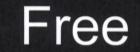
## The Domestication THE BRITISH MUSEUM



The Asahi Shimbun displays Room 3 10 August 2017



Supported by The British Museum Trust and sponsers of the International Training Programme B. Cellini (1545-1554). The Loggia dei Lanzi Florence

avoiding her deadly gaze by using a mirror shield, protect his mother from the king Polydectes he offered to exchange Medusa's head for his Perseus was the son of Danae of Argos. To mother's freedom. He approached Medusa, and removed her head.

had a dreadful appearance, with protruding tongues, serpents in their hair and the power to petrify (to turn to stone) all who caught their direct gaze. Medusa was the only mortal Gorgon, but could only be killed by decapitation.

Euryale and Medusa. They The Gorgons were three sisters named Sthenno,

The famous Gorgon myth: Medusa & Perseus

## THE DOMESTICATION OF FEAR

Throughout history humankind have resisted fear..

Fear of darkness, fear of hunger, fear of death, fear of vanishing...

People cope with these frightening thoughts by domesticating them.

The domestication of fear was displayed in the past in many different ways, by burying dead loved-ones in the home, by painting wild animals on the walls, or by wearing protective amulets.

1st century BCE



6th century BCE

Gorgons appeared as symbols of fear around the 8th century BC.

The Gorgon image was displayed on armour, coffins and grave goods, appropriating and channelling her fearsome power to protect the living and the dead.

Over time, the grotesque and wild Gorgon becomes more beautiful, the snake heads are tied and tamed. The fearsome monster is not only resisted, but domesticated.

> The British Museum

Pair of bronze greaves Made in Southern Italy about 550–500 BC

The protective Gorgon image hammered on each greave displays the typical characteristics of its time. The fearsome facial expression displays a (bone inlaid) fanged mouth, broad nose, prominent ears and protruding tongue.

Found in Ruvo, probably from a grave. GR 1856,1226.615 (Bronze 249) Terracotta scent bottle with Gorgon's head Made in East Greece about 610–550 BC

This small scent bottle highlights the dichotomy between the elegance of the form (and its aromatic contents) and the wildness of Gorgon image (and the fear it represents).

Found in Vulci, probably from a grave. GR 1836,0224.368 (Terracotta 1619)



