

# EXPLORERS & COLLECTORS

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Viscount Strangford



# Viscount Strangford

Antiquities collector and international diplomat

Percy Clinton Sydney Smythe, sixth Viscount Strangford (1780-1855), pursued diplomatic roles across the globe. Most notably, he was ambassador in Constantinople, now Istanbul, while Greece was occupied by Turkey. He discovered and collected Greek and Roman antiquities, giving some to Canterbury thanks to his son, a local MP.

## Biography

### Early years

Sir John Smith (or Smythe) of Ostenhanger, near Folkestone, Kent, was an ancestor of Percy Clinton Sydney Smythe, sixth Viscount Strangford (1780-1855). The Strangford peerage, created for Sir John's son in 1628, was Irish. Percy studied at Trinity College Dublin and took a 'Grand Tour' to Europe. He entered diplomatic service and worked in Portugal before appointment as ambassador to Sweden (1817-20) then Constantinople, now Istanbul (1820-24), when Greece was occupied by Turkey. A predecessor in that position, Lord Elgin, had acquired the British Museum's famous Parthenon marbles. The Greek war of independence from the Ottoman Empire lasted until 1830, when Athens became the capital of Greece.

In 1825 Strangford was made Baron Penshurst of Penshurst and sent as ambassador to St Petersburg, Russia. After a special mission to Brazil he retired but remained active in the House of Lords. He was also a director of the Society of Arts and one of its Vice-Presidents.

Strangford was very interested in literature, history and the arts. Lord Byron was a regular visitor when in Athens. Strangford wrote many articles and several books. He also arranged excavations. The collection of antiquities he amassed while based in Constantinople included the ancient Greek 'Strangford Apollo' and 'Strangford Shield' given by him, with over 100 other antiquities, to the British Museum. He collected mostly small items as he did not have a large estate to house them. Canterbury Museum received in 1844 the antiquities exhibited here thanks to Strangford's son, George Augustus Frederick Percy Sydney ([dates]), who was Member of Parliament for Canterbury 1841-52.

Byron described Strangford as "Hibernian Strangford, with thine eyes of blue,  
And boasted locks of red or auburn hue"

*Lord Byron, British Bards and Scotch Reviewers ([date])*

Other quotations reflecting Strangford's character:  
"Congratulations upon a result obtained by your rare abilities, firmness and perseverance."

*Duke of Wellington (1824)*

“Lord Strangford, whose judgement and feeling in every thing that relates to the fine arts are well known, exerted his influence...on this critical occasion, and procured a firman, directed to the Turkish commanders, that they should permit no violence to be offered to these temples, but carefully preserve them from injury...and it is not too much to say, that as the arts have been

indebted to one of our Ambassadors at Constantinople [Lord Elgin] for the preservation of part of them at home, so they have to another for what remains of them abroad.”

*Robert Walsh, Strangford's chaplain (1836)*



## **Items on display**

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### **Oil lamp with image from the Odyssey** Late 2nd century AD Roman, by a central Italian maker

Earthenware

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An oil lamp of unusual square shape, made by Caius Innius Bitus, who stamped his initials, CIVNBIT, on the back.

The image shows a scene from the Odyssey, the Greek epic poem by Homer. Odysseus (whom Romans called Ulysses) is sailing through dangerous waters off the coast of Ithaca, where Sirens lure mariners to their deaths on the rocks. He has put wax in the ears of his crew, so they don't hear the Sirens, and has tied himself to the ship's mast, to prevent the Sirens' call from making him throw himself into the sea.

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Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 994*



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## **Fragment of a sculptured frieze**

Unknown date and source

Stone

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Probably formed part of architectural decoration. The drilled holes create lines of shadow.

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Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4250*



## **Oil lamp with four burners**

**2nd century AD Roman, by a central Italian maker**

**Earthenware**

By the same maker as the Odysseus lamp (both stamped CIVNBIT).  
The helmeted head surrounded by stars may represent Night.

