CLASSICAL ART

Greek art began in the Cycladic and Minoan civilizations, and gave birth to Western Classical Art. It absorbed influences of Eastern civilizations, of Roman art and its patrons, and the new religion of Orthodox Christianity in the Byzantine era. Greek art is mainly five forms: architecture, sculpture, painting, pottery and jewellery making.

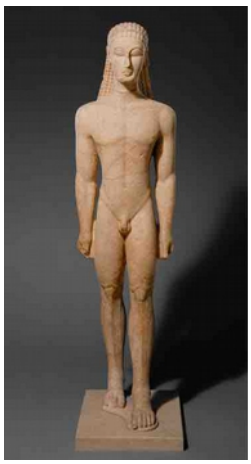
The art of ancient Greece is usually divided stylistically into four periods: the Geometric, Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic. The Geometric age is usually dated from about 1000 BC, although in reality little is known about art in Greece during the preceding 200 years, traditionally known as the Greek Dark Ages. The 7th century BC witnessed the slow development of the Archaic style as exemplified by the black-figure style of vase painting. Around 500 BC (shortly before the onset of the Persian Wars 480 BC to 448 BC) is usually taken as the dividing line between the Archaic and the Classical periods, and the reign of Alexander the Great (336 BC to 323 BC) is taken as separating the Classical from the Hellenistic periods. From some point in the 1st century BC onwards "Greco-Roman" is used, or more local terms for the Eastern Greek world.

Kleobis and Biton, kouroi of the Archaic period, ca. 580 BC

The Sculpture of ancient Greece is the main surviving type of fine ancient Greek art, as, with the exception of painted pottery very little ancient Greek painting survives. Modern scholarship identifies three major stages in monumental sculpture in bronze and stone: the Archaic (from about 650 to 480 BC), Classical (480-323) and Hellenistic. At all periods there were great numbers of Greek terracotta figurines and small sculptures in metal and other materials.

The earliest form of free standing figure, attempting to convey some sense of naturalism is the Kouros. Kouroi are beardless, take a formulaic advancing posture, and are most often nude. Taken from the style of Egyptian figures, Greek kouroi often have their left leg extended forward as though walking; however, the figurine looks as though it could be either standing still or taking a long stride.

The *Metropolitan Kouros* (so named as it is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum, New York) is an early example of life-sized statuary in Greece. This marble statue of a Greek youth, carved in Attica, and marking the grave of a young Athenian aristocrat, has an Egyptian pose, and is otherwise separated from the block of stone.



Metropolitan Kouros. ca. 590–580 BC

The Greeks decided very early on that the human form was the most important subject for artistic endeavour. Seeing their gods as having human form, there was little distinction between the sacred and the secular in art—the human body was both secular and sacred. A male nude of Apollo or Heracles had only slight differences in treatment to one of that year's Olympic boxing champion. The statue, originally single but by the Hellenistic period often in groups, was the dominant form, although sculptures in relief were also important, some often carved in such "high relief" that they were almost free-standing.

Moschophoros, known as *The Calf Bearer,* is dated ca. 560 BC and estimated to have originally measured 1.65 meters in height. An inscription on the plinth claims that it was dedicated to Athena the goddess of wisdom, by a prominent citizen of Attica who offered his own likeness to Athena. He has a calf on his shoulders, representing the sacrificial offering he is about to give to the goddess. His thick beard, is a symbol of adulthood. He wears a thin cloak over a nude body, which indicates that it is a representation of the donor, a respectable and well-recognized citizen.

The challenge of representing man and animal together is successfully accomplished by this Archaic sculpture. The calf's legs are held firmly, making a bold X-shaped composition. This interaction between the calf and the calf-bearer represents a strong, inseparable bond between the two. The man is smiling, a unique and new feature that started from around this time in the art of early Greek statues.

Free-standing figures share the solidity and frontal stance characteristic of Eastern models, but their forms are more dynamic than those of Egyptian sculpture. After about 575 BC, figures such as these, both male and female, began wearing the so-called archaic smile. This expression, which has no specific appropriateness to the person or situation depicted, may have been a device to give the figures a distinctive human characteristic.

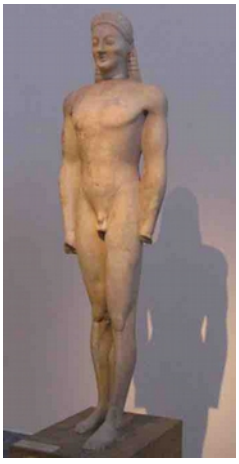
Melos Kouros, Mid 6th c BC

Three types of figures prevailed—the standing nude male youth (kouros, plural kouroi), the standing draped girl (kore, plural korai), and the seated woman. All emphasize and generalize the essential features of the human figure and show an increasingly accurate comprehension of human anatomy.

The Melos Kouros is a fine example of the 6th century kouros associated with the softer ionic style, which compared to the hardness of the Doric-Peloponnesian one, is characterized by a more elegant and slender figure, with greater agility and with a more subtle anatomical definition.

