

Long ago, at the time of the ancient Greeks, a powerful king lived in a place called Phrygia. (Phrygia was where the country Turkey is today.) The king's name was Midas.

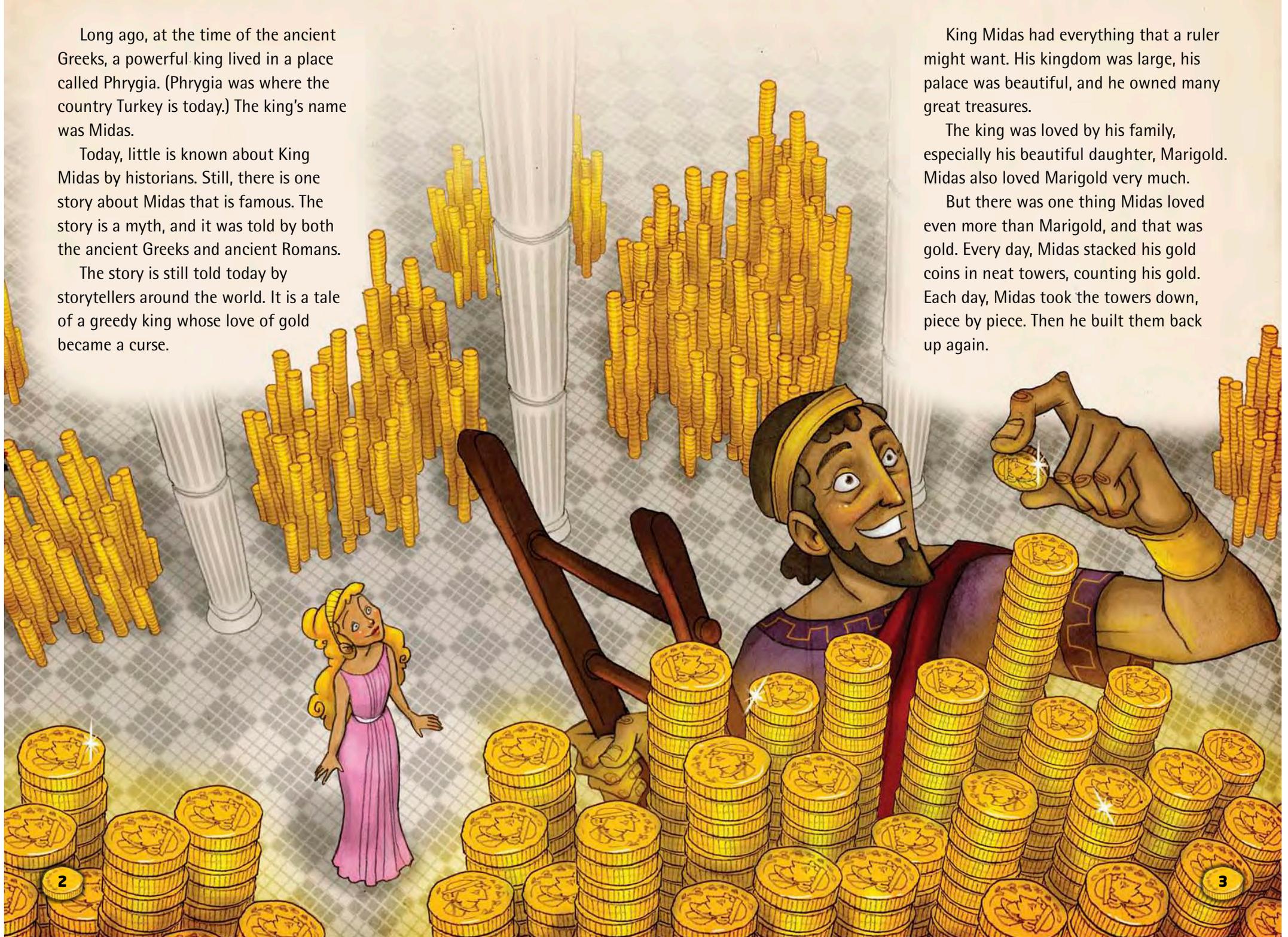
Today, little is known about King Midas by historians. Still, there is one story about Midas that is famous. The story is a myth, and it was told by both the ancient Greeks and ancient Romans.

The story is still told today by storytellers around the world. It is a tale of a greedy king whose love of gold became a curse.

King Midas had everything that a ruler might want. His kingdom was large, his palace was beautiful, and he owned many great treasures.

The king was loved by his family, especially his beautiful daughter, Marigold. Midas also loved Marigold very much.

But there was one thing Midas loved even more than Marigold, and that was gold. Every day, Midas stacked his gold coins in neat towers, counting his gold. Each day, Midas took the towers down, piece by piece. Then he built them back up again.



One morning, the god Dionysus and his good friend, Silenus, were walking on the path next to King Midas's garden when Silenus became tired and decided to have a nap.

"You keep walking," said Silenus. "I'll meet you a little later." Dionysus waved goodbye and kept walking.

