

The Art Institute of Chicago

T H E E S S E N T I A L G U I D E

Selected by James N. Wood
and Teri J. Edelstein

With entries written and compiled by
Sally Ruth May

The Art Institute of Chicago

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WINE CONTAINER
(*STAMNOS*)

Greek, c. 450 B.C.
Chicago Painter
Earthenware; h. 14½ in. (37 cm), max.
diam. 12⅛ in. (30.9 cm)
Gift of Philip D. Armour and Charles L.
Hutchinson, 1889.22

This refined Athenian *stamnos* was used to hold water or wine. Valued as well for its beauty, this red-figure vessel (so-called because the figures have been left the natural color of the clay) portrays maenads, women participants in rites celebrating Dionysos, the god of wine. But unlike the frenzied and whirling figures of other Greek painters, there is a calmness, even an elegance, depicted here. This tender serenity, coupled with a softer, somewhat freer form, is a stylistic hallmark of this artist (referred to as the Chicago Painter because of this vase), and has been used to identify other works by him, principally similar *stamnoi* with Dionysian scenes. Working in Periclean Athens, in the potter's quarter, the unknown master painter was active during the construction of the

Parthenon, the stylistic influence of which can be seen here. He worked closely with a master potter whose vases were individually shaped in a prescribed range of configurations. With its refined designs so gracefully adapted to its shape, this *stamnos* embodies the finest achievements of red-figure pottery.



HEAD OF HADRIAN

Roman, 2nd cen.
Marble; h. 14⅛ in. (36 cm)
Katherine K. Adler Fund, 1979.350

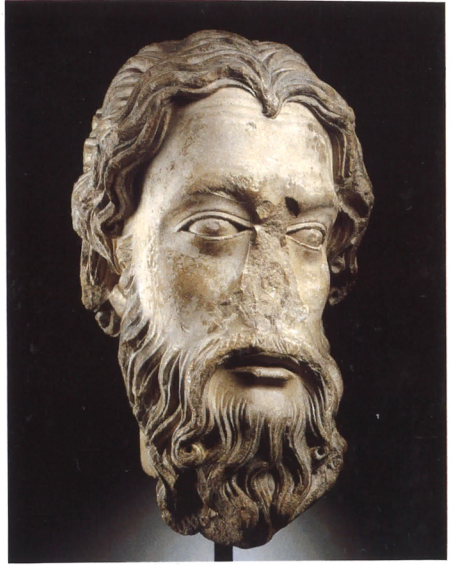
A skillful artist and architect, soldier and builder, Hadrian (r. 117–138) was, beyond all other Roman emperors, a lover of Greek art and culture. Here he is shown wearing the classical ringlets of the Greek philosophers; abandoning the age-old Roman custom of the clean shave, Hadrian also adopted the Greek beard. From this

point on, most Roman emperors (as well as ordinary men) were presented bearded. One of the few descriptions of Hadrian's appearance might provide an additional motive for this new fashion: "He was tall of stature and elegant in appearance; his hair was curled on a comb, and he wore a full beard to cover up the natural blemishes on his face." The shortness of the beard may indicate that Hadrian was in mourning. Thousands of portrait busts have been found from the times of the Roman republic and empire, and the best are evidence of the important contribution of the Romans to the genre of portrait sculpture. This fine marble example, a fragment of an original bust or full-figure sculpture, is among the approximately 150 portraits of the ruler known to have survived.

HEAD OF APOSTLE OR PROPHET

French, c. 1200
Limestone; h. 17 in. (43.2 cm)
Lucy Maud Buckingham Collection,
1944.413

Once thought to have been unearthed during the restoration of Paris in the mid-nineteenth century, the origin and identity of this impressive and stately medieval sculpture head remain a mystery. It comes from a columnlike biblical figure that was attached to the door jamb of a Gothic cathedral. Such figures were often mutilated during the French Revolution because of their association with the monarchy. They also suffered damage during the sixteenth-century Reformation, through exposure to the elements, and



at the hands of over-zealous restorers in the nineteenth century. Largely intact except for the defacement of the nose and some damage to the beard, this noble head has been attributed to various cathedrals in the Ile-de-France. Characteristic of stylistically transitional works produced around 1200, the head exudes the powerful spirituality of the older Romanesque style and also shows the beginnings of the more naturalistic, personalized depiction of the emerging Gothic aesthetic. Several stylized features, such as the elongation of the lower face and the unnaturally high furrowed brow, are combined with more subtly shifting facial planes. Although the hair and beard are sinuously patterned, the deep gouging indicates the Gothic's emphasis on the three-dimensional effects of form.