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical  
and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through  
purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 993*

## **Small vessels**

**4th to 2nd century BC Greek and 1st to 2nd century  
AD Roman**

**Earthenware**

Small flasks and jugs used for toilet oil, perfume and condiments.  
The colours were achieved by covering parts of the clay pots with  
slip (diluted clay solution). The iron oxide naturally present in the  
clay turned from red to black, or back to red, depending on firing  
conditions. Further pigments could be added to the slip.

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical  
and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through  
purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47



## **Small vase**

**1st to 4th century Greek**

**Earthenware**

With heads and birds on the bowl, and the faces of a man and  
woman across a swan.

*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4162*



## **Small vase with honeysuckle design**

*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4122*



## ***Small vase with honeysuckle design***

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Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4166



## ***Vase with honeysuckle design***

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Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4115



## ***Vase with honeysuckle design***

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Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4224



## ***Vase with honeysuckle design***

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Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4117



## ***Vase with honeysuckle design*** **From Megara**

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Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4110



## ***Small vase with horizontal grooves***

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Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4169



## ***Small urn with arabesque patterns***

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Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4163

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## **Small red and black globular vase**

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Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4168



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## **Vase with longitudinal furrows**

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4232



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## **Body of vase with band of Greek key pattern**

**From Megara, 1821**

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Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4094



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## **Urn with two female heads facing one another**

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4165



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## **Black two-handled vase of unusual shape**

**Found 1821**

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Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4090



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## **Vase**

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4238

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## Lamp

4th to 2nd century BC Greek and 1st to 2nd century AD Roman

Earthenware

The round oil lamps were mass-produced in moulds with a variety of decoration. Oil was poured in through a central hole and wicks for light placed in the corner spouts.

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 993*



## 'Lekythos' vase

5th century BC; found at Athens in 1811 (mouth found separately in 1821)

Earthenware

The Lekythos is a type of tall vase particular to ancient Athens. It contained oil for funerary offerings.

The image shows a crucial moment in the story of mythological hero Agamemnon. He had returned from years of war in Troy to find his wife, Clytemnestra, was having an affair with his cousin Aigisthus. The adulterous pair murdered Agamemnon and neglected to observe correct funeral rites. Agamemnon's daughter, Electra, sent her younger brother, Orestes, to safety. Years later he returned, and the two met and recognised one another at their father's tomb (represented by the column). They planned how to avenge his death.

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4105*

## 'Lekythos' and other vessels

5th to 2nd century BC; found in Greece and Turkey

Earthenware

Ancient Greek pottery is predominantly red and black. The colours were achieved by covering parts of the clay pots with slip (diluted clay solution) and firing at different temperatures. Early decoration was black-on-red, succeeded from about 500 BC by red-on-black. Several pots are made in the tall, slim Lekythos shape particular to Athens.



The decoration includes images of a charioteer driving quadriga (four-horse chariot) and a Nike (winged victory) pouring a libation (liquid offering) at an altar. The small black spouted vessel may be a child's feeding pot.

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47



## Vase

**With four figures, the two central ones fighting**

Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4119



## Lekythos

**Black figure with a four-horse chariot with a draped female figure**

Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4153



## Lekythos

**Red figure with Nike pouring at an altar [bits missg]**

Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4152



## Lekythos

**Design very worn**

Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4114



## Lekythos

Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4108



## Lekythos

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4107



## Globular vase with arabesque pattern

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4116



## Vase with diamond pattern

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4230



## Small vase

### Foliated pattern in red and black

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4107



## Vase

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4111



## Vase with winged horse lying down

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4229



## Small vase

### Gladiator holding a shield

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4103



## Lekythos

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Charioteer driving a four-horse chariot

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*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4154*



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## Small black vase

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*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4091*



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## Small black vase

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4227*



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## Small vase

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4170*



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## Spouted black vessel

.....  
May be a child's feeding pot.

