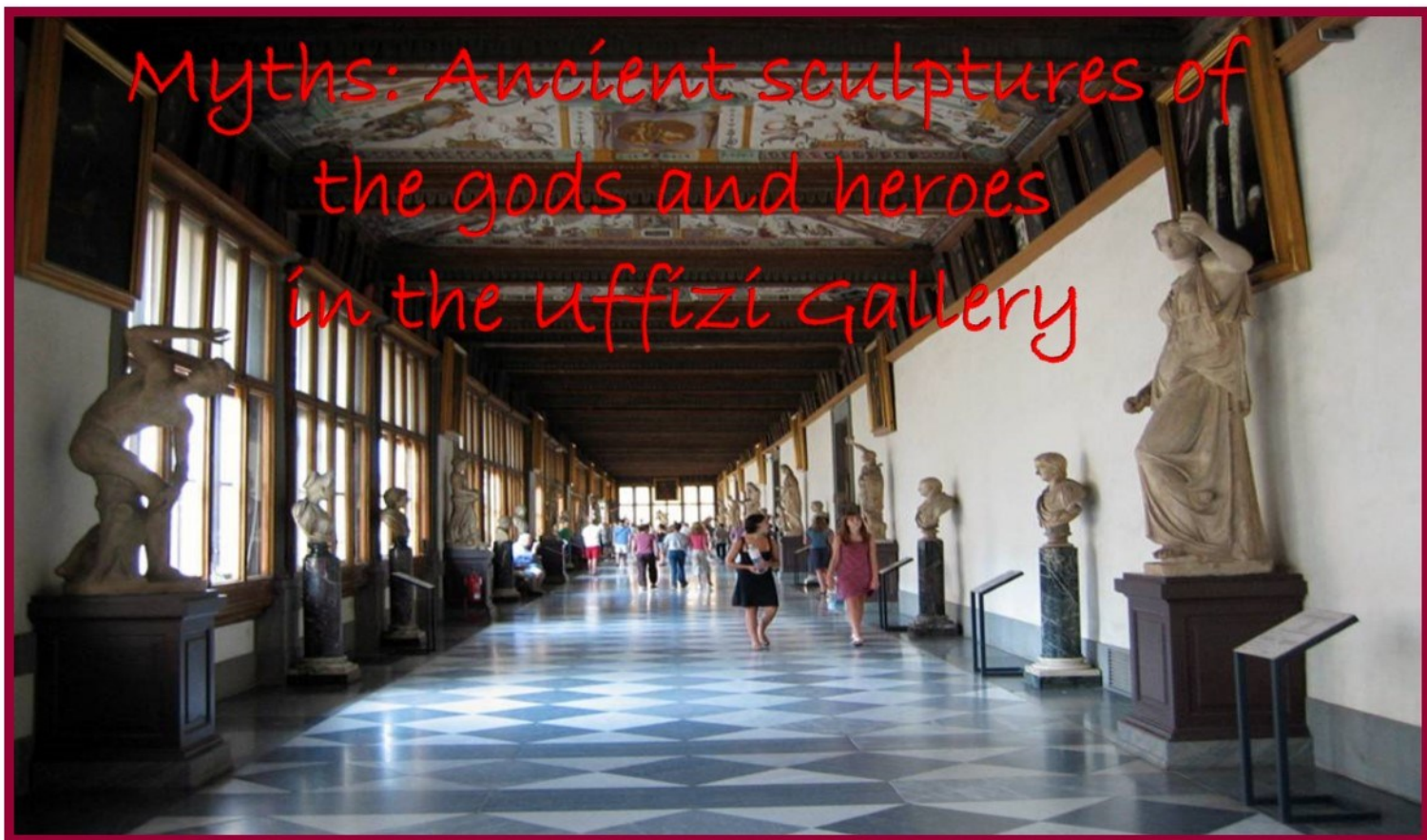


Divisione Educazione Ricerca e Sviluppo
Dipartimento Scuola e Giovani

Answers and insights



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Worksheet 1



- The characters are represented Heracles, (Hercules to the Romans) and the centaur Nessus.
- The attribute is the characteristic element of a character, an object that allows you to identify it forever. In fact, the ancient Greeks imagined gods and heroes like men and set them apart only by their attributes. In the case of Heracles, the characteristic attributes are the club and lion's skin; the latter refers to the first of his twelve labors, fighting the Nemean lion. Here the skin of the lion lies between the hero's body and that of the centaur.
- In the Greek world Heracles is a demigod since he is the son of a god, Zeus and a mortal, Alcmene, wife of the King of Thebes, Amphitryon. Capable of doing extraordinary things, he is the hero par excellence. This is the story of his birth: his mother Alcmene was on the verge of giving birth so his father Zeus, solemnly swore that the child born that day would reign over all the neighboring peoples. Hera, the wife of Zeus, in the throes of a terrible jealousy and eager for revenge, then stopped the labor pains of poor Alcmene and contributed instead to the premature birth of the son of the king of Mycenae who was named Eurystheus. The latter thus became, according to the will expressed by Zeus, king of Mycenae and Tiryns and everyone, including Heracles, were forced to recognize his authority.
Not satisfied with her revenge, Hera, one day in Heracles provoked a rage so foolish as to kill his wife and his children, so blotting him with a terrible sin. According to some mythological traditions, it was this which impelled the hero to face the twelve labors, as a form of atonement.
The struggle against the centaur Nessus, a monstrous being with a body part human, part horse, however, does not belong to this series of hardships, but it is linked to an episode about his private life; Heracles having to cross a river with his wife. Nessus, during the journey began to harass the woman sparking the jealousy