GREEK RELIEF FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM IN ATHENS GOES ON VIEW AT THE GETTY VILLA

Loan is the first to arise from 2011 cultural agreement between the Getty and the Hellenic Republic Ministry of Culture

At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Villa

LOS ANGELES—The J. Paul Getty Museum today placed on view a Decree Relief with Antiochos and Herakles, the first Greek loan to arise from a 2011 framework for cultural cooperation between the Getty and the Hellenic Republic Ministry of Culture.

On loan from the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, the marble relief bears a historical decree, dated to 330 B.C., which honors Prokleides, a military officer (taxiarch) in the Athenian army. The relief will be on view at the Getty Villa for three years in a second-floor gallery devoted to Religious Offerings.

The relief takes the form of a stele, a stone slab decorated with images and text, crowned with the figures of Herakles and his son Antiochos, who was the mythical hero of the tribe Antiochis. Herakles is depicted as an athletic nude, holding a club and the pelt of the Nemean Lion he vanquished, referring to the first of the twelve labors he had to perform. Seemingly the elder, Antiochos wears a dignified mantle and holds a staff (no longer visible, but probably added in pigment). Both father and son heroes were the subject of cult worship, and are shown standing within a small temple framed by columns and a pediment.

Written in ancient Greek below the figures, an inscription describes the honors bestowed upon Prokleides by his soldiers and comrades, all members of an elite infantry corps known as the epilektoi. This is the earliest known inscription referencing the epilektoi, a group of men bound together by their military service, participation in sacrifices and theatrical performances, and membership in the Athenian Council. According to the decree, Kephisokles of the village of Alopeke proposed the resolution to praise Prokleides, who “has well and with
distinction taken care of security," and crown him with a gold diadem worth at least 1,000 drachmas (an enormous sum, considering the average worker in classical Athens could support a family of four on one drachma a day).

Soon after arriving at the Getty, the stele was photographed using a technique that captures the object numerous times with varying degrees of raking light. The resulting composed image reveals the shallow lettering with unprecedented depth and clarity and enables a more accurate reading of the inscription. A transcription of the ancient Greek text, translation, and detail photography of the historical inscription accompanies the installation.

"The Antiochos relief commemorates the affection and respect of troops for their commanding officer," explains Claire Lyons, acting senior curator of antiquities at the Getty Villa. "We are delighted that it will be on view at the Getty Villa in time for Memorial Day, when we honor the contributions of fallen soldiers to their communities and country."

This long-term loan results from the Framework for Cultural Cooperation signed in September 2011, which provides for joint scholarship, research projects, loans, and exhibitions between the Getty and the Hellenic Republic. "As part of this framework of cooperation between the Hellenic Republic Ministry of Culture and the Getty Museum, we are pleased to have the Antiochos relief on display at the Getty Villa," said Maria Vlazaki-Andreadaki, General Director of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in Athens. "We believe that this collaboration will promote classical studies in the United States and will spread the values and the spirit of ancient Greek civilization."

**Historical Background**

The relief was discovered in 1922 in the foundations of a house in the Athenian neighborhood of Dourgouti. In antiquity, the area was known as Kynosarges and was the site of a public gymnasium and a sanctuary of Herakles, the greatest of the Greek heroes. Believed to have stood in this sanctuary, where several other inscriptions mentioning the tribe Antiochis were found, the relief was a votive dedication erected in a prominent public location befitting a successful military leader.

The Antiochos relief is a primary document of democracy, and the language of its inscription shows that voting and public speech were deeply ingrained in civic life two centuries after the foundation of democratic political institutions in Athens.
The creation of the Attic tribes was the most important feature of the revolutionary reorganization of Athenian politics that followed the overthrow of the tyrants in 508 B.C. In this system, ten tribes composed of approximately 3,000 citizens and their families were created. Each tribe was assigned the name of a mythical Athenian hero: Antiochos was the eponymous hero of the tribe Antiochis.

Drawn from villages in three distinct zones of the Athenian territory—the coast, the inland farming region, and the urban/suburban zone—the tribes represented the entire citizenry of Athens. Josiah Ober, Professor of Political Science and Classics at Stanford University, observes: "Imagine a reorganization of the United States that would require citizens from Maine, Texas, and California to work, fight, and feast together on a regular basis. The communities constituting the tribe of Antiochis included Alopeke, the philosopher Socrates' home village—so we might even imagine that a descendant of Socrates as among the signatories to the decree.”

About the National Archaeological Museum in Athens

The National Archaeological Museum is the largest museum in Greece and one of the world's great museums. Although its original purpose was to secure all the finds from the nineteenth-century excavations in and around Athens, it gradually became the central National Archaeological Museum and was enriched with finds from all over Greece. With more than 11,000 exhibits, its abundant collections provide a panorama of Greek civilization from the beginnings of Prehistory to Late Antiquity.

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The J. Paul Getty Museum collects in seven distinct areas, including Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts, and photographs gathered internationally. The Museum's mission is to make the collection meaningful and attractive to a broad audience by presenting and interpreting the works of art through educational programs, special exhibitions, publications, conservation, and research.
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