Silenus sat on a bench in King Midas's garden. He leaned against a tree filled with birds and fell asleep. As he slept, he snored. His loud snoring scared all the birds away.

When Silenus finally woke up, he realized he didn't know how to get to Dionysus's house. Silenus was lost.



In the palace, Midas was taking a break from counting his gold. He looked out a window and saw all the birds fly out of a tree in his garden. "What is scaring all those birds?" he asked his daughter.

He and Marigold went to the garden to find out.

In the garden, Midas and Marigold found Silenus.

"I am a friend of Dionysus," said Silenus. "Can you help me find his house?"

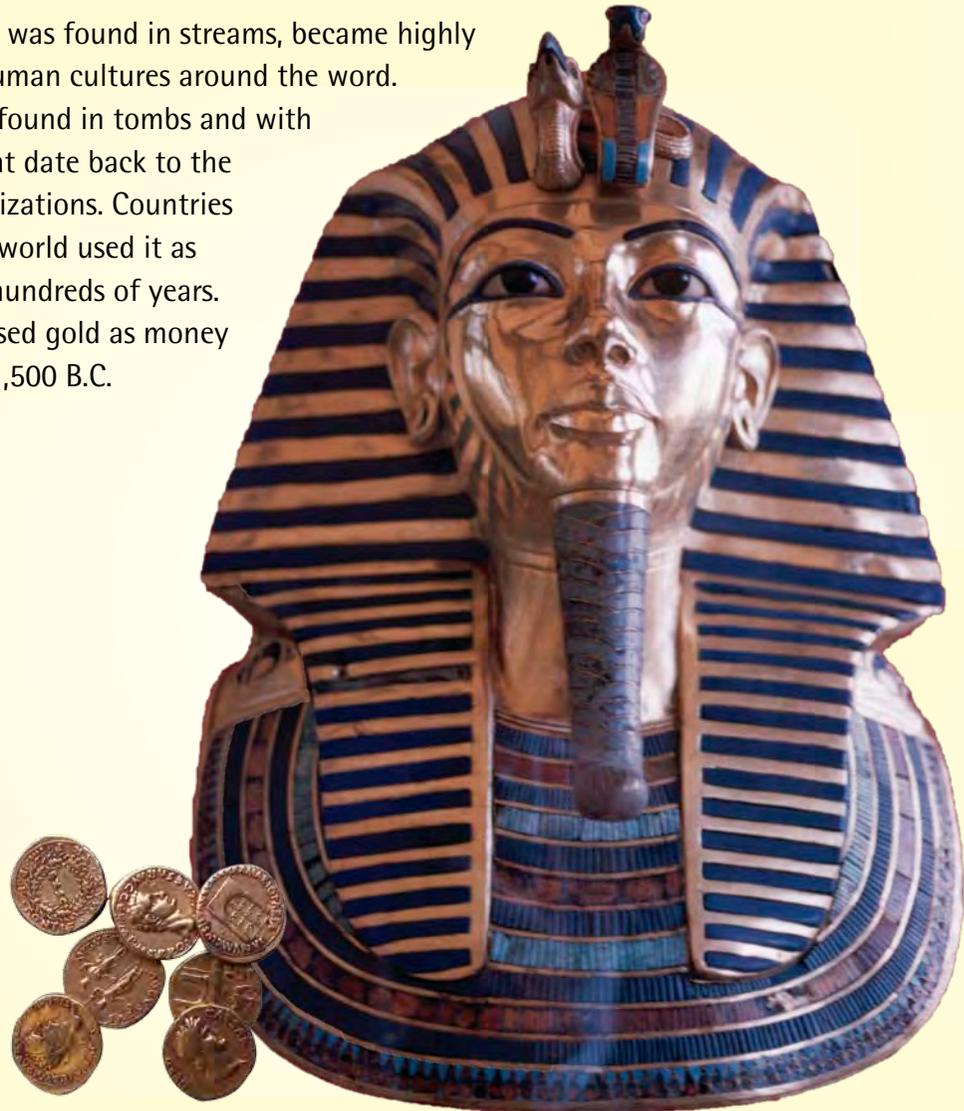
"Dionysus is my friend, too," Midas said. "I'll take you to his house, which is not far from here. But first, come to my palace and share a meal with us!"

Facts About Gold

What Is Gold?

Gold is a very valuable, shiny metal which is usually yellow in color. It is one of the first metals people knew and used. It is believed that gold was first used in the Middle East, where the first known civilizations began. The first gold objects date back more than 6,000 years.

Gold, which was found in streams, became highly valued in human cultures around the world. It has been found in tombs and with artifacts that date back to the earliest civilizations. Countries around the world used it as money for hundreds of years. Egyptians used gold as money as early as 1,500 B.C.

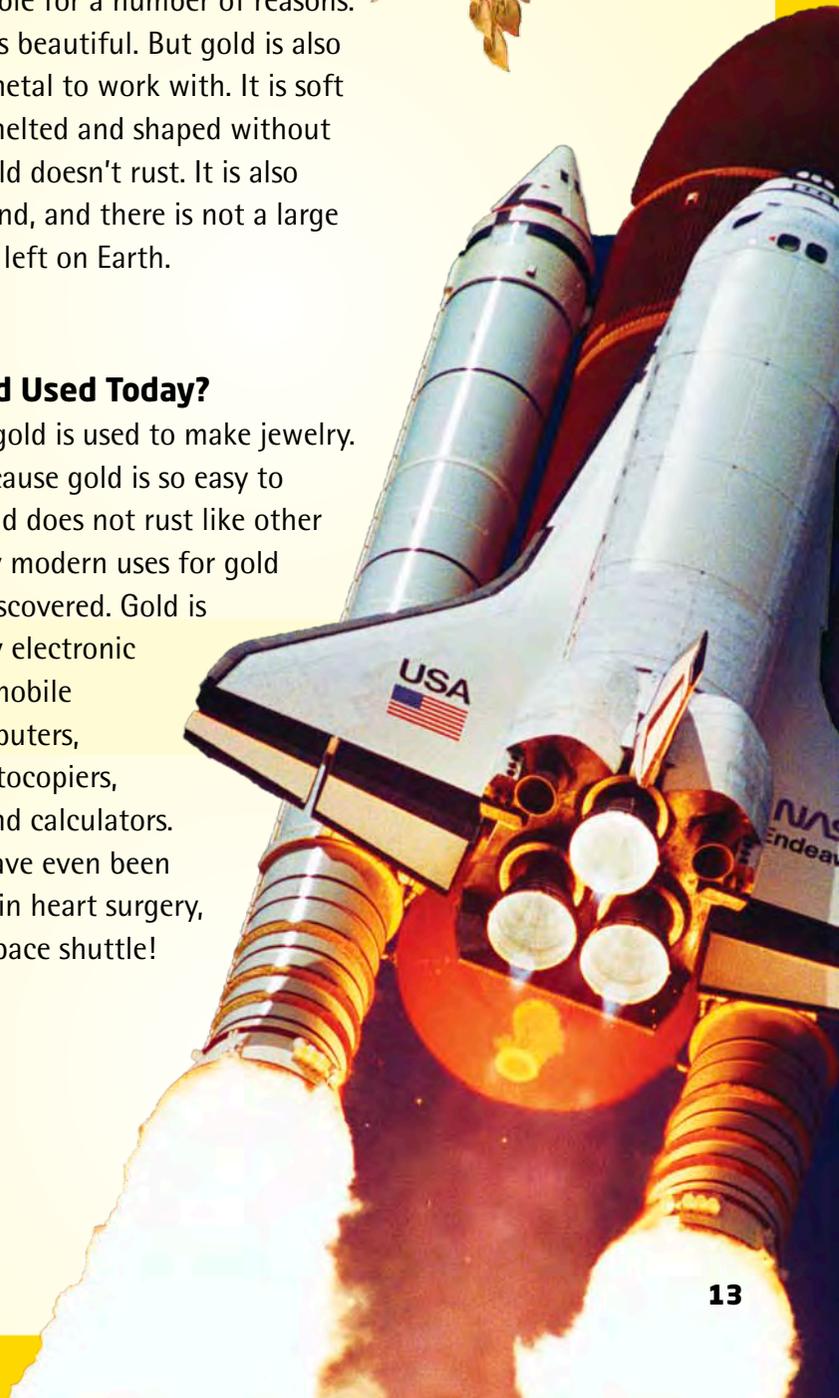


Why is Gold so Valuable?

Gold is valuable for a number of reasons. Of course it is beautiful. But gold is also a very easy metal to work with. It is soft and can be melted and shaped without difficulty. Gold doesn't rust. It is also difficult to find, and there is not a large amount of it left on Earth.

How is Gold Used Today?

Today, most gold is used to make jewelry. However, because gold is so easy to work with and does not rust like other metals, many modern uses for gold have been discovered. Gold is used in many electronic devices like mobile phones, computers, printers, photocopiers, televisions and calculators. Gold parts have even been used in cars, in heart surgery, and on the space shuttle!



Word Play Treasure

Use the words below to complete the paragraphs.

objects ruler gold treasure caused discovered

On July 5, 2009, a man named Terry Herbert discovered something incredible. Herbert was searching a field in central England with a metal detector when the metal detector started beeping. When the ground was dug up, a great _____ was found. It consisted of over 3,500 pieces. The pieces were from hundreds of _____ from the seventh or eighth centuries, and most of them were made of _____. Many experts think this great treasure probably belonged to a _____ from a kingdom that used to be on the land long ago.

A British museum paid Herbert and the owner of the land £3.28 million (just under \$5.3 million) for the treasure.

The discovery _____ a lot of excitement in the small town of Staffordshire where it was found!

Make up a story about the photo. What is in the treasure chest? Where did it come from? Who buried it? Who found it? Use as many of the words below as you can. Use a dictionary if necessary.

objects tomb ruler gold treasures statues caused discovered