of the hero who threw at the centaur a poisoned arrow, killing him. Before dying, however, Nessus gave Deianira, few drops of his blood, promising that she would have protection from betrayal by Heracles if she shed a few drops on his robe. However Deianira, through this device, inadvertently caused the death of her husband since the blood that Nessus had given her was that same poisoned arrows of Hercules.
- Heracles is like a modern-day hero, invincible, doer of extraordinary feats, with superhuman strength and a keen intelligence. Already in the ancient world figures such as Alexander the Great identified themselves with the hero; in later Roman times _ emperors Commodus and Caracalla used the iconography of Heracles at rest, as a symbol of the sovereign who works for the good of his people.
During the Renaissance, the image of this hero was used to represent the struggle against all forms of tyranny, while the characters of the Medici are often identified with Heracles as "ruler of the world", as the hero in one of _ his exploits had to replace _ Atlas and "hold" the world; just like Heracles, they, too, had to make use of strength and intelligence to govern well.
- It is a painting that has as its protagonists Heracles and Antaeus by Antonio del Pollaiuolo, dated to 1478.
- In the courtyard of the Palazzo Pitti, you can still see many sculptures dedicated to Heracles:
 - Hercules in repose (placed in the bottom of the porch on the left)
 - Heracles and Antaeus
 - Heracles and the apples of the Hesperides
 - Heracles and Cerberus

Insights

The sculpture, already documented in Florence in 1589, was probably found in Rome where it was subjected to a first restoration. Moved to Florence it was entrusted to the sculptor Giovanni Caccini who was responsible for the reconstruction of the head and left arm of the centaur and almost all the other pieces of Heracles of which there were only the right foot and the tip of the left. Although it is, therefore, in large part a reconstruction, the reconstruction by Caccini is not much different than the original sculpture, who you must acknowledge has a great sensitivity and a deep knowledge of ancient art.

