RUINSCAPE LESSON SHEET

Mount Nemrut

On land | Turkey | about 62 BCE | Grades 3-5

Name _____ **Date** _____

A king built himself a tomb on a mountaintop, with giant statues of himself sitting beside the gods.

Read the story

Mount Nemrut is in the land once called Commagene, a small kingdom between Rome and Persia. Around 62 BCE, King Antiochus I built a royal tomb-sanctuary on the peak. Workers piled up a huge cone of loose rocks, about 50 meters tall, which may cover his burial.

On terraces to the east and west, Antiochus placed giant seated statues of gods and himself, guarded by lions and eagles. The gods mix Greek and Persian ideas. Zeus is also Oromasdes, and Apollo is also Mithras, showing how the king saw himself as part of both worlds.

Over time, earthquakes knocked the heads off the statues. They now sit on the ground in front of the bodies, which is how most people know them today.

How it ended

Rome took over Commagene in 72 CE, and the festivals stopped. Earthquakes toppled the heads, and snow and wind wore away the stone. The mountain stayed lonely and remote for almost 2,000 years.

Key words

- tumulus: a large mound of earth or stones built over a grave
- terrace: a flat area cut into a hillside
- colossal: extremely large

Wow facts

- The heads are about 2 meters tall.
- A carved lion relief has stars on it that some think show the night sky in 62 BCE.
- No one has found the king's actual burial chamber under the rock pile.

Talk about it

1. Why do you think the king put statues of himself next to the gods?

_____

_____

2. How does mixing Greek and Persian gods show the kingdom's place in the world?

Try this

Draw a map of Mount Nemrut as it looked at its busiest. Label three things people did there.

Quick quiz

Circle the best answer.

1. **Who built the monuments on Mount Nemrut?**
   - **A.** Antiochus I
   - **B.** Cyrus
   - **C.** Ramesses II
   - **D.** Augustus
2. **Why are the heads on the ground?**
   - **A.** Earthquakes knocked them off
   - **B.** They were made that way
   - **C.** Vikings moved them
   - **D.** They were buried
3. **What may be under the giant rock pile?**
   - **A.** A lake
   - **B.** The king's tomb
   - **C.** A volcano
   - **D.** A palace

Go further

Open ruinscape.live/mount-nemrut/ for photos, the Then and Now picture where there is one, and links to museum collections and research. On the globe, Lyra Kael can fly the class there and answer questions.

Answer key (for teachers)

1. A. King Antiochus I of Commagene built them around 62 BCE.
2. A. Earthquakes toppled the heads off the statues.
3. B. The tumulus may cover the king's burial, which has not been found.