay, H. 18.5 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

# EXPLORE FURTHER

To explore further, you can use the examples below as starting points (with the option to look for other references in class):

## ENSEMBLE KÉRYLOS

**Ensemble Kérylos was formed in 1990 by Annie Bélis. It plays Greek music just as the ancient Greeks** themselves would have heard, by reconstructing instruments true to the originals.

Link: <https://www.kerylos.fr/>

- You could have the class listen to a piece of music played by Ensemble Kérylos.

## SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY (AGES 9–15) :

Imagine and compose an epic hymn to a goddess of your choice, in the style of Sappho's poems.

• As a reminder, an epic hymn reveres a hero or heroine, glorifying their actions, qualities and achievements, in order to ask them for a favour.

Equipment: A4 sheet of paper, pencils, pens

### **Excerpt from the poem "Hymn to Venus", by Sappho :**

"Immortal Venus, throned above In radiant beauty, child of Jove, O skilled in every art of love And artful snare; Dread power, to whom I bend the knee, Release my soul and set it free From bonds of piercing agony And gloomy care. Yet come thyself, if e'er, benign, Thy listening ears thou didst incline To my rude lay, the starry shine Of Jove's court leaving, In chariot yoked with coursers fair, (...) And saidst thou thus, dread goddess? Oh, Come then once more to ease my woe (...)"

A full-length bronze statue of a woman, identified as Karomama, the Divine Adoratrice of Amon. She is depicted standing, wearing a tall, rounded headdress with a cylindrical top. Her face is serene, with dark eyes and a slight smile. She wears a long, intricately patterned dress with a wide, textured collar. Her hands are positioned in front of her chest, holding a small object. The statue is set against a plain, light gray background.

# 3. WOMEN IN ANCIENT EGYPT, BETWEEN SUBMISSION AND FREEDOM

*Statue of Karomama, Divine Adoratrice of Amon*

In antiquity and during the pharaonic period (3100–30 BCE) in particular, **Egyptian women occupied an almost equal place with men, at least in the eyes of the law. They could therefore acquire and dispose of their own property**, they could discuss their choice of husband with their father and also divorce, or even pursue certain studies (scribing, medicine, surgery).



## WHAT IS A ROYAL WIFE?

Unlike the common people, the Pharaoh could have several wives. Of those wives, one in particular had a separate title, "the great wife" or "royal wife". Considered an advisor to the king, she was the only one to bear the same attributes as the pharaoh and the deities, in addition to having a vital role in the education of the heirs to the throne.

(Fig. 14) *Fragment of a painted shroud*, Egypt, 1295–1069 BCE, linen, H. 25 cm x W. 21 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In ancient Egypt, there were high-ranking women, and even a female pharaoh, which was the highest office. Moreover, several royal wives (such as **Nefertari**, wife of Pharaoh **Rameses II**, or **Nefertiti**, wife of Pharaoh **Akhenaten**) had considerable influence over their husbands politically and diplomatically. On the other hand, they had to commit to fidelity in return, whereas men could have multiple wives without consequence.

# PRESENTATION OF WORK #3:

## *Statue of Karomama, Divine Adoratrice of Amon*

Throughout the Mediterranean Basin, in Egypt as in Greece, Lebanon and Italy, and even Tunisia, the great sanctuaries welcomed priestesses, female religious figures and the faithful who celebrated their love for the deity they worshipped. Some of them, as evidenced by the bronze statue of **Karomama** (Fig. 15), are among the masterpieces of the Louvre. Acquired in 1827 by the man who deciphered hieroglyphs for the first time, the French Egyptologist **Jean-François Champollion** (1790–1832), the inscription on its base indicates her identity: "beloved of Amon-Ra, she is his divine spouse, the Divine Adoratrice".

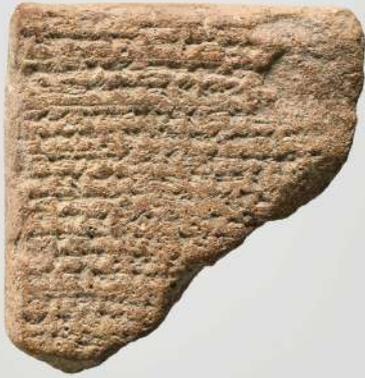
This beautifully crafted statue recalls the importance of women who, in the 9th century BCE, **served to strengthen ties between the royal power and the clergy of Amon\***, when Egypt was divided between the "priest-kings" (in the south) and the pharaohs (in the north).



(Fig. 15) *Statue of Karomama, Divine Adoratrice of Amon*, Egypt, 870 BCE, bronze, H. 64 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

## DID YOU KNOW?

There was a time in Egypt when Pharaoh Smendes (of uncertain origin), of the city of Tanis\*, took control of the north of the country, while the south of the country was controlled by the high priests of Amon in Thebes\*, who proclaimed themselves kings and accumulated vast tracts of land in order to increase their power. It was in this context that girls were sent to Thebes to become "Divine Adoratrices of Amon", and therefore the god's wives, allowing the pharaohs to keep control over the priest-kings of Thebes.



This tablet fragment (Fig. 16) is **evidence of diplomatic exchanges between Egyptian and Hittite courts**. The tablet **evokes the royal marriage between the daughter of the Hittite\* king Hattusili III (1267–1237 BCE) and Pharaoh Ramesses II (1301–1236 BCE)**. This marriage alliance\* came 13 years after the peace treaty signed following the Battle of **Kadesh\*** which, in around 1274 BCE, had ended several years of conflict between the Hittite kingdom and Egypt. Written in Akkadian, **this fragment allows us to examine the status of women (especially foreign women) in the Egyptian court, through "interdynastic marriages"**.

(Fig. 16) *Fragmentary tablet of a letter from Ramesses II to Hattusili III evoking the marriage of a daughter of the Hittite\* king to the Pharaoh, Türkiye, 1450–1190 BCE, terracotta, H. 5.7 cm x W. 5.5 cm x D. 2.4 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.*

## THE DIVINE ADORATRICES, GUARANTORS OF THE PHARAOH'S POWER

The title of «adoratrice» refers **to certain priestesses attached to the goddess Hathor** (Egyptian equivalent of Aphrodite, the goddess of love) **or to the god Amon**, around whom a true cult was formed in Thebes (southern Egypt). **In order to awaken desire among the creator gods, or to perform certain rites, many generations of Egyptian girls were chosen to become wives of Amon. Their role was paramount within the Theban clergy of Amon** because they were the representatives of the sovereigns in the Egyptian religious metropolis. With a status comparable to that of deity, **they had to remain celibate all their lives, married to the one supreme god, be surrounded by virgin singers and participate in rites in the sanctuaries.**

This sculpture (Fig. 17) underlines **the centrality of women in religion in ancient Egypt**, around the worship of Amon during this period. Held by completely different classes of Egyptian women, the title of “adoratrice” effectively designated the priestesses dedicated to the service of Amon, **powerful women with important religious and political roles.**

(Fig. 17) *Henoutideh, singer for Amon, Egypt, 1425–1400 BCE, sandstone, H. 102 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.*



# THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN WEALTHY COUPLES



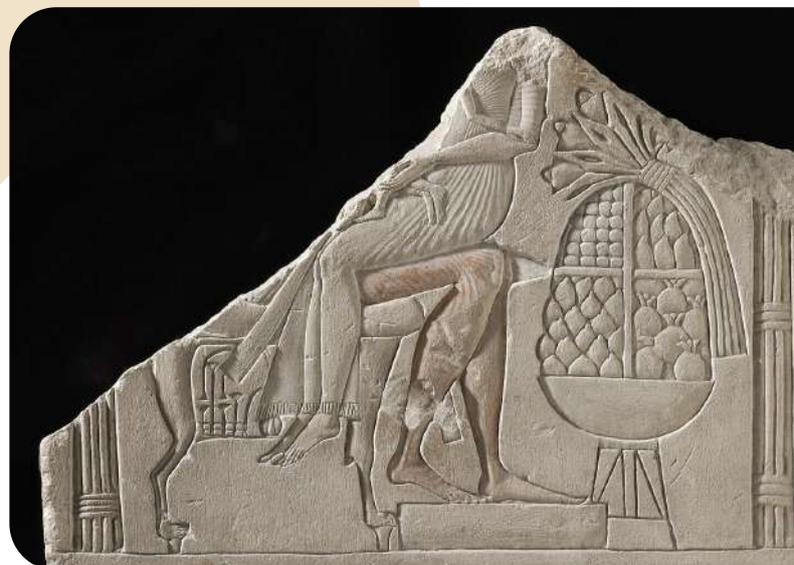
Within the household, the woman's role was, above all, that of a housewife: she managed the running of the house, the servants, and she also had to be a perfect concubine\* even though her husband could be polygamous.