Worksheet 2



- The work represents Demeter which the Romans called Ceres. Daughter of the Titans, Cronus and Rhea, she is the sister of Hera, Hestia, Zeus, Poseidon and Hades and Persephone's mother. The goddess looks solemn and impressive. Its size, higher than natural, and the majestic attitude suggest that it may be a cult statue of the goddess, and therefore an object of veneration by the faithful.
- Her name means Mother Earth.
- You can recognize her by a wreath of heads of grain which on her head. The grain is, in fact, the typical attribute of Demeter. The ancient Greeks relied on the reliability of the fertility of the earth and the regular succession of the seasons. The center of her cult was the city of Eleusis, near Athens, the place chosen by the goddess herself for the construction of the temple, where they celebrated the mystery rites; during these rites Demeter would reveal to those who were initiated knowledge that they had to remain secret; hence the term **mysteries**.
- The statue was made of white marble. For the clothes they used black marble.
- The goddess wears a chiton and a himation, which is the mantle, black in color. The black could be explained as a sign of mourning for the loss of her daughter Persephone also called Kore, which means maiden, abducted by Hades, god of the underworld to make her his wife. After the kidnapping, according to the will of the gods, Persephone would stay with the mother for only a portion of the year, corresponding to the spring and summer, while he spent with her husband Hades in the Underworld, the months corresponding to autumn and winter. The joy of Demeter, therefore, for the presence of her daughter and, on the contrary, mourning for her absence, explains the changes of the seasons and, what is more important, it guaranteed continuity.
- The statue has the right arm raised and this leads us to suppose that originally it could hold in the right hand, a torch; the left hand instead could grasp a bouquet of ears of wheat and poppies, the flowers sacred to her. The myth says that, after the kidnapping of her daughter Persephone, Demeter did not sleep, and for nine days and nine nights, desperately tried to brighten her way with the light of the torches.

Insights

The statue comes from Rome and became part of the collection of the Medici family in 1569. The sculpture of Demeter could be a copy of a Greek original dating to the fourth century. B.C. The right forearm and left hand are restored.

Worksheet 3



- The snake that wraps around the stick, is the attribute that allows us to immediately identify this character by _ the Romans called Aesculapius, the god of medicine. The snake changes its skin every year and so is considered a symbol of regeneration and is associated with medicine, science and care that regenerates. The sculpture depicts a character with his face marked by a solemn expression, by flowing hair and beard, dressed only in a robe which leaves uncovered the upper part of the chest. He leans with his right arm on a stick, which was originally to reach just below the right armpit, as evidenced by some statues like this one.
- At the foot of the god there is an oval stone, called Omphalòs, a Greek word which means navel, the central part, a definition that alluded to the city of Delphi the city Greeks considered the center of the Earth. There was at Delphi an important sanctuary dedicated to Apollo and also the stone at the foot of our statue, suggesting a link between Apollo and Asclepius. Asclepius was indeed the favorite son of Apollo, born from a relationship between the god and a girl named Coronis. But unfortunately, infidelity of the latter provoked the wrath of the god so the task entrusted to his sister Artemis was to avenge him, killing her. Apollo then repented of this decision, however, and was able to save the child whom he had given the name of Asclepius, after entrusting him to the care of the centaur Chiron, who initiated him to the art of medicine.
- Right at the beginning of the third corridor, on the left, there is another statue of Asclepius; the god is depicted in the act of feeding the snake.

Insights

The statue was one of the sculptures owned by the Medici family that were at the Villa Medici in Rome and was moved to Florence in 1778. This sculpture, which has a lot of restoration work, is most likely a copy of an original dating from the second half of the fifth century B.C. and preserves for us perhaps, the cult image in the most revered ancient temple dedicated to Asclepius, located on the slopes of the Acropolis of Athens. Some features of marble working such as the rigidity of the mantle and the hardness of the folds, make likely the hypothesis that the original could be bronze.

Worksheet 4



- They are Dionysus and a satyr. The god, larger in size, has a crown of vine leaves and fruit and low wearing boots similar to sandals decorated with a panther head. The satyr has the body crossed by an animal skin, holding in his right hand a kantharos vessel for drinking wine, and has characteristic feral ears. The leaves of the vine, the panther, the presence of the satyr, are all elements that take us to the world of Dionysus.
- This is Dionysus who the Romans called Bacchus, portrayed while advancing with an unsteady gait, leaning firmly onto the satyr in the throes of drunkenness brought about by wine. To this god in fact, the ancients had attributed the invention of wine, a drink that cheers the life of men, loosening the control of reason, but able, sometimes, when in excess, to trigger its baser instincts.
- Indeed, it has animal ears!: This is a satyr, one of the characters, along with the maenads, also called Bacchae, were part of the Dionysian cult and embodied the most irrational aspects of the human soul.
- This is the Bacchus, a work created by the young Michelangelo around 1496 to 1497.

Insights

The work was found in Rome in the vineyard of the scholar Peter de Radicibus, close to the Porta Maggiore and displayed as described in the same house, around 1550, by Ulysses Aldovandi, naturalist and eclectic collector, author of a list which describes the ancient statues present in Rome at that time.

Worksheet 5



- The sculpture depicts a small Eros sleeping.
- According to an ancient mythographic tradition, Eros was the son of Aphrodite, goddess of love and Ares, the god of war and was represented as a kid with wings, with bow and arrows. The little Eros is shown here completely abandoned to his sleep, lying on a lion's skin, thus emphasizing the fact that nobody can resist the force of love, not even the strongest!
- Perhaps because the ancients attributed to Love the wonderful ability to elevate the human spirit.
- In room 10 of the gallery there is a major work of the Renaissance: the Primavera was painted by Sandro Botticelli around 1482. Directly above the figure of Spring, the artist painted a small winged Eros, blindfolded, ready to strike so unrelentingly, with one of his fearsome arrows, one of the three Graces; these figures, also known as the Charites were the daughters of Zeus and Eurynome, an ancient deity, representing values such as joy, splendor, prosperity and joy of life and it was natural that they were part of the following of the love goddess Aphrodite and her son Eros.

Insights

The sculpture in black marble, was once considered a work of ancient times, has been dated to the late third century. A.D. , because of the "hard and rough" work. Today, both the type of work that the quality and uniqueness of marble suggest that the work can be dated back to the Renaissance, and considering that in the sixteenth century the tendency to make copies of ancient works in colored marble was quite widespread in Rome.

Worksheet 6



- The character is represented Silenus Marsyas, depicted with his hands above his head and hanging from a tree.
- In the Marsyas to the right of the hall is made of white marble, while the one on the left is a pavonazetto marble, a type of reddish marble. In the Marsyas is also pictured on the right with his head resting on his chest, his body abandoned in an attitude of complete resignation. In the Marsyas on the left hand, the head is raised, the chest muscles have tension, a gesture of rebellion and surprisingly the facial expression is a mix of defiance, anger and pain. It should be noted, however, that this sculpture, the so-called red Marsyas or Marsyas in rebellion, his head, chest and arms are fully refurbished by a Renaissance artist, probably the sculptor Mino da Fiesole, who in this case has experimented with the restoration of an ancient work.
- Was a Silenus Marsyas, a mythological character with animal features: the tail, ears and hooves of a horse, it was a native of Figura, a region of present-day Turkey. One day he stumbled upon a flute which Athena had thrown away after having cursed, having noticed herself to be ridiculous and ugly, with swollen cheeks, while she played it. The Silenus however, from the very first moment he became aware of its abilities and the wonder that was aroused in all who heard his music. Convinced that he was so good at this point to be able to compete also to with the gods, he agreed to challenge Apollo to a musical contest. The Muses, by decision of the god would declare the winner. The first competition was finished with a tie; then the god proposed to compete playing and singing at the same time; thus, since it was impossible for those who played the flute sing also to, inevitably the competition was won by Apollo who, playing a lyre, could also sing. The punishment for Marsyas was terrible: hanging from a tree, he was flayed alive. The gods had punished in this manner those who had dared to confront them, thus having become guilty of arrogance.
- The two sculptures are considered to be Roman copies of Greek originals of the III-II century. B.C.

