



News Release

For Immediate Release

September 12, 2014

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Muse Sarcophagus Back on Display at Hearst Castle®

San Simeon, CA.--After a lengthy process of conservation treatment that spanned several years, the Nine Muse Sarcophagus is back on display at Hearst Castle® in the hilltop location chosen by William Randolph Hearst.

This sarcophagus was carved around 230-250 A.D. The front of the sarcophagus depicts a young man with the Greek gods Apollo and Athena, along with the nine muses – the minor deities who inspired literary arts. The sides depict scenes from *The Odyssey*. The left side of the sarcophagus is a modern restoration.

One of the best known Roman sarcophagi in the world, the Muse Sarcophagus had once belonged to Prince Maffeo Colonna di Sciarra in Rome. In 1811, he gave it to a cousin in the renowned Barberini family. The Barberini family negotiated permission with the Italian government to sell and export numerous works of art, including the sarcophagus.

The sarcophagus was purchased at auction in New York in 1910 by William Randolph Hearst. He installed it before 1927 at his magnificent hilltop estate at San Simeon, and it has been there ever since. While it was in fairly good condition consistent with its age, the sarcophagus had deteriorated over the centuries. Furthermore, during the years that it has been displayed outdoors, it has also been exposed to environmental stresses.

The sarcophagus has been cleaned and consolidated, and fragments that became detached have been reintegrated. Other repairs that had affected the structural integrity of the sarcophagus were reversed. Eventually, the sarcophagus will be protected by a glass enclosure which will provide a controlled environment for this famous work of art.

Visitors who purchase a ticket for any tour of Hearst Castle can view the sarcophagus on the esplanade. Tour tickets can be purchased at www.hearstcastle.org, or by calling 1-800-444-4445. Reservations are encouraged, as space is limited.

Reporters and Editors: Photos of the Muse Sarcophagus available upon request. Subscribe to California State Parks News via e-mail at info@parks.ca.gov or via [RSS feed](#).

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