



OBJECT ID	2008.21.1
OBJECT NAME	Picture, Needlework
MATERIAL	Cotton

OBJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a large needlepoint piece of mostly red and brown thread. The scene depicts a woman wearing a light blue shirt, brown skirt and pink apron surrounded by various foliage and animals. She is holding a loom. There are two sheep behind her and two at her feet. The piece has a floral border and in the left hand corner is stitched a Greek name. The piece is on a simple dark wooden frame with a hanging wire attached to the back.

ORIGIN

In the Classical world, weaving was the most important job that women had. Weaving was an important tradition for women in ancient Greece. In the Mycenaean Culture weaving produced one of the major exports and women who could weave were in high demand. In the Iliad Homer mentions that Athena wears a dress that she wove herself. In the Odyssey when Odysseus arrived at the Palace of Alcinous Homer writes: "White-armed Arete (the queen) was the first to break the silence. For in the fine cloak and tunic she saw him wearing she recognized some clothes that she herself had made with her women's help." Then there is the story of Penelope who wished not to marry until she finished a shroud for her father-in-law. Each night she undid what she had woven during the day and thus postponed any thought of marriage. Weaving was an occupation of the ladies of the highest status and of every other class.

The looms which they used were upright with a frame attached to a wall and the weaver would stand in front or portable so they could be carried and worked on anywhere. As the work progressed the work was wound up in a roll at the top. Small clay or stone weights were used to weigh down the ends of the warp. There were no spinning wheels, but use was made of the distaff and spindle and whorl. The raw material was held in a spinning basket. A rough clay semicylinder called an epinetron was used to prepare the wool. The ancient Greeks used a vertical loom with the warp strings stretched with weights. The cloth was rolled up at the top. All weaving was done by hand.

Weaving is depicted on my vases and other pieces or artwork. You can see the typical patterns which were used by these women

CITATION

Picture, Needlework, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://collections.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 12/19/25.