



OBJECT ID	2008.37.20
OBJECT NAME	Block, Printing
OBJECT COLLECTION	Greek Art Printing Company Artifact Collection (is part of)
MATERIAL	Lead; Wood
OBJECT ENTITIES	Damianos, John (is related to)
ACCESS POINTS	Greek Art Printing Company Monogram of Christ print Printing printing block Rho Wood

OBJECT DESCRIPTION

Wood and cast lead printing block. The print image on the block is that of the chi-rho symbol.

ORIGIN

Donated by John Damianos. The printing block was used in a linotype printing machine. Linotype presses allowed for the casting of entire lines to be printed at a time. Linotype printing was eventually succeeded by lithograph printing and computer typesetting during the 1960's and 1970's. This printing block was used by the Chicago-based, The Greek Art Printing Company. The chi-rho symbol is simply a combination of the capitalized Greek characters Chi and Rho. The origin of the symbol is from taking the first two characters of the Greek word for "Christ," Chi and Rho, and combining them as a monogram. The chi-rho is one of the earliest forms of christogram and invokes the crucifixion of Jesus and his status as the Christ. The Byzantine legend is that the chi-rho appeared to Emperor Constantine on the eve of a battle as a symbol of victory. Constantine had the chi-rho, or a symbol similar to it, placed on the shields and battle standards of his troops and was victorious at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (312 CE). With Constantine's victory, Christianity was legalized and the chi-rho became the official imperial symbol. The chi-rho was also used by pagan Greek scribes to mark notable passages in text, as the Chi and Rho are the first two letters of the Greek word "chreston," which translates to "good." The chi-rho also was used as a monogram for Chronos, the god of time, who also shares the Chi and Rho as the first two letters.

CITATION

Block, Printing, Greek Art Printing Company Artifact Collection, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://collections.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 04/26/24.