(Fig. 18) The man is depicted **in motion**, which traditionally means that he is the one who works. We can compare this with the statue of Karomama, which **also portrays her in motion even though she is a woman, a sign of her importance.**

(Fig. 18) *Statue of a couple*, Egypt, 2500–2365 BCE, limestone, H. 52.8 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

Like most of the representations of couples displaying their love, this carved relief (Fig. 19) depicts family life and equality in the royal couple.

(Fig. 19) *Akhenaten, Nefertiti and their children*, Egypt, 1350–1330 BCE, limestone, H. 24.7 cm x W. 34 cm x D. 5.5 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais



# EXPLORE FURTHER

To explore further, you can use the examples below as starting points (with the option to look for other references in class):

## HATSHEPSUT

**Hatshepsut** (1508–1458 BCE), **the only female Egyptian pharaoh**, often depicted with all the attributes of the pharaoh, starting with the loincloth and postiche (false beard).

- You could show the class one of the Louvre's statues of Hatshepsut (inventory number: E 11057) and describe it with the students.

## NAWAL EL SAADAWI

**Nawal El Saadawi** (1931-2021), an Egyptian writer, reflecting the **evolution of the treatment of women in Egyptian society, and a pioneer of the emancipation of women in the Arab world**.

- You could make a link with "Memoirs of a Woman Doctor", her semi-autobiographical novel. In it, a young Egyptian woman in the 1950s is confronted with her family's lack of understanding when she announces that she wants to become a doctor instead of submitting to an arranged marriage and motherhood. Thus begins her hard work to fulfil her dreams.

## FAIROUZ

**Fairouz** (born in 1934), **a Lebanese singer, diva of the Arab world** nicknamed «the Arab soul» and «Lebanon's ambassador to the stars». Hailing from a modest Christian family in Beirut, Fairuz became known for her unique voice, her charisma and her short and nostalgic songs, in which she sings about war, exile and the dream of unity.

- You could listen to the song «Bhebbak ya Lebanon» ("I love you, O my Lebanon"), performed by Fairuz in 1973, as a class.

# 4. ETRUSCAN CIVILISATION: A CULTURAL GATEWAY

*Sarcophagus of the Spouses*



Considered the **first great pre-Roman Italic civilisation**, the Etruscan civilisation began at the end of the **12th century BCE and lasted until the 1st century BCE**. Stretching from the Po Plain to the Gulf of Salerno in the south, **the Etruscans took advantage of the opening up of markets, military alliances and their maritime presence to establish contact with other Mediterranean civilisations**, including the Greeks and Phoenicians, giving rise to artistic, artisanal and religious works at the crossroads of cultures.

## A LITTLE GEOGRAPHY?

**Italic:** term designating the peoples who inhabited the Italian peninsula, known from the 1st millennium BCE, and who were assimilated by Rome from the 3rd century BCE.

**Po Plain:** vast plain in northern Italy, including large cities such as Turin, Milan and Pavia.

**Gulf of Salerno:** part of the sea off the southwest coast of Italy.

**Phoenicia:** ancient civilisation composed of independent city-states that once extended over what is now Syria, Lebanon and northern Israel.

**Apulia:** ancient name of the Puglia region in southern Italy.



Map of Italy: the Etruscan expansion.  
©TheNationalGeographic.

# PRESENTATION OF WORK #4:

## *Sarcophagus of the Spouses*



It was in 1845 that **Giampietro Campana**, a great collector of antiques and works of art, discovered this sarcophagus (Fig. 20) in the **Etruscan necropolis\* of Cerveteri** (northwest of Rome). Evidence of the mastery of firing clay acquired by the Etruscans, this sarcophagus depicts a deceased couple, lovingly cuddled up together and taking part in a reclining banquet.

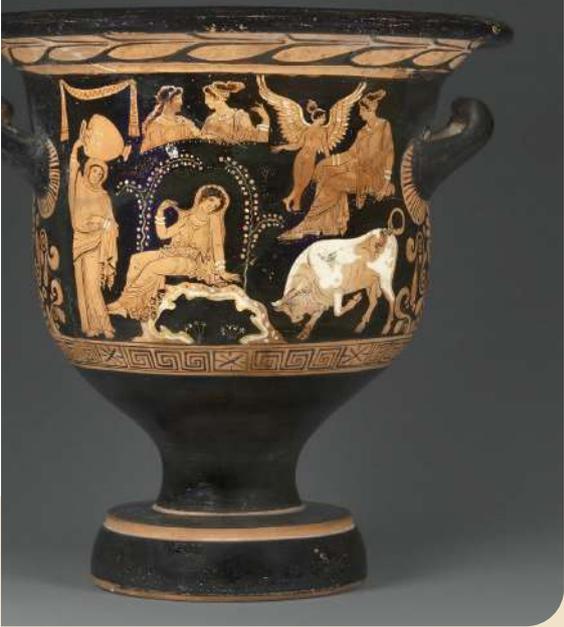
(Fig. 20) *Sarcophagus of the Spouses*, Italy, 520–510 BCE, red clay, H. 114 cm (with lid) x W. 194 cm x D. 74 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

## A RECLINING BANQUET?

This aristocratic practice derived from Greece and the Near East from the 7th century BCE, before being taken up by the Romans, had a notable difference among the Etruscans: unlike Greek women, Etruscan women participated in banquets alongside their husbands. Of great social importance, **banquets were the place for alliances, relationships between families and the celebration of important moments (festivals, birthdays, weddings, funerals etc.)**.

## DID YOU KNOW?

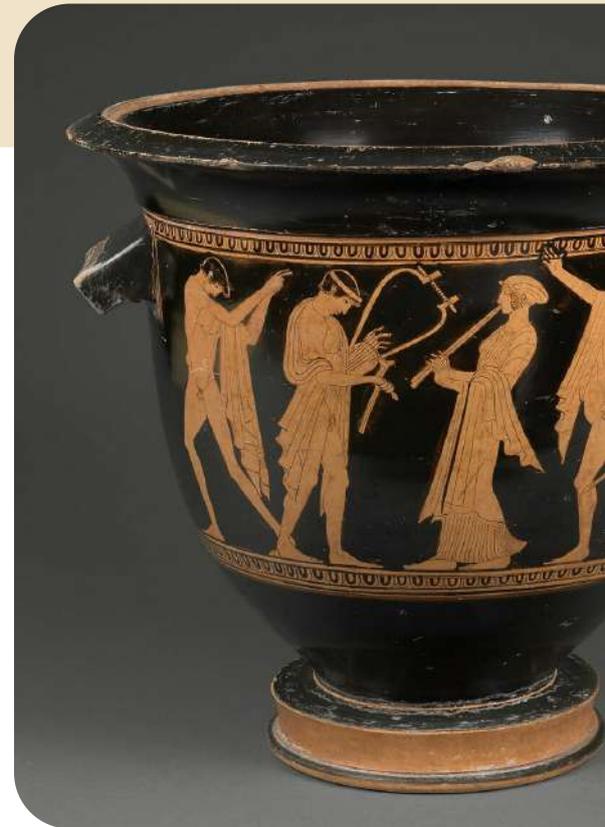
**Giampietro Campana** (1809-1880) was a great Roman bourgeois in the first half of the 19th century. He was a banker to the papacy, a passionate collector of Italian art, but also known as a thief and forger.



Of Etruscan design and used to mix wine and water, this crater (Fig. 21) shows both the dialogue with Greek art, craters being typical objects at Greek banquets, and the myth of Europa, thus illustrating the sharing that took place between cultures. **Indeed, it was in Greek mythology in the 7th century BCE that the character of Europa, a princess from Phoenicia (now Lebanon) who Zeus seduced by metamorphosing into a bull, appeared.**

(Fig. 21) *Crater, the abduction of Europa*, Apulia, circa 360 BCE, clay, H. 48 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

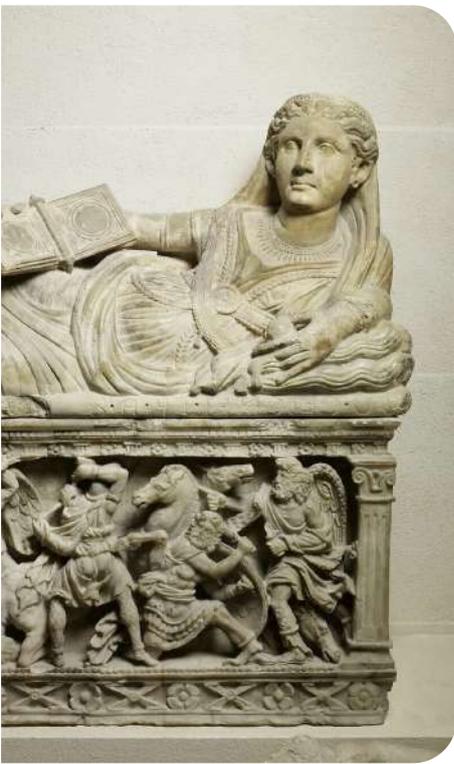
The crater pictured here (Fig. 22) is of Greek origin, which highlights the dialogue between Greek and Etruscan cultures, in this case the process known as technology transfer\*.



(Fig. 22) *Crater*, Apulia, circa 460 BCE, clay, H. 37 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

## A GREATER ROLE FOR ETRUSCAN WOMEN

**Etruscan women enjoyed much greater freedom of action than their Greek or Roman counterparts.** Although they remained subordinate\* to their husbands and never ruled in the Etruscan world, they could do things like go out, take part in banquets (a practice then reserved for aristocrats), freely attend games, participate in political life, have priestly functions and drink wine. Moreover, Etruscan women were considered to be free individuals in their own right, thus enjoying better legal status than women in the rest of the Mediterranean. **In the absence of Etruscan literary sources, it is mainly the archaeological material\* found during excavations in Etruscan tombs and necropolises that testifies to women's particular social prestige.**



Pictured here is a **cinerary urn\*** (Fig. 23), **very common in Greek and Etruscan funerary works**. Intended to hold the ashes of the dead, decorated with a relief on the front face and an effigy of the deceased on the lid, this cinerary urn depicts **Larthi Ceicnei Prenthrei**, a 25-year-old woman, **in a traditionally rather masculine posture (man at a banquet) and holding a book, which means that she had some education**.

(Fig. 23) *Master of Myrtilus, Urn lid*, Italy, alabaster, 175–150 BCE, H. 48 cm x W. 79 cm x D. 33 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

## ETRUSCAN HERITAGE IN ROMAN CULTURE

Characterised by a lifestyle **imbued with refinement and expertise**, as evidenced by their craftsmanship, knowledge of precious metals and stones, architecture and heritage, Etruscan culture left an extraordinary cultural legacy that made its mark on ancient Rome. **The Etruscans were gradually assimilated by the Roman Empire, between the 4th and 1st centuries BCE**. They were known to be skilled navigators and refined craftsmen, who retained their own culture while incorporating works, cults and uses from the rest of the Mediterranean. **Their extraordinary heritage was actually retained by the Romans:** not only did their attributes become symbols of Roman authority (curule chair, lictors' fasces, toga, bulla), but the Romans also worshipped the same deities as the etruscans, simply changing their names or some of their attributes.

## SYMBOLS OF ROMAN AUTHORITY

**Curule chair:** of Etruscan tradition, this chair became one of the major symbols of power in Rome, reserved initially for magistrates before becoming one of the attributes of the emperor under Augustus (63 BCE–14 CE). **Lictors' fasces:** in antiquity, an axe surrounded by a bundle of wooden rods, which was a symbolic object and punishment tool carried by lictors (public officials) in front of certain Roman magistrates. **Toga:** large piece of seamless woollen fabric worn over clothes by Roman citizens in antiquity. **Bulla:** round pendant in gold (for the rich) or leather (for the poor) worn in ancient Rome as a protective amulet.

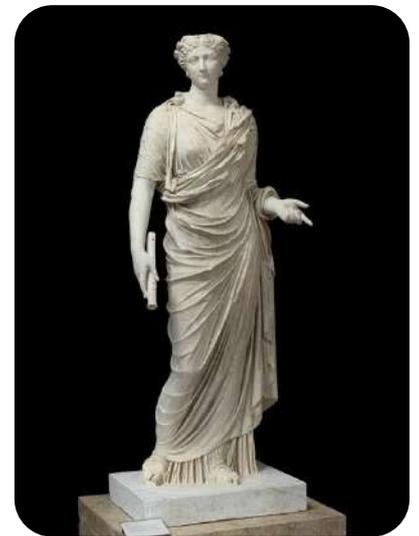
## SOME EXAMPLES:



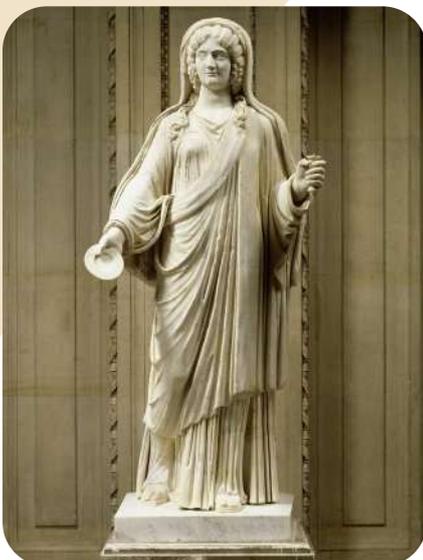
**Venus\*** is a Roman deity who shares the characteristics of **Turan\***, her equivalent for the Etruscans (goddess of love, beauty, fertility and health), **which attests to the closeness between these cultures.**

(Fig. 24) *Venus de Milo*, Greece, 2nd century BCE, marble, H. 204 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

Wife of Emperor **Augustus** (63 BCE–14 CE), **Livia** (58/59 BCE–29 CE) is depicted here as **Ceres** (Fig. 25), who was the Roman goddess of agriculture, the harvest and fertility (counterpart of the Greek goddess **Demeter**). Emperor Augustus used **the sterility of their union as a propaganda tool to extol the model of the Roman matron\*** (chaste, virtuous, confined to the domestic sphere). **The first empress to be deified\* after her death**, she was said to have been a good wife, after 52 years of marriage.



(Fig. 25) *Statue of Livia as Ceres*, Italy, 25–50 CE, marble, H. 199 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.



A Roman empress of Syrian origin, **Julia Domna** (160–217 CE) is shown here sculpted to appear as a priestess of **Isis\*** (Fig. 26), an Egyptian goddess whose cult had developed in Rome during the 1st century CE. **This sculpture provides a counterpoint to the relegation of women to the domestic sphere and their loss of political power.** Indeed, Julia Domna became an **empress with an important role, in addition to being considered a goddess.**

(Fig. 26) *Julia Domna*, Greece, 193–209 CE, marble, H. 202 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais

# EXPLORE FURTHER

To explore further, you can use the examples below as starting points (with the option to look for other references in class):

## CHRISTINE DE PIZAN

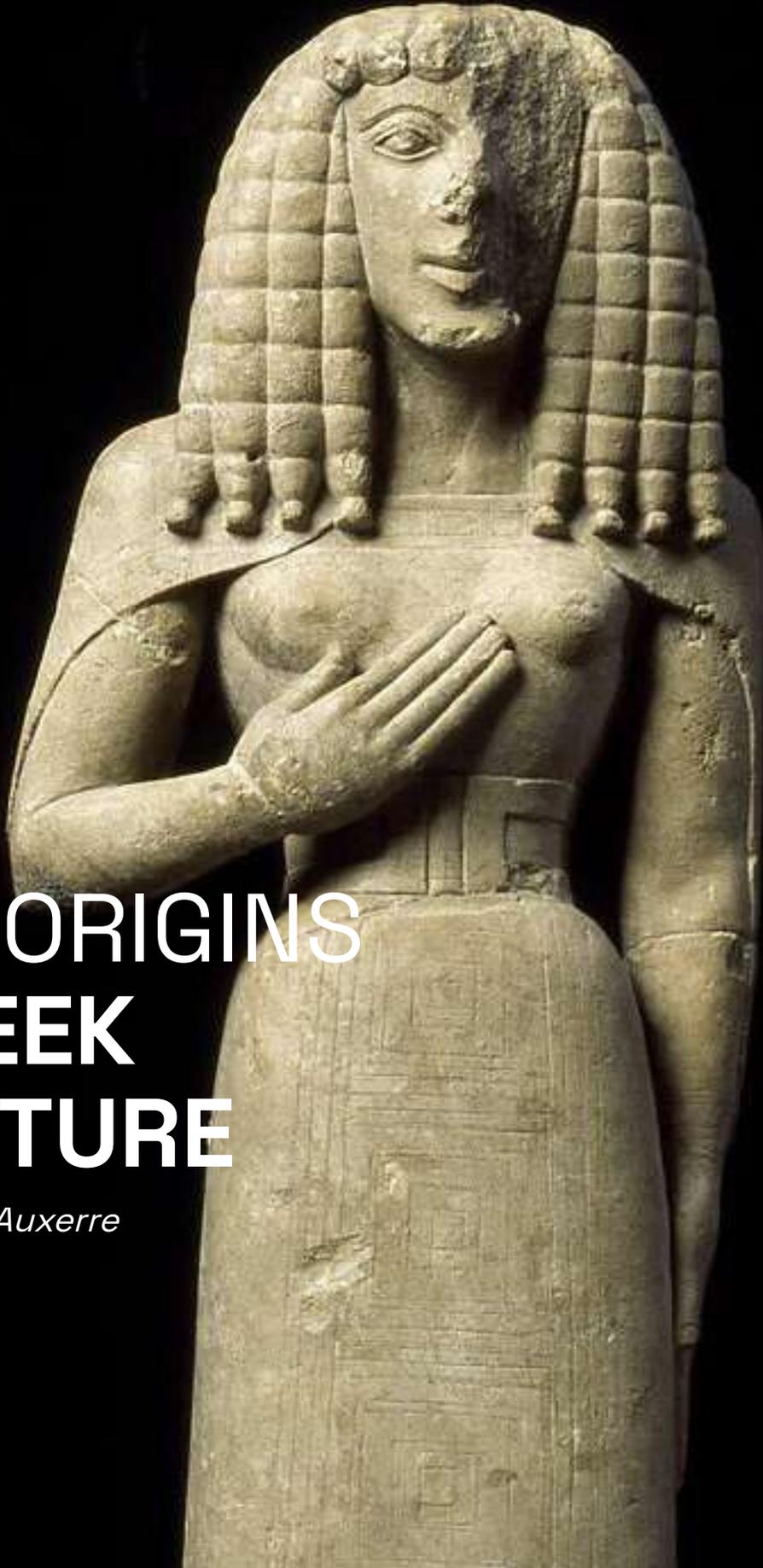
**Christine de Pizan** (1364/1365–1430) was a mediaeval poet believed to be **the first French female author to have successfully earned a living from her writing**. She wrote texts extolling the virtues of Tanaquil (an Etruscan noblewoman who lived in the 6th century BCE).

- You could read an excerpt from Christine de Pizan's "La Cité des dames", (The City of Ladies) chapter 45, in which she refers to **Tanaquil** (also called **Gaia Caecilia**) as a praiseworthy woman, who was very discerning, as well as virtuous, loyal and good, making her an example for Roman women to follow.

## BAYA

**Baya** (1931-1998), was an Algerian painter who studied at the Museum of Fine Arts in Algiers. Her favourite subjects **were women and their representations** (with flowers, everyday objects, musical instruments, furniture, fruits etc.).

- You could show the class one of Baya's paintings (for example "Conte 1: La dame dans sa belle maison" [Tale 1: The lady in her beautiful house], 1947, gouache on paper, 24 x 31 cm, Aix-en-Provence) and ask the class to describe the colours and the emotions it makes them feel.

A marble statue of a young woman, Kore, standing and facing forward. She has long, wavy hair and is wearing a long, patterned dress. Her right hand is raised to her chest, and her left hand is at her side. The statue is set against a dark background.

# 5. THE ORIGINS OF GREEK SCULPTURE

*Kore, The Lady of Auxerre*

Although few original Greek works have survived, there are enough originals, fragments and copies to give us an idea of their quality and quantity.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Before 650 BCE, life-size stone sculptures were not made,** and it was at that time that Pharaoh **Psamtik I** (664–610 BCE) allowed two groups of Greeks to settle along the Nile. That is how the **Greeks learnt the art of large-scale stone sculpture from the Egyptians,** except they used limestone and marble (more easily accessible in Greece) rather than the porphyry and granodiorite favoured by the Egyptians.

## GREEK ART

The earliest Greek period dedicated to sculpted art was the Archaic period\*. This was when the **Daedalic** style flourished, which was named after the architect Daedalus, who the Greeks believed to be the inventor of the labyrinth in which the **Minotaur\*** was imprisoned. Characteristics of the works from this period **include the elongated and triangular face, almond-shaped eyes and Egyptian hairstyle** (triangular wig), as seen in the "kouros" or "kouros" (statue of a nude man with long hair and well-developed muscles) and **its feminine counterpart, the "kore" or "core"** (statue of a dressed woman, standing with her legs together and presenting an object for a deity).

## THE DIFFERENT ROCKS

**Porphyry:** igneous rock (rock that forms when magma from a volcano cools and solidifies) that is very hard, contains clusters of feldspar crystals and is purple, reddish, greyish or brownish in colour. It was once considered a symbol of longevity among Egyptians. **Granodiorite:** igneous rock containing crystals, with a composition that lies between granite and diorite, and which is grey-pink in colour. **Limestone:** a sedimentary rock that is soft and easy to carve. Sculptors in Egyptian and Greek antiquity made extensive use of it.

# PRESENTATION OF WORK #5:

*Kore, The Lady of Auxerre*



A Greek limestone statue dating from the 7th century BCE, the "Lady of Auxerre" (Fig. 27) is a masterpiece of Greek art in the **Daedalic style**. It depicts a woman dressed in a long sheath dress\* that is tightened at the waist by a wide belt, and her hairstyle evokes the Egyptian fashion. **The statue has a "raw" appearance, with the exception of some traces of red paint on the bust. However, we know that it was once painted because we can still distinguish the incised preparatory lines of the polychrome decoration that has since disappeared.** Its style places it at the heart of artistic exchanges between Egypt on the one hand and **Cycladic art\*** on the other, which is particularly evident in the **frontality and the imposing hairstyle**, which are of Egyptian influence.

(Fig. 27) *Kore, The Lady of Auxerre*, Greece, 630 BCE, limestone, H. 75 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

## MYTHS AND FEMALE FIGURES

The history of the discovery of Cycladic statuettes\* dates back to the beginning of the 19th century. The majority of them were made of marble, depicted the heads and bodies of nude women, were not very wide and showed only the nose in relief. **It is believed that these statuettes, depicting female figures with opulent\* and stereotyped\* forms, dating from the early Bronze Age (3200–2400 BCE) and made in the Greek archipelago of the Cyclades, were key elements of religious\* life of the time,** perhaps serving to accompany the dead, help them participate in rites of passage, or symbolically protect the home. **For lack of a better term, they have been described as idols\*, even if their function is yet to be confirmed.**



Considered the **Mona Lisa of Cycladic art** (Fig. 28), this idol head is one of the Louvre's masterpieces, and its influence extended to the **avant-garde artists of the 20th century such as Picasso, Modigliani and Brancusi**. Imposing in its size, impressive in its purity\*, smooth, and undoubtedly finished with colour at the time (make-up, tattoos etc.), **this idol head evokes the origins of Greek sculpture and also the worshipping of female fertility idols.**

(Fig. 28) *Head from Keros\**, Greece, 2630–2400 BCE, marble, H. 27 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

**The steles of Tanit, on the other hand, are better documented.** The Department of Near Eastern Antiquities at the Louvre houses more than 1420 of them, which come from **Carthage** (in Tunisia) and testify to the Punic\* civilisation that developed there during the Iron Age (between 800 BCE and the end of the 1st century CE). **Widely documented in Tunisia and beyond, in several centres of the Syro-Palestinian region,** this type of production was dedicated to Tanit, the Punic and Numidian\* goddess of fertility, who was **symbolised by a triangle with a horizontal line at the top that is in turn surmounted by a circle.**



This Punic stele (Fig. 29) is decorated with **engraved or embossed motifs and an inscription** including a dedicator\*, **their ancestry and the tutelary deities\* of Carthage** : the goddess Tanit (responsible for ensuring fertility, births and growth, and representing feminine beauty) and the god **Baal Hammon\***. Represented by geometric shapes (triangle and circle), she is holding a caduceus\* in her left hand and overlooking a swimming dolphin. **It is one of the relics of a cult that still raises questions today.**

(Fig. 29) *Stele of Tanit*, Tunisia, 200–0 BCE, limestone, H. 56 cm x W. 19.5 cm x D. 7.5 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN - Grand Palais.

## COLOUR IN ANCIENT ART: EMBELLISHING STATUES AND INDIVIDUALS

Like the Egyptians, the Greeks partially or fully embellished their works. It was thus common for sculpted figures, especially female ones, **to be enhanced with metal** (for hair and eyelashes), **glass, ivory and coloured stone inlays\*** (for eyes) **and paint** (facial details, clothing). Female statues were also supplemented with jewellery (earrings, diadems, necklaces, arm bands), while athletes and warriors were **equipped with objects** (crowns, spears, shields, swords).

The statues of **Sepa** and his wife **Nesa** (Fig. 30) are among the most famous Egyptian statues representing notables\* in life-size form (over 1.69 m high), **at a time when only pharaohs enjoyed this privilege**. In a static position, with a figure-hugging dress that accentuates the pubic\* region (and therefore the fertile and maternal aspect), **this statue presents an idealised and timeless image of youth**. **Traces of green paint indicate the presence of make-up based on ground malachite\* powder (kohl)**.

(Fig. 30) *Statue of Nesa*, Egypt, 2700–2620 BCE, limestone, H. 154.5 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN - Grand Palais



This statue represents **Polyhymnia** (Fig. 31), a Greek muse of eloquence and rhetoric\*. Despite its modern repainting\* on the torus\* and the column, **this clay statue shows many traces of the original paint (red for the hair, lips and eyelids, pink on the drapery and eyes, Egyptian blue previously on the drapery)**, **which raises the subject of polychromy on ancient sculptures**.

(Fig. 31) *Muse*, Asia Minor, 100 BCE, clay, H. 30 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

Colour in ancient statuary art raises the question of make-up in everyday life, **since the sculptures were extensions of the beliefs and practices of the time.**

This cup (Fig. 32) with a hollow base is surmounted by a frustoconical belly\* on which a female face is depicted in relief. A **black glaze\*** was used for the eyes, eyebrows joining in the middle, and the three strands of hair styled in the form of a "kiss curl" on the forehead and cheeks.

(Fig. 32) *Cup with female face*, Syria, 1200–1150 BCE, earthenware, H. 16.2 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.



## DID YOU KNOW?

In Mesopotamia, make-up was used by both men and women, although generally more so by women. Figurative representations, especially when traces of their polychromy are preserved, testify to regular use of make-up, especially within royal courts.



This mirror consists of a disc, **one of the faces of which is reflective while the other bears mythological decoration**, surrounded by several thin engraved concentric\* lines. Here **Leda** is shown sitting on a rock, with a swan with outstretched wings in front of her, laying its leg on her knees. This iconography refers to the myth in which the god **Jupiter** metamorphoses into a swan to seduce the young and beautiful mortal. **This allusion to feminine beauty fits well with this particularly luxurious grooming utensil, common in Campania\* at the beginning of the empire.**

(Fig. 33) *Mirror depicting Leda and the Swan*, Italy, 25 BCE–50 CE, silver, H. 28.8 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais

# EXPLORE FURTHER

To explore further, you can use the examples below as starting points (with the option to look for other references in class):

## AMEDEO MODIGLIANI

**Amedeo Modigliani** (1884-1920), a **20th-century Italian artist** whose art has often been described as influenced by the Cycladic art that was rediscovered at the beginning of the 20th century (which can be seen through his use of simplified, stylised shapes, egg-shaped heads etc.).

- You could show a painting of a woman painted by Modigliani (such as "Jeanne Hebuterne in a large hat", 1918, oil on canvas, Private collection) and compare it with the Cycladic idols from the Louvre.

## ZHANG YUNYAO

**Zhang Yunyao** (born 1985), is a **Chinese contemporary artist** who produced an interpretation of the famous head from Keros.

- You could show a piece by Yunyao inspired by the Cyclades (such as "Study in Two Heads (Inceptions)", 2021, pencil, coloured pencil, pastel on felt, (227 cm x 175 cm) and describe the work with the class.