Worksheet 7



- It is Hermes, messenger of the gods; The statue is in fact characterized by the presence of all the attributes typically found with this god: he wears a winged hat, has fins on his feet, holding in his left hand a staff, around which two snakes wrap, while in his right hand clutching a bag.
- Hermes, who the Romans called Mercury, was the son of Zeus and a nymph named Maria and as a child he had stolen the oxen of Apollo but then, to make amends, had given him a lyre, a musical instrument constructed using a turtle shell.
- Zeus soon appreciated the qualities of young Hermes and entrusted him with the prestigious role of messenger of the gods; wings on his feet were used to perform this task as quickly as possible.
- The winged hat is called petasus.
- The stick which Hermes always carries is the caduceus, a gift from the god Apollo, characterized by the presence of two entwined serpents. The myth says that Hermes one day managed to interrupt the fight between two snakes, throwing his stick between them and from that moment it became a symbol of peace.

Insights

The sculpture presents numerous renovations including the right arm, with his right hand which was originally to rest on the hat in a gesture of rest, and the left hand with the caduceus. Restoration has also occurred on the fins unless the petasus attacks. It was present at the Gallery in 1782 and may have come from Rome in cabins for disabled people between 1770 and 1787.

The sculpture is considered by some an eclectic work of Roman times, a work that is presenting itself with different stylistic features, probably made in the second century AD. It has been observed that the attitude of the rest of the god is only momentary and how the statue seems rather to express the typical instability of the messenger of the gods, often depicted in flight.

Worksheet 8



- The sculpture shows a female figure with the upper part of the body uncovered, her hair as if she were about to take a bath or as if it had just come out of the water. It is precisely her nakedness, in relation to the bathroom and the water which allows us to identify this figure as Aphrodite, the goddess whom the Romans called Venus.
- According to a traditional myth, Cronus, to take the place of his father Uranus at the helm of the world, castrated him and his seed which fell into the sea begat Aphrodite. According to another tradition, the goddess would instead be the daughter of Zeus and Dione. To her, the goddess of love, beauty, and harmony, were consecrated the islands of Kythera and Cyprus and on the island of Cyprus she was received by the Hore, daughters of Zeus and Themis who embodied the seasons, and carried them to Olympus to be received by all the gods.
- In the hall of the fifteenth gallery you can see two very complex and extraordinary works by Sandro Botticelli; The first is the 'Birth of Venus' and the other is the 'Primavera'. In the Birth of Venus, the goddess is represented naked, on a shell, blown by the winds perhaps to the island of Cyprus, where a Hora is ready to cover it with a veil. In the other painting, Venus is instead depicted fully clothed at the center of a niche and protagonist of her reign.

Insights

The work became part of the Medici collection in 1658, bought from the Bolognini, of Bologna and submitted, shortly thereafter, to a careful restoration with numerous additions, by the sculptor Alessandro Algardi. In fact, the statue was kept mostly a torso; antique arms, although they were subsequently purchased by Cardinal Leopoldo, were not reapplied. Even the head, although old, is not original to the work. The drapery was also completely restored _ that wraps around the lower part of the body and which may have been made precisely to cover the fracture of the statue to the height of the upper part of the thighs. _ Thus having a multiplicity of dates and the complexity of the restoration work, it is not possible at the moment to clarify what could be the appearance of the statue originally; the characteristics of the torso, however, have allowed the identification as Aphrodite. The yield of the soft molding suggest a work of the Hellenistic period.