The boy, fractured in the ankles and feet, stands, as in the typical representations of the kouroi, erect and naked, with the left foot slightly advanced. The arms are straight and his torso narrow at the hips. The face is youthful, with a typical archaic smile, and long hair hanging over the shoulders.

Note that the surface of the statue does not rise and fall as if muscles and bones were rippling somewhere beneath. The anatomy is indicated by clearly defined sharp ridges and shallow grooves so that the details appear to lie on the surface. In the overall visual effect, the details of the human body have been reduced to a surface pattern. Such patterning is typical of kouroi and archaic art in general.



Kouros 560/550 BC

The sculptor uses the divisions of the body to establish a set of rigid proportions based on simple mathematical relationships. Most obviously, the width of the figure is equal to its depth and approximately one quarter of its total height. The body is proportioned so that the distance from the base of the foot to the base of the knee cap is also one quarter of the figure's total height. This one to four proportion based on the total height is also found with the distance between the navel and the chin, and between the top of the head and the base of the neck at the clavicles. The latter relationship makes the head itself one sixth of the statue's height. Far larger in proportion than one observes on the actual human body, the height of the kouros's head corresponds exactly to the width of the figure at its hips.

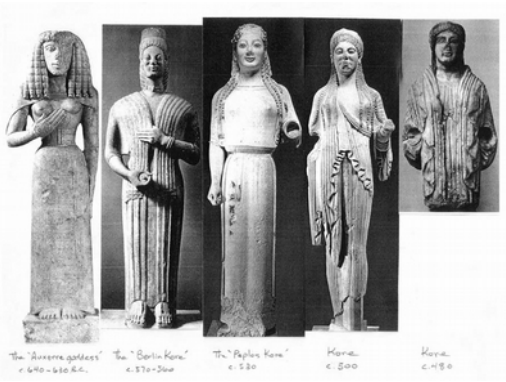
The life size (1.94m.) Kouros found at Anavyssos, Attica (530 BC) displays increasing realism while still retaining the formal stance derived from Egyptian art: the hips are wider but the musculature of the torso and the definition of the knees are stil represented as a surface pattern.

Found at the cemetery of Anavyssos we know the name of the man for whom this sepulchral or votive statue was carved in marble. A verse was carved on the base:

> "Stand and grieve at the tomb of Kroisos the dead,
> in the front line slain by the wild Ares"
> (Translated by Thomas Sakoulas)

Anavyssos Kouros

Korai statues are the female equivalent of Kouros, created during the Archaic period (600 – 480 BC) either as votive or commemorative statues. Many Kore (maiden) statues have been unearthed at the acropolis, most dating back to the beginning of the 6th century BC. There are several distinct differences between the two, the most significant one being the fact that Kouros statues were almost always portrayed in the nude, while Kore are always of a young age and always clothed. Consequently, when studying the statues, we tend to focus on the development of anatomy in Kouros, and on the development of the dress for the Kore along with the facial expression.



Commissioned by wealthy patrons, either to serve the deities in place of the patron, or, less often as commemorative grave markers for members of a family. Inscriptions on the base (and sometimes on their dress) of a short paragraph documents the statue's function, the patron, and the artist. According to the most accepted interpretations of the archaeological evidence, Kore statues never represented deities.

The original and alternative reconstructions of the Peplos Kore in the *Gods in Colour* exhibition, at left as Artemis.

The **Peplos Kore i**s one of the most well-known examples of Archaic Greek art. The 1.18 metre high white marble statue was made around 530 BC, and originally was colourfully painted.

The name of the statue comes from the heavy woollen garment worn by the girl, the Dorian peplos, which was no longer actually in fashion when the statue was made. Underneath it, the girl wears a thin chiton which peeps out from the sleeves and hem. Bore holes on the head and shoulders indicate that the statue was decorated with bronze head decorations (probably a wreath) and shoulder fibulae The left arm was made of a separate piece of stone and is now lost.

It is suggested that this statue type does not depict mortal girls but goddesses. Her posture does not correspond to the late archaic Kore, "who steps forward with her left leg, holds her skirt with her left hand and holds fruit in the crook of her right arm". On the Peplos Kore, there are bore holes in the lowered right arm and the bent left arm which suggest she held a bow and arrows or a shield and helmet.

The movement towards anatomical precision and realism is further developed in the form of the 1.95 metres tall **Aristodikos Kouros**, where the Greek artist achieves a greater accuracy of natural form, and exhibits greater knowledge and understanding of the subtleties of human anatomy. Every muscle, bone, and feature is treated realistically in a manner that describes the human figure instead of suggesting it.

The head is smaller than those of earlier kouros, the crotch line is at half the height of the body and the anatomy is refined to accurately describe muscle groups and bone structure under the skin. The statue seems to take a step forward but the immobility of the rigid pelvis and spine do not allow for the illusion of movement. Along with the striding leg the forward thrust of the arms, which are detached from the body, infers the space into which the figure is moving. With the "Aristodikