



Educational Program: Ancient Faces and You

*Material for optional student activities
before and after a visit to the Acropolis
Museum.*

During your school group's visit to the Acropolis Museum, the students will come into contact with secrets hidden in representations of real people in ancient times and today, through observation, exploration, creation and a game.

Some brief preparation with the students before their visit to the Museum can make the experience of this program even more fruitful.

Show the image below, of an exhibit at the Museum, to your students. Encourage them to observe it very carefully a number of times. Initiate a discussion about it considering the questions and suggestions for the students listed below, following the steps in the order that we suggest.

After your visit to the Museum you can suggest to your students that they continue their critical and creative exploration of the same subject using the material below, thus reinforcing the benefits of the experience offered by this program.

Material for optional preparation in class. Step 1:

- Look at the image below (or view the exhibit on the Museum's website using the zoom function):

http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/sites/default/files/alexander_0.jpg

Or in the Museum's guide: D. Pandermalis, a.o., *Acropolis Museum, guide (Athens 2016)* fig. 346



-Questions for the students:

Observe the image carefully and try to describe what you see.

- * What do you think are the facial characteristics, age, character and status that this work reflects?
- * Do you recognize the identity of the person portrayed?
- * If so, how did you recognize him and why?

Material for optional preparation in class. Step 2:

- *Suggestion for the students:*

See what the people at the Museum have to say about the work in the previous image on the Museum's website:

<http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/content/athens-acropolis-and-successors-alexander-great>

<http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/en/content/votives-classical-hellenistic-periods>

You may also consult the Museum's guide:

D. Pandermalis, a.o., *Acropolis Museum, guide* (Athens 2016) 286-289

Material for optional preparation in class. Step 3:

- Suggestion for the students:

- * Read what some ancient authors wrote about Alexander the Great:

Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives, The Life of Alexander* 4.1-2 (1st – 2nd century AD)

The outward appearance of Alexander is best represented by the statues of him which Lysippus made, and it was by this artist alone that Alexander himself thought it fit that he should be modelled. For those peculiarities which many of his successors and friends afterwards tried to imitate, namely, the poise of the neck, which was bent slightly to the left, and the melting glance of his eyes, this artist has accurately observed. Apelles, however, in painting him as wielder of the thunder-bolt, did not reproduce his complexion, but made it too dark and swarthy. Whereas he was of a fair colour, as they say, and his fairness passed into ruddiness on his breast particularly, and in his face.

Translation Bernadotte Perrin, Vol. VII, Loeb Classical Library edition, Harvard University Press 1919

Aelian, *Historical Miscellany* 12.14 (2nd – 3rd century AD)

Alexander the son of Philip is reported to have possessed a natural beauty: his hair was wavy and fair. They say there was something slightly alarming about Alexander's appearance.

Translation N.G. Wilson, Loeb Classical Library edition, Harvard University Press 1997

Pseudo-Callisthenes, *The Greek Alexander Romance*, 1.13 (probably 3rd century AD)

In shape he was a man, but his hair was that of a lion and his eyes were asymmetrical – the right one being downward-slanting and the left one clear; his teeth were as sharp as nails, and his movements were as swift and violent as a lion's.

Translation Richard Stoneman, Penguin Classics 1991

Material for optional preparation in class. Step 4:

- Questions for the students:

- * How do you view the sculpture after what you read?
- * Why do you think a portrait of Alexander the Great was erected on the Acropolis?
- * Can you imagine how various ancient visitors to the Acropolis would have perceived the portrait?

Optional material to take further advantage of the program experience

- Suggestion for the students:

- * Where do we encounter depictions of real people today?

Divide into groups, choose such a portrayal and try to describe the following:

- * the facial features you can distinguish.
- * symbols that may be used to indicate the status of the person or the context of the depiction.
- * the posture, gestures, expression, etc. of the person portrayed, which may be related to his or her status and mood, and the context of the depiction etc.

Try to find reliable information about the identity of the subject.

- * Can you find out who commissioned the portrait?
- * What do you think that the person who requested the depiction wanted to show?
- * Is the location of the portrait related to the manner of its depiction and its use?
- * Who do you think would usually see this portrait?

If you had the opportunity to create a portrait:

- * Whom would you choose and why?
- * Which of his or her features would you include or highlight in your portrayal?
- * Where would you place the work and why?

You may create the portraits of your classmates or other students of your school and display them in a special place at your school.

We would be very pleased if you shared the results of your activities with us at:

learning@theacropolismuseum.gr/en