Worksheet 9

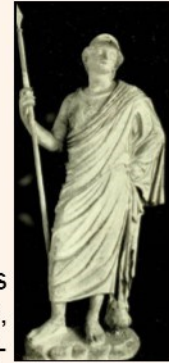


- It is Apollo, the son of Zeus and a woman named Leto, daughter of the Titans Phoebe and Ceo.
- The small cave at the base of the trunk on which rests the statue, alludes to an episode in the history of Apollo. The god was in fact born by betrayal of Zeus and so his wife, blinded by jealousy, had decided to send against Leto the serpent Python because it would persecute her continuously. A few days after his birth, however, he managed to get Python away from Apollo, in the meantime, it had taken refuge in his cave at Delphi and after fierce fighting, killed it. Delphi was the site of a famous oracle away from had once belonged to Mother Earth and Apollo by defeating the serpent Python, he was able in this manner to take possession of the oracle. At Delphi was later built a large sanctuary dedicated to the god and inside there was priestesses, the Pythia, sitting on a tripod, who interpreted the vapors coming from a split in the soil and so revealed to men the will of the gods.
- The attributes of Apollo are the arrows and the bow. Often connected to the god, as we have seen, is the serpent Python.
- This is Artemis, who the Romans called Diana, goddess of the hunt and protector of animals, depicted with a bow and arrow.
- In the hall of Niobe, you can see many sculptures that come from Rome. The myth says that Niobe, wife of Amphion king of Thebes, had boasted to Leto to have seven sons and seven daughters unlike her, who had given birth to only two, Apollo and Artemis. The Revenge of Leto was swift and the presumption of Niobe was punished with the death of all her children.

Insights

The statue was found in Rome during an excavation in 1553 on the Esquiline, on land owned by Leoni Strozzi and was moved to Florence. The sculpture has undergone numerous restorations performed as early as the sixteenth century by Flaminio Vacca, making it difficult to accurately determine the original parts of the work.

Worksheet 10



- The statue depicts Athena, goddess of wisdom and war who the Romans called Minerva; her main attributes are the helmet and spear. In this case, however, next to the left foot, there is also an owl, a bird sacred to the goddess.
- The myth says that Zeus one day, tormented by a terrible headache, he turned and Hephaestus to free him from that pain. The blacksmith god then with a single blow of the ax, opened a fissure in the skull of Zeus, from which came the goddess Athena, fully armed and ready to fight.
- Athena wears a chiton and a cloak, the himation, which covers her body; on her breast the aegis, a goatskin which gave protection and upon which appears the head of Medusa.
- Medusa was one of the Gorgon sisters: of the three, the only mortal. The myth says that originally she was a beautiful girl, but was turned into a terrible monster by the jealousy of Athena. She had flaming eyes, a large mouth with boar tusks and, instead of hair, lots of snakes. Equipped with an extraordinary power, she was able to transform into stone anyone unlucky enough to catch her eye.
- The hero Perseus, son of Zeus and Danae. He succeeded in killing Medusa with the help of Hermes who had given him a sickle and Athena who had offered him, on the other hand, a shield shiny in which the monster was immobilized by his own image. Perseus then gave the goddess the head of the monster. Because of its protective function, the head of Medusa was often used symbolically as a decorative element of shields and armor, as you can see here in the gallery, on a number of busts of Roman times. The head could then appear elsewhere with a protective role: walking through the Boboli Gardens, for example, you can also see it on an ancient Roman era basin which lies at the center of the Amphitheatre.
- It is by Michelangelo Merisi, known as Caravaggio, on a parade shield, who painted the terrible image of the severed head of Medusa. The work was donated to the Grand Duke Ferdinando de 'Medici by Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte, Caravaggio's patron at the time and became part of the collection of the Grand Duke of armor. The work is dated around 1598.

Insights

The sculpture can be considered a copy of an original bronze dating from the fourth century. B.C.

Worksheet 11



- The sculpture depicts a large boar, with shaggy hair, treated in a naturalistic way. The impression is that the animal is suddenly straightened (see its ears cocked!) Because of some suspicious noise and which is preparing to defend himself. Giorgio Vasari describes it as "a wild boar hog in the act of I suspect..."
- The sculpture could be related to a myth, known from numerous representations: the hunt for the Calydonian boar. It is said that in Calydon in Aetolia, in ancient Greece, the king Oeneus had forgotten to make sacrifices in honor of Artemis, during a celebration of the harvest, and that the goddess had been vindicated in that region by sending a boar of enormous size. No one would be able to beat that huge animal alone, so Meleager, son of King Oeneus, decided to summon all the heroes and so they organized a "mythical" hunt. Those who took part, among others, included Peleus, father of the hero Achilles, the Dioscuri, sons of Zeus, Theseus, and Atalanta. It was the latter who, after many days, managed to pierce the boar, while Meleager finally finished it.
- At the market called "Porcellino" There is some currently a copy in bronze, made the Marinelli Foundry after 1999, the year in which the seventeenth-century copy (also bronze) was removed to be submitted to restoration. The latter is currently at the Museo Bardini.

Insights

The marble sculpture in the Uffizi was found in Rome, according to some, on the property of the Genoese merchant Paoplo Ponti along with the statues of two mastiffs and that of a hunter and was given, together with the other, to the Grand Duke Cosio I by Pope Pius IV in 1560. From Giorgio Vasari we know it was a statue in the Hall of niches of the Pitti Palace, already by 1568. In 1591, it was transferred to the Uffizi. The bronze copy, dating back to the early decades of the 1600s, was commissioned by the Grand Duke Cosimo II for the Pitti Palace, and made by Pietro Tacca, which was then subsequently moved to the Loggia of the market and turned into a fountain. It is from that moment that the market loggia also became the Loggia del Pocellino as it is still known to all.

The marble sculpture in the Uffizi has recently undergone restoration and is being studied. At the moment it is considered a work of a sculptor active between the second and first centuries BC

Worksheet 12



- The character portrayed is Laocöon, the Trojan priest killed, along with his sons, by two sea serpents sent against him by Athena.
- Virgil tells the story of Laocöon in the second book of the Aeneid.
- Laocöon, the priest of Apollo, with extraordinary powers of prescience, knew that the huge wooden horse left by the Greeks as a gift to the Trojans was a hoax and that could not be brought inside the walls. There are famous verses of the Aeneid in which he claims to fear the Greeks especially when they offer gifts. The goddess Athena siding with the Greeks, intervened to prevent the Trojans from giving heed to Laocöon and not letting the horse into the city: so she sent two terrible snakes that crushed Laocöon and his sons. In this way, she guaranteed the destruction of Troy and the end of the war.
- The Laocöon group of the Uffizi is the work of sixteenth-century sculptor Baccio Bandinelli as you can read in the inscription also indicated on the base and is therefore the only modern sculpture in the Galleria of the Uffizi. In 1520, Pope Leo X had in fact commissioned Baccio Bandinelli to make a copy of the ancient sculpture of Laocöon, discovered in Rome in 1506, as a gift to the king of France, Francis I. The sculptor finished his only copy in 1525 and the work was so successful that Pope Clement VII decided to assign it instead to the garden of the Palazzo Medici, in the end of 1400, it had remained in the Palazzo Vecchio. The Laocöon by Baccio Bandinelli remained in the Palazzo Medici until the early 1600s, then passed into the Casino di San Marco and the Uffizi Gallery in 1671 and where we can still see it today. The group of Baccio Bandinelli is therefore a copy of an ancient statue of Laocöon who in 1506 had been found in Rome on the hill of Oppian; Giuliano da Sangallo and Michelangelo were among the first to see it, remaining impressed. The two artists recognized this group described by Pliny the Elder in the house of the Emperor Titus, which he attributes to the Rhodian sculptors Aghesandoros, Atenodoros, and Apollodoros. This work, preserved in the Vatican Museums, is now considered a copy of the first century BC of a Hellenistic original of the second century BC

Insights

The dramatic twist of the bodies represented the effort to free himself from the grasp of the snakes, the extreme tension of the muscles investigated with so much realism, the expressions of the faces full of intense pain of Laocöon and his sons, had an extraordinary influence on the artists of the Renaissance in general and the art of Michelangelo in particular who, as we have seen, was destined to be among the first to see the work just rediscovered. Then the creation of a modern copy, that of Baccio Bandinelli and its presence even today in the Uffizi Gallery is an obvious manifestation of the charm that the ancient art had on the men of that period who sensed they gathered all beauty and the inheritance, drawing inspiration from and being confronted, sometimes in competition with it.