



OBJECT ID	2006.19.97
OBJECT NAME	Burner, Incense
MATERIAL	Bronze
OBJECT ENTITIES	Frangos, Diane (owned by)
ACCESS POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bronze</li> <li>cross</li> <li>hinge</li> <li>household accessory</li> <li>incense</li> <li>incense burner</li> <li>Medium</li> <li>Tiered</li> </ul>

## OBJECT DESCRIPTION

Medium-large bronze incense holder/burner. Holding chamber (which still has incense in it) is covered with a top with a tiered, banded design and flips up to reveal the chamber. The lid also has five holes that are arranged into the form of a Greek Orthodox cross around its midsection for the purpose of releasing steam. The bottom area is made up of a stem and a base that is also tiered with varied bands. A handle extends from the lid's hinge down to the base and has a nice curve that is embellished with small horizontal lines.

## ORIGIN

This medium-large incense burner/holder is a variation of the censer, which is large and hung in Greek Orthodox churches. I suspect that this petite and freestanding version would probably have been used in the home.

Incense is a material used to produce a fragrance when burned. It is a mixture of spices and gums burned during religious rites to produce a fragrant smoke. These grains of spices are obtained from trees in Eastern and tropical countries.

The priest places incense on the burning coals in the censer which the server swings to and fro, causing clouds of smoke to go heavenward. The ascending clouds of an incense in the Old Testament made up of fragrant gums and spices is an offering of earth's treasures to their Creator, symbolizing prayer. "Let my prayer be counted as incense before thee, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice ..." (Psalm 141: 2) Accordingly, the people would pray before the Holy of Holies while the priest within was making the sacrifice. "And the whole multitude of people were praying outside at the hour of incense." (Luke 1: 10) The prayers went up to heaven unto God as the smoke of the incense does leaving behind the sweetness of the odor of it all the sweetness of the Holy Spirit.

The burning of incense has several meanings. Its burning represents zeal in the service of the Lord. Its fragrance represents virtue, pleasing to God as it always is. The rising smoke represents prayer and shows that your prayers are rising too. The smoke reminds you to pray, if you are not praying. The fragrance of the smoke shows that our prayer and service are pleasing to God. God commanded Moses and His chosen people to use incense. The Church uses it in her service so the burning of incense has a biblical-historical weight.

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#### CITATION

Burner, Incense, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://collections.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 05/08/24.

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