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4093*



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## Two-handled vase

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4089*

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## Gravestone

Unknown date; probably from Turkey  
Stone

.....  
A tall gravestone inscribed 'Farewell having received these delights, Pollothemis'. The deceased is shown sitting beside her husband, with servants, laid table, and oxen pulling a plough.  
.....

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4270*



## Marble relief

Unknown date; found at Brusa (now Bursa), Turkey  
Stone

.....  
This square marble relief shows one of the labours of Hercules, who was tasked with stealing apples from the Garden of the Hesperides, guarded by a serpent. Hercules tricked Atlas into doing the task. The latter's cloak is shown flowing behind to suggest speed.  
.....

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4267*



## Fragmentary relief

Unknown date; found at Buyukdere, Istanbul, Turkey  
Stone

.....  
This fragment probably relates to the labours of Hercules.  
.....

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4266*



## Cosmetics container

Unknown date and source

Earthenware

.....  
The small round dishes inside this container had red iron oxide or ochre clays and charcoal mixed with olive oil for lip, cheek and eyebrow make-up.  
.....

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 1005*





## **Carved foot**

**Unknown date, probably Roman**

Marble

.....  
Found at Agrigentum, Sicily, in 1825 and bought by Strangford in St Petersburg.

.....  
Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4265



## **Headless statue of a male**

**Unknown date, probably Roman**

Stone

.....  
Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4261*

## **Terracotta sculptures and stone fragments**

**3rd to 1st century BC; found in Greece and Turkey**

Earthenware and stone

.....  
Figures sculpted in baked clay – terracotta – were very popular. Some may have been used for funerary or religious ritual, others for decoration or amusement. The seated figure of Dionysus (Bacchus) is a wine pitcher, his headdress the spout. Other terracottas include a wolf's head, a pomegranate, and a pig and bird, probably toys. The round terracotta tablet, of unknown purpose, is inscribed 'Augustus and Caesar', with the maker's initials 'SR'.

The partial foot of a marble sculpture, with sandal thongs imitating creepers, was found at Athens, the hand with scroll at Adrianople (modern Edirne), Turkey.

.....  
Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47



## ***Seated figure with headdress***

Terracotta

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 960*



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## ***Foot with sandal strap***

**Found at Athens**

.....  
Partial foot of a marble sculpture, with sandal thongs imitating  
creepers.

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4215*



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## ***Seated male***

Terracotta

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4199*



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## ***Seated figure***

Terracotta

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4174*



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## ***Lamp shaft in the form of a female holding her robe***

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*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4193*



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## ***Round tablet with inscription***

Terracotta

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4189*





## ***Head of a woman with a garland***

Marble

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4208



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## ***Female head***

Terracotta

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4184



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## ***Black and red glazed lamp***

Earthenware

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4233



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## ***Draped female figure holding round instrument in left hand***

Delos, 1823

Terracotta

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4183



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## ***Pedestal with a relief of a boy leaning against a tree***

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4187



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## ***Hand with a scroll***

Found at Adrianople (modern Edirne), Turkey

Marble

.....  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4197





## **Relief of a woman**

Terracotta

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4190*



## **Seated figure**

Terracotta

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4181*



## **Female figure with flowing robe**

From Delos

Terracotta

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4178*



## **Ivy-crowned head of Bacchus**

Marble

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4194*



## **Seated Bacchus**

Naxos, 1822

Terracotta

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4186*



## **Wolf's head**

Terracotta

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4223*





## **Pig or other animal**

Terracotta

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 1007*



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## **Bird or seal**

Terracotta

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4196*



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## **Pomegranate**

Terracotta

Cut to show the interior

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4182*

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## **Black two-handled pottery**

**5th to 1st century BC; found in Greece and Turkey**

Earthenware

.....  
Cups for drinking wine or water, of a type called a skyphos.