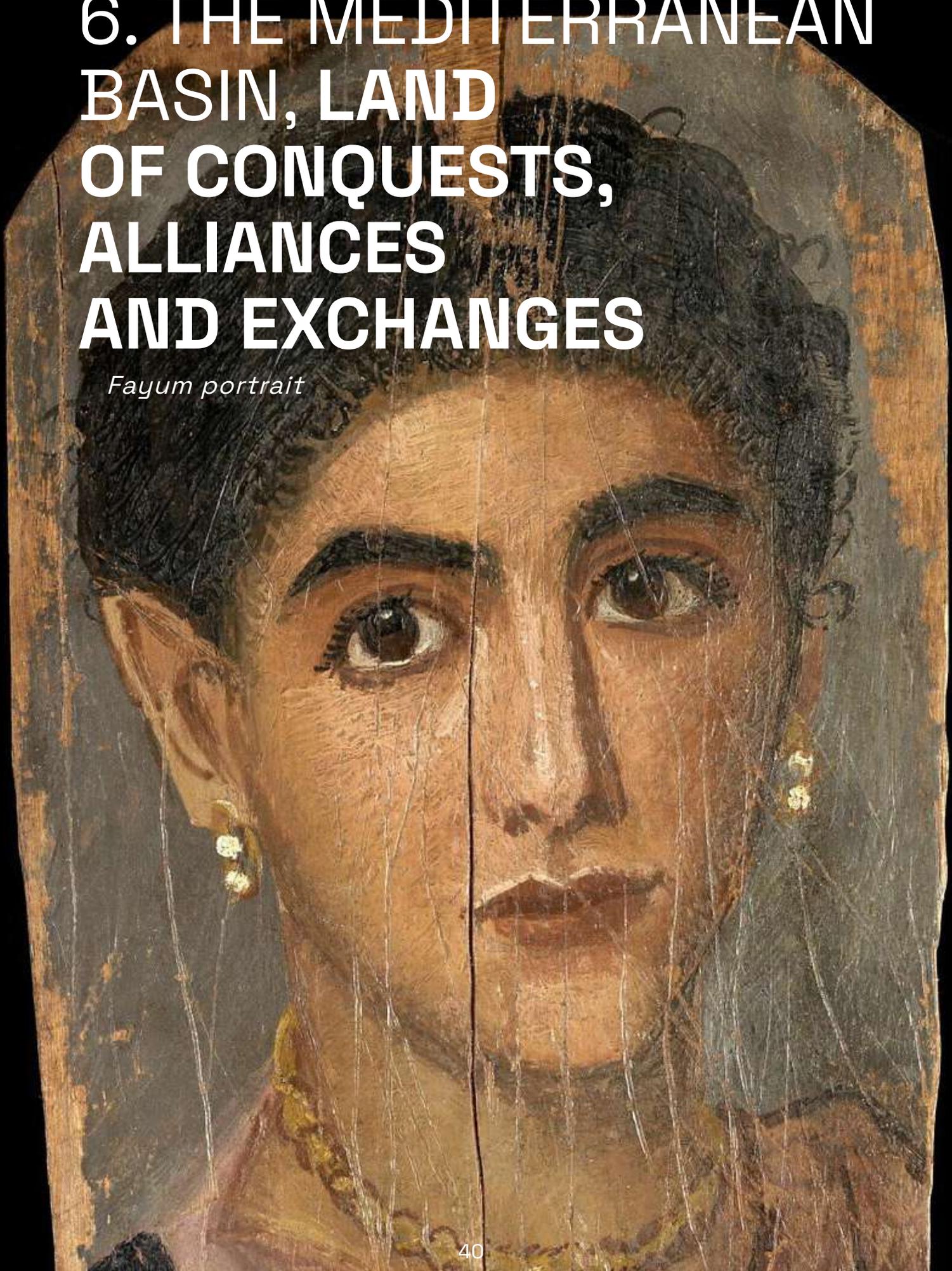
## SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY (AGES 6–15) :

Download a black and white drawing of the Lady of Auxerre, print it, and ask the students to imagine the decorations of the dress and the colours of the hair and make-up etc. Then, at the end of the activity, show the class the restoration by the University of Cambridge (available by [clicking here](#)).

Equipment: printer, A4 sheets of paper, felt-tip pens, coloured pencils

# 6. THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN, LAND OF CONQUESTS, ALLIANCES AND EXCHANGES

*Fayum portrait*





Map of the Roman Empire from the end of the 1st century BCE.  
 ©Secrétariat Général pour l'administration du Ministère des armées (general secretariat for administration of the French ministry of the armed forces).

After conquering Italy around the **3rd century BCE** at the time of its victory in the second Punic War, **Rome was led to intervene further and further in the Mediterranean Basin, until it had secured full control at the end of the 1st century BCE.** By setting up various colonies\*, from Sicily to Spain and North Africa to England, the Roman Empire marked its presence in the four corners of the continent, and experienced its golden age under the reign of **Emperor Trajan** (98–117 CE).

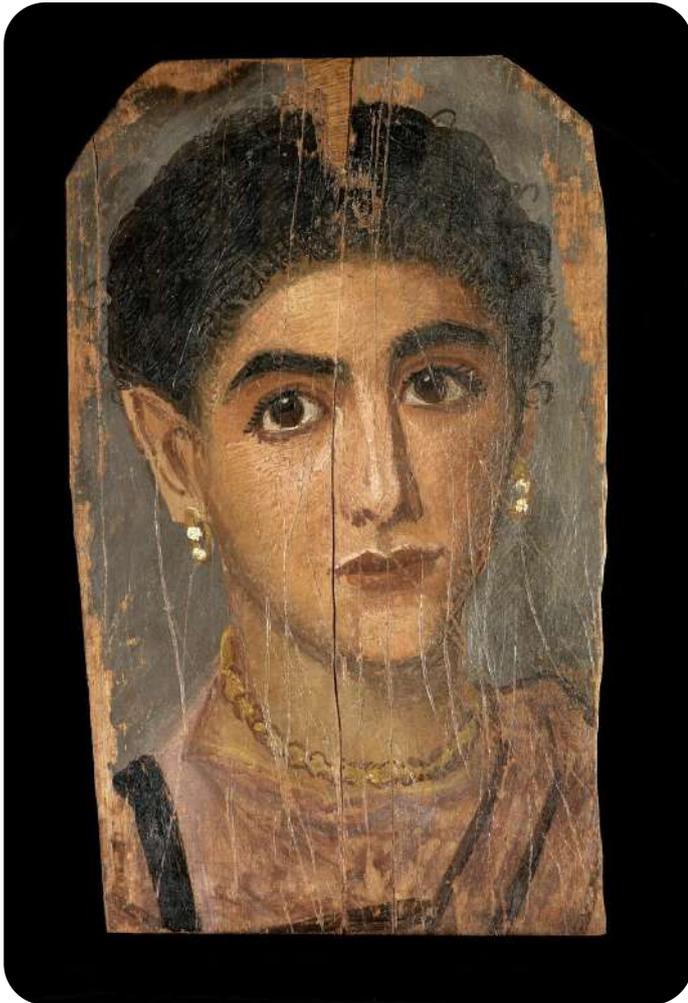
At that time, this immense empire comprised very distant countries and peoples, **gradually united around the same Roman culture.** This "**romanisation\***" of local populations saw them adopt the same lifestyles, language, culture, architecture (temples, forums, public baths, arenas etc.), religion and so on.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In the empire, women had certain freedoms, although they were not equal to men. They belonged to the social class of their husband, were treated like minors and were either under the guardianship of their father or their husband. **It should be noted, however, that married women were more respected than others because they were considered to be the keepers of the household.**

# PRESENTATION OF WORK #6:

## *Fayum portrait*



The Fayum portraits were named after Fayum, where they were discovered, which was an ancient rich agricultural and military province during the Roman occupation of Egypt. This portrait painted on wood (Fig. 34) and produced during the model's lifetime allowed the traditional Egyptian funerary mask to be replaced with an effigy of the deceased placed on her mummy. Being a part of a series of works remarkably well preserved by the dry Egyptian climate, **it is one of the oldest painted portraits from antiquity.**

(Fig. 34) *Fayum portrait*, Egypt, 117–138 CE, lime wood, H. 33 cm x W. 20 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.

Depicting members of the middle and upper classes of Egyptian society, this type of portrait showed individuals of Greek and Egyptian culture, **but dressed and styled in the fashion of Rome** (with the hair parted in the middle and ears uncovered). Thus, by blending the tradition of Egyptian funerary rites (mummies) with Greek pictorial heritage (naturalism\*) and Roman fashion, **this portrait illustrates the interbreeding\* of cultures in post-Alexandrian\* Egypt.**

## CLASHES THAT PROMOTE ENCOUNTERS

Among the many Mediterranean cities that were gradually assimilated to the Roman Empire, we can look at, for example, the case of **Palmyra**. Located in the northwest of the Syrian desert, **the oasis\* of Palmyra reached its peak in Greco-Roman times**. As a former nerve centre\* of a great empire, Palmyra was integrated into the Roman Empire in around 19 BCE, as part of the Roman province of Syria. That explains why it acquired **typical elements of Rome: marketplaces, colonnades\*, temples, theatres and public baths**. The Roman influences there were thus undeniable, **both in everyday life and in cultural and religious practices, as evidenced by many Palmyrene funerary portraits**.



The portrait from Palmyra (Fig. 35) demonstrates **the extent of the Roman Empire** and the number of cultures over which its power was exercised. **Indeed, the very type of portrait as a bust cut at the waist is foreign to Near Eastern art** (rather, it is found in Roman art), while the subject is depicted in a Palmyrene style, as it has a strict frontality\* characteristic of that culture.

(Fig. 35) *Portrait from Palmyra*, Syria, 200–300 CE, limestone, H. 52 cm x W. 58 cm x D. 21 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais

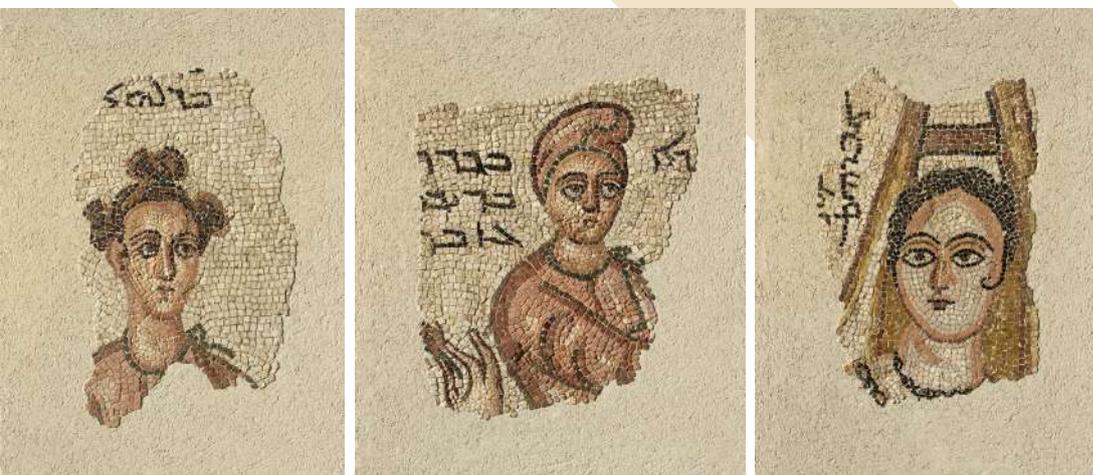
This make-up spoon (Fig. 36) shows that hygiene and beauty practices were similar in the Mediterranean Basin.

(Fig. 36) *Make-up spoon*, Mediterranean region, 1550–1425 BCE, wood, H. 22 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN Grand Palais.



## THE MEDITERRANEAN UNDER ROMAN RULE

As part of its imperial domination in the Mediterranean, which lasted until the 3rd century CE, **Rome brought about a unification of the regions around the principle of "romanisation"**; in other words, **inhabitants of the Roman Empire could enjoy the benefits of Roman authority (and above all peace) if the elites adhered to Roman culture.** The Roman conquest also accelerated cultural and linguistic exchanges across much of the Mediterranean, especially on the western side, before the fall of the Roman Empire in **476 CE** led the Byzantine Empire\* to continue this transfer, this time in the eastern Mediterranean.



(Fig. 37 à 39) *Fragments of mosaics, Türkiye, from left to right, 200–400 CE, and 100–300 CE, stone. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.*

These different funerary portraits (Fig. 37 to 39) **illustrate the dialogue between cultures**, with the permeability\* of artistic representations and practices.

This relief\* (Fig. 40) shows a man (the deceased) reclining on a couch while attending a banquet, accompanied by his wife who is sitting next to him on cushions. **The banquet was a component of funerary iconography\* in Palmyra as a practice that was borrowed from the Greco-roman world.** This work shows the **extent of the Roman Empire and the permeability of cultures in terms of their rites and representations**, as well as the similarities with the Fayum portraits in terms of style, make-up and jewellery.



(Fig. 40) *Funerary relief from Palmyra, Syria, 200–250 CE, limestone, H. 43 x W. 63 x D. 18 cm. Paris, Louvre Museum. ©RMN-Grand Palais.*

# EXPLORE FURTHER

To explore further, you can use the examples below as starting points (with the option to look for other references in class):

## SAMIA HALABY

**Samia Halaby** (born 1936), is a **Palestinian abstract painter** whose work is inspired by European abstraction as well as pictorial representations from her native country, which can be compared with the cultural exchanges discussed in this section. The artist draws inspiration from both nature and art history (from Islamic architecture to the Soviet avant-garde).

- You could show the class a painting by Samia Halaby (such as "New York", 1978, 61 x 61 cm) and discuss it with the class (composition, colours, impressions felt, link with the title, emotions etc.).

## MARGUERITE YOURCENAR

**Marguerite Yourcenar** (1903-1987), was the first female writer to be elected to the Académie française, in particular for her 1951 work "Mémoires d'Hadrien" ("Memoirs of Hadrian"). In this historical novel, she recounts the travels of **Emperor Hadrian** (76-138 CE) in his conquest of the Mediterranean Basin, which can be compared with the curiosity and exchanges between the cultures discussed in this section.

- You could read an excerpt from "Mémoires d'Hadrien" (for example the paragraph from the chapter «Saeculum Aureum» that begins "I kept him on after the others had gone [...]" and ends "His voice was low, and his Greek had the accent of Asia").

## SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY (AGES 6-15) :

Print out half of the Fayum portrait in colour onto an A4 sheet and have the class continue the work, following the lines, colours and shapes inferred.

Equipment: printer, A4 sheet of paper, felt-tip pens, coloured pencils



# GLOSSARY

The glossary defines the terms marked with an asterisk (\*) in the order they appear in the text

# 1. MESOPOTAMIA, CRADLE OF CIVILISATION

**City-state:** in the past, a city-state was an independent territory, controlled by a sovereign. It was the precursor of today's cities. **Sumerian:** people who lived in southern Mesopotamia between 4100 and 1750 BCE. **High Priestess:** in Mesopotamian religion, the high priest or high priestess took care of the administration of temples (houses of the deities) and made daily offerings to the deities etc.

**Sin:** the god of the moon in Sumerian mythology. **Ur:** one of the oldest and most important cities in ancient Mesopotamia (now Tell al-Muqayyar in Iraq). **Autobiography:** literary and artistic genre in which an individual gives an account of their own life. **Metaphorical:** relating to a metaphor, i.e. an image or an analogy (comparison) used for a poetic purpose. **Priestly:** relating to the priesthood or specific to priests and priestesses. **Enki:** Sumerian god of fresh and flowing water, fertility and knowledge. **Ninmah:** Goddess who participated with her husband, the god Enki, in the creation of humanity, according to Sumerian texts. **Akkadian:** people who lived in Akkad, a Mesopotamian kingdom founded by King Sargon (father of Enheduanna) circa 2325–2190 BCE. **Assimilation:** in sociology, a process by which a foreigner or a minority integrates into a broader social group by adopting its cultural characteristics. **Arbela:** ancient Akkadian city in Mesopotamia.

# 2. THE INVENTION OF PAPYRUS AND ITS VARIOUS USES IN ANTIQUITY

**Papyri:** plural of the word «papyrus», used only for ancient manuscripts. **Aria:** term originally meaning any expressive melody, often sung. **Tragedy:** theatrical genre originating in ancient Greece, characterised by the gravity of its language and a set of actions leading to the death of one or more of its characters. **Medea:** a character from Greek mythology, Medea played a decisive role in the myth of the Argonauts (she helps Jason, hero of the Argonauts, in his quest for the Golden Fleece). **Carcinus the Younger:** Athenian tragic poet who lived around 380/360 BCE. **Memphis:** founded circa 3100 BCE and located south of the Nile, Memphis was the first capital of ancient Egypt (until 2040 BCE). **Euripides:** born in 480 BCE and died in 406 BCE, Euripides was one of the three great tragedians of classical Athens, along with Aeschylus and Sophocles. **The myth of the abduction of Europa:** Europa was a Phoenician (present-day Lebanon) princess whom Zeus coveted. Zeus decided to transform himself into a white bull in order to abduct her and flee with her across the sea. Her story is the source of the Greek myth of Europa, explaining the creation of the continent of Europe as opposed to Asia. **Delphic hymns:** these are two musical compositions dedicated to the Greek god Apollo (god of the arts, song, music, masculine beauty and poetry) that were discovered in 1893 in Delphi, Greece. **Monodic:** with a single voice (opposite of polyphonic). **Titeux:** named after Auguste Titeux, who was behind the discovery of the statuette. **Pan:** in Greek mythology, the god of nature, protector of shepherds and flocks. **Nymph:** a generic term for minor deities in Greco-Roman mythology. **Maenad:** in Greek mythology, maenads are the women who accompany the procession of the god Dionysus. **Dionysus:** in Greek mythology, Dionysus is the god of wine, festivity and vines. **Hathor:** in Egyptian mythology, Hathor is the goddess of love, beauty, music, motherhood and joy. **Isis:** depicted as a woman wearing a throne on her head, in Egyptian mythology Isis is the magician, the faithful wife and protector of children. **Osiris:** in Egyptian mythology, Osiris is the brother of Isis, and the god who invented agriculture and religion. **Lamentation:** outward expression of grief in an audible and prolonged manner, sometimes of a religious and ritual nature. **Fibula:** metal brooch or clasp used to fasten clothing. **Affliction:** feeling of deep sadness, distress and pain caused by an unfortunate event. **Epitaph:** funerary inscription on a tombstone or funerary monument to commemorate the deceased person. **Tanagra:** ancient Greek city where many small terracotta figurines were made between the 6th and 3rd centuries BCE. **Polychrome:** having various colours (the opposite of monochrome).

### 3. WOMEN IN ANCIENT EGYPT, BETWEEN SUBMISSION AND FREEDOM

**Amon:** essential deity in the Egyptian pantheon, considered the god of the gods for bringing about the creation of the world and of life. During the 13th dynasty (between the 19th and 17th centuries BCE), his cult took on considerable importance and became omnipresent throughout the country. **Tanis:** located in the Nile Delta, northeast of Cairo, Tanis (present-day San el-Hagar) was the capital of the 21st and 22nd dynasties (circa 1069–664 BCE). **Thebes:** an ancient Egyptian city located on the eastern bank of the Nile, Thebes (present-day Luxor) was the capital during the Middle and New Kingdoms, and the main city of the god Amon. **Hittite:** people of antiquity established in Anatolia, Asia Minor, from the 19th to the 12th century BCE. The term is derived from «Hatti», the name of the region in which the Hittite people established their principal kingdom. The Hittites are considered the ancestors of the Turks. **Marriage alliance:** when a union is sealed by a marriage. **Battle of Kadesh:** a battle fought between the Egyptians and the Hittites (people of Central Anatolia) in the 13th century BCE, considered by historians as the largest battle involving chariots in antiquity. **Interdynastic marriage:** a practice whereby many rulers of ancient Egypt married the daughters of neighbouring kings in order to ensure peace in the country, as well as to form alliances. **Concubine:** woman who lives with a man without being married to him.

### 4. ETRUSCAN CIVILISATION: A CULTURAL GATEWAY

**Necropolis:** group of monumental tombs or graves, separate from places of worship. **Technology transfer:** transfer from one country to another of the knowledge, production techniques and equipment used to produce an object. **Subordinate:** somebody who is under the authority of another person, and has a low rank in the hierarchy. **Archaeological material:** all the objects left by people and found in an archaeological context. **Cinerary urn:** marked with great symbolism, especially in funerary art, a cinerary urn is a closed receptacle intended to hold the ashes of a deceased person, and can be used as an ornament or sealed on a tomb. **Venus:** in Roman mythology, Venus was the goddess of love, seduction and feminine beauty, assimilated to the Greek goddess Aphrodite from the 2nd century BCE. **Turan:** in Etruscan mythology, Turan was the goddess of love, beauty, fertility and health (counterpart of the Assyrian and Babylonian goddess Ishtar, the Sumerian goddess Inanna, the Greek goddess Aphrodite and the Roman goddess Venus). **Roman matron:** from the Latin «matrona», itself derived from the word «mater» («mother» in Latin), this term designates a worthy wife and a mother of a family. She was the one who managed household tasks, supervised the work of slaves, spun wool, produced legitimate children for her husband and homeland, and so on. **Deified:** where a person, animal or thing has been elevated to the rank of god/goddess. **Priestess of Isis:** woman holding religious positions in the service of the Egyptian goddess Isis, one of the most important goddesses in the Egyptian pantheon and whose cult spread first in Egypt before extending throughout the Mediterranean world.

### 5. THE ORIGINS OF GREEK SCULPTURE

**Archaic period:** in the history of ancient Greece, the archaic period was a historical period from the 9th or 8th century BCE to the 5th century BCE, approximately. **Minotaur:** in Greek mythology, the Minotaur was a hybrid monster (with the body of a man and the head of a bull, or half man, half bull) that the engineer Daedalus had imprisoned in a labyrinth to stop it from eating humans. **Sheath dress:** a feminine garment

characterised by its figure-hugging slim fit. **The Cyclades:** archipelago of Greek islands located in the Aegean Sea. **Cycladic:** art form related to the civilisation of the Cyclades. **Opulent:** ample. **Stereotyped:** inspired by a fixed model and without originality or individuality. **Religious:** relating to religion, cult or worship, connected to the religious and the sacred. **Idol:** object representing a deity and worshipped in the same way as the deity itself. **Punic:** related to the ancient Carthaginians, an ancient people inhabiting the city of Carthage (located in present-day Tunisia). **Numidian:** group of languages once spoken by the people of ancient Libya. **Keros:** one of the largest islands of the Small Cyclades. **Purity:** referring to an artwork made pure, from which stains have been removed. **Dedicator:** an individual who offers a work or works. **Tutelary deity:** the protective god or goddess of a city. **Baal Hammon:** in Carthaginian mythology, Baal Hammon was a chief god to whom sacrifices were offered. **Caduceus:** a staff with two wings at the top and two intertwined snakes coiled around it, attributed to Hermes in Greek mythology and Mercury in Roman mythology. **Inlay:** a decorative process that consists of making impressions in a material in which to insert small pieces of another material. **Notables:** people whose social situation gives them some authority. **Pubic:** related to the pubis (triangular bulge in the area below the lower abdomen). **Malachite:** green-coloured mineral widely used in antiquity to make certain blue-green tones. **Rhetoric:** set of processes constituting the art of using language effectively and eloquently. **Repainting:** part of a work that has been repainted. **Torus:** ring-shaped moulding that adorns the base of a column. **Frustoconical belly:** domed/curved part of a vessel that takes the shape of a truncated cone. **Glaze:** vitrifiable coating applied to pottery to make it shiny and waterproof. **Concentric:** having the same centre, when speaking of circles and curves. **Campania:** region in the south-west of Italy.

## 6. THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN, LAND OF CONQUESTS, ALLIANCES AND EXCHANGES

**Colony:** territory occupied and administered by a nation beyond its borders. **Romanisation:** the process by which the Romans spread their culture, civilisation and way of life to all conquered territories. **Naturalism:** naturalism refers to the artistic process in which an artist depicts the world faithfully and accurately (nature, animals, landscapes, humans etc.), without embellishing or idealising it. **Interbreeding:** blending or crossing of ethnic groups, breeds or species. **Post-Alexandrian:** period following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE. **Oasis:** a small area of land suitable for vegetation and human habitation in the middle of the desert and that exists thanks to a nearby body of water. **Nerve centre:** located at the most sensitive, critical point. **Colonnade:** in architecture, a line of columns in one or more rows, forming an architectural complex. **Frontality:** the nature of an object or work that is depicted facing directly towards the viewer. **Byzantine Empire:** the Byzantine Empire, or Eastern Roman Empire, refers to the state that appeared around the 4th century CE in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, at the time when the Roman Empire gradually divided into two. **Permeability:** ability to be penetrated or influenced by external agents. **Relief:** in the field of fine art, relief is a technique in which a figure projects from the surface of its supporting medium. **Iconography:** all representations of the same subject or theme in works belonging to the visual arts.

# ART EXPLORA FESTIVAL



CULTURAL  
ODYSSEY IN THE  
MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Document made by the  
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