



Gravestone of Pollis, Unknown Artist

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Unknown Artist

Greek, about 480 B.C.

Marble

60 1/4 x 17 3/4 x 6 1/4 in.

90.AA.129

Questions for Teaching

Take time to look closely at the work of art.
What do you see?

What is the person holding? (*A shield and spear.*)

What does his body language communicate about him? (*He is crouched, his shield and spear are raised, and his head is facing the direction of the pointed spear, as if he is ready to go into battle.*)

If you could touch this sculpture, what words would you use to describe how it feels?

Look closely at the rectangular shape of the object and the material that was used to make it. What do you think the object might have been used for? (*The object marked an individual's grave.*)

What do you think is being communicated about the individual on this gravestone? (*Since he is depicted advancing into battle, he could be considered brave or heroic.*)

Notice the inscription above the figure. What kind of information typically appears on gravestones? What do you think the inscription on this gravestone says?

The inscription can be translated as, "I speak, I, Pollis dear son of Asopichos, not having died a coward, with the wounds of the tattooers, yes myself." Based on this inscription, what can students infer about ancient Greek attitudes toward an individual's participation in a war?



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Background Information

Proclaiming the bravery of the warrior whose grave it marked, this tall funerary **stele** shows a hoplite, or heavily armed foot soldier, advancing into battle with his shield raised and his spear ready. A sword hangs at his side, suspended from a strap that was originally added in paint, as were other details of the decoration. The **inscription** carved across the top identifies the warrior and how he died: "I speak, I, Pollis dear son of Asopichos, not having died a coward, with the wounds of the tattooers, yes myself." The tattooers, the enemy named in the inscription, were probably the Thracians, a fierce people who occupied the area to the north of Greece.

The stele's inscription combines the alphabets of both Athens and Corinth. This kind of writing was typical of Megara, the city-state located between the two, and indicates that this stele was a Megarian monument.