.....  
Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47



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## **Shallow black and red bowl**

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4157*



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## **Shallow black bowl**

.....  
Pattern inside of circular radiations including the branches of a palm or yew.

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4161*





## **Black bowl**

.....  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4160*



## **Portion of a terracotta cornice**

**4th to 1st century BC; found in Rhodes**

**Earthenware**

.....  
Building decoration fragment with Grecian honeysuckle and a face.

.....  
Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 959*



## **‘Lekythos’ vase**

**5th to 2nd century BC; found in Greece or Turkey**

**Earthenware**

.....  
The Lekythos is a type of tall vase particular to ancient Athens. It contained oil for funerary offerings. The colours were achieved by covering parts of the clay pots with slip (diluted clay solution). Iron oxide naturally present in the clay turned from red to black, or back to red, depending on firing conditions. Further pigments could be added to the slip. This example has leaf patterns.

.....  
Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries references 4106*



## **‘Lekythos’ vase**

**5th to 2nd century BC; found in Greece or Turkey**

**Earthenware**

.....  
The Lekythos is a type of tall vase particular to ancient Athens. It contained oil for funerary offerings. The colours were achieved by covering parts of the clay pots with slip (diluted clay solution). Iron oxide naturally present in the clay turned from red to black, or back to red, depending on firing conditions. Further pigments could be added to the slip.

.....  
Black-on-red decoration was favoured initially, like this example with charioteer driving a quadriga (four-horse chariot).

.....  
Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries references 4151*





## 'Lekythos' vase

5th to 2nd century BC; found in Greece or Turkey

Earthenware

.....  
The Lekythos is a type of tall vase particular to ancient Athens. It contained oil for funerary offerings. The colours were achieved by covering parts of the clay pots with slip (diluted clay solution). Iron oxide naturally present in the clay turned from red to black, or back to red, depending on firing conditions. Further pigments could be added to the slip.

Black-on-red decoration was favoured initially. From about 500 BC red-on-black predominated like this example depicting a woman holding a mirror.

.....  
Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries references 4149*



## Funerary monument

Unknown date; found at Brusa (now Bursa) Turkey, 1823

Stone

.....  
The marble with a woman holding a lyre or harp is inscribed 'Farewell to grieve no more, loved young and worthy Zosime', a Greek female name.

.....  
*Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4269*



## Funerary monument

Unknown date; probably found in Turkey

Stone

.....  
The fragment of votive stone with horse and rider is unidentified.

.....  
*Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4219*



## **Funerary monument**

**Unknown date; found at Adrianople (modern Edirne), Turkey**

Stone

.....  
The family scene shows a seated man and woman with attendants or family, including children, and a horse visible through a window.  
.....

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4192*



## **Funerary monument**

**Unknown date; probably found in Turkey**

Stone

.....  
The gravestone with two figures reclining, a tripod table and servant in front of them, is inscribed 'Farewell, worthy Nicotyche'.  
.....

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4268*



## **Terracotta reclining male figure**

**3rd to 1st century BC; found at Athens in 1821**

Earthenware

.....  
There are traces of red paint on the terracotta.  
.....

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4175*



## **Fragment of a votive dedication**

**3rd to 1st century BC; from a shrine in Mysia, north-west Turkey**

Marble

.....  
Inscribed with a Greek dedication to local god Zeus Olbios.  
.....

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4218*





## ***Sculptural fragment with hands holding a disc***

**Perhaps 5th to 4th century BC; source unknown**

**Marble**

.....  
Finely carved and probably from a discus-thrower sculpture.  
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Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4264*



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## ***Profile head crowned with laurel***

**Perhaps 5th to 4th century BC; found in Rhodes, 1824**

**Marble**

.....  
Laurel leaves are symbolic of victory.  
.....

Presented by Viscount Strangford to Canterbury Philosophical and Literary Institution Museum, 1844, and acquired through purchase of the museum by Canterbury Corporation, 1846-47  
*Canterbury Museums and Galleries reference 4191*

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