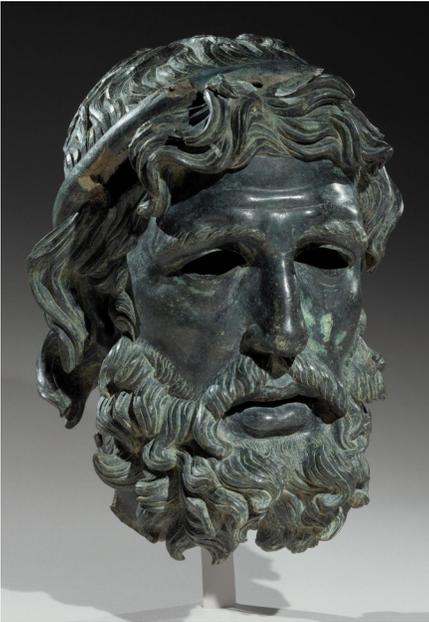


☪ THE LIBRARIES OF ☪
MFA **H** *The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston*
Hirsch Library Research Guide



Head of Poseidon / Antigonos Doson
Greek

Greece, Hellenistic period, 227-221 BC
Bronze: 11 3/8 x 7 3/4 x 9 1/2 in. (28.9 x 19.7 x 24.1 cm)

Museum purchase funded by Isabel B. and Wallace S. Wilson

Larger-than-life-size Greek bronze statues were the undisputed masterworks of antiquity. They were the focal points of temples and important public places and served as models and inspiration for the classical sculptures that we know today.

Unfortunately few statues from antiquity have survived in complete form with distinguishing attributes or characteristics. Coins of the period are often an important way to identify gods, royals, and important persons.

Our famous Hellenistic head was a case in point. Internationally recognized as a bronze masterwork, his identity was unclear. An exceptionally fine silver coin, minted during the rule of Macedonian king Antigonos Doson, 227-221 B.C., solved the mystery. The world conqueror Alexander the Great and his successors associated themselves with the gods. Antigonos Doson coins portray him as Poseidon, god of the sea, a reference to his reestablishment of Macedonian supremacy over the sea. The bronze head and silver coin both have fine facial bone structure, deep-set eyes, full open lips, and baroque curls of hair and beard that suggest the turbulence of sea waves. The windswept locks are barely bound by the fillet that serves as crown. The head and coin define the height of Greek portraiture: god and

Online Resources:

[Hirsch Library Online Catalog](#)

[The Metropolitan Museum of Art Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History](#)

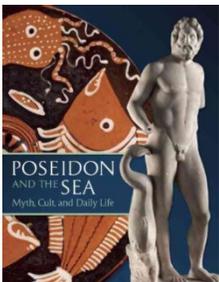
Articles: (full-text access available on-site; off-site access available through your school library or Houston Public Library)

[Comstock, Mary B. "Masterpieces of Greek Coinage." *Boston Museum Bulletin* 67, no. 349 \(1969\): 104-119.](#)

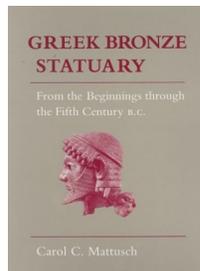
[Lloyd-Jones, Hugh. "Ancient Greek Religion." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 145, no. 4 \(2001\): 456-464.](#)

[Mattusch, Carol C. "In Search of the Greek Bronze Original." *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome. Supplementary Volumes 1, The Ancient Art of Emulation: Studies in Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity* \(2002\): 99-115.](#)

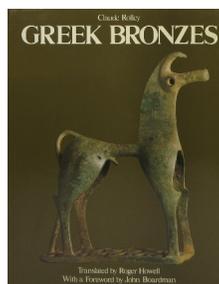
Print Resources:



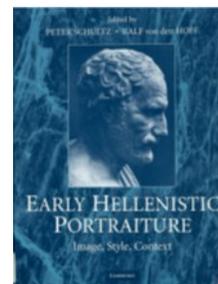
[Poseidon and the Sea: Myth, Cult, and Daily Life](#)



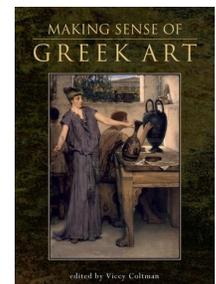
[Greek Bronze Statuary](#)



[Greek Bronzes](#)



[Early Hellenistic Portraiture: Image, Style, Context](#)



[Making Sense of Greek Art](#)

Bibliography

Object Specific Information

[Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. *Annual Report*. Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2003. N 576 .H7 A2 2002-2005 Ref.](#)

[Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. *MFAH Today*. Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2001. N 576 .H7 M423 2001 Ready Ref.](#)

General Surveys of Greek Art

[Gardner, Helen, Fred Kleiner, and Christin J. Mamiya. *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*. 12th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2005. N 5300 .G25 2005 Ref.](#)

[Janson, H. W., and Penelope Davies. *Janson's History of Art: The Western Tradition*. 7th ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007. N 5300 .J3 2007 Ref.](#)

[Stokstad, Marilyn, and David A. Brinkley. *Art History*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008. N 5300 .S923 2008 Ref.](#)

Macedonian History

[Abulafia, David. *The Mediterranean History*. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003. DE 80 .M43 2003 Reserve](#)

[Browning, Robert. *The Greek World: Classical, Byzantine and Modern*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1985. DF 741 .G73 1985b](#)

[Oliphant, Margaret. *The Atlas of the Ancient World: Charting the Great Civilizations of the Past*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992. G 1033 .05 1992 Reserve](#)

[Richter, Gisela. *The Portraits of the Greeks*. London: Phaidon Press, 1965. N 7586 .R5 v. 3](#)

Hellenistic and Macedonian Art

[Burn, Lucilla. *Hellenistic Art: From Alexander the Great to Augustus*. London: British Museum, 2004. N 5630 .B87 2004](#)

[Charbonneau, Jean, Roland Martin, and François Villard. *Hellenistic Art \(350-50 B.C.\)*. New York: G. Braziller, 1973. N 5630 .C46513 1973b Reserve](#)

[Greece, International Council of Museums, and International Cultural Corporation of Australia Limited. *Ancient Macedonia*. Athens: Ministry of Culture, 1988. DF 261 .M2 A72 1988](#)

[Pollitt, Jerome J. *Art in the Hellenistic Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. N 5630 .P55 1986](#)

[Ridgeway, Brunilde S. *Hellenistic Sculpture*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990. NB 94 .R535 1990 v. 1 Ref.](#)

[Seltman, Charles T. *Greek Coins: A History of Metallic Currency and Coinage Down to the Fall of the Hellenistic Kingdoms*. London: Methuen, 1955. CJ 335 .S4 1955](#)

[Stewart, Andrew F. *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990. NB 90 .S74 1990 Ref.](#)

Poseidon and Mythology

[Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1949. BL 313 .C28](#)

[Grant, Michael, and John Hazel. *Who's Who in Classical Mythology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. BL 715 .G68 1993 Ref.](#)

[Hamilton, Edith. *Mythology*. New York: New American Library, 1942. BL 310 .H35 1942 Ref.](#)

[Huffington, Arianna S., and Roloff Beny. *The Gods of Greece*. New York: Abrams, 1983. BL 782 .S8 1983 Reserve](#)

Technique of Ancient Greek Sculpture

[Charbonneau, Jean. *Greek Bronzes*. London: Elek Books, 1962. NB 140 .C413](#)

[Haynes, Denys. *The Technique of Greek Bronze Statuary*. Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1992. NB 140 .H39 1992 Reserve](#)

[Mattusch, Carol C. *The Fire of Hephaistos: Large Classical Bronzes from North American Collections*. Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, 1996. NB 135 .M39 1996](#)

[Spivey, Nigel J. *Understanding Greek Sculpture: Ancient Meanings, Modern Readings*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 1996. NB 90 .S66 1996 Reserve](#)

This reference guide is just the tip of the iceberg on helpful resources in the library's holdings. Many of the suggested resources above have their own bibliographies. Each of these may lead you to another resource that would also be helpful in your research here in the museum or in another library. To find additional resources, use keywords such as "Macedonia" and "Hellenistic" in the online catalog and in periodical indexes. Once you find a few relevant titles, pay attention to the subject headings to identify similar materials. Examples of useful subject headings are:

Mythology
Art, Hellenistic
Greece, History
Bronze sculpture, Greek
Coins, Greek

For guidelines about writing it may be helpful to look at Sylvan Barnet's *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*, which includes tips for looking, reading, and writing about art. Ask for it at the reference desk. At every stage of your work, please allow the library staff to help you. Contact us at 713-639-7325 or hirsch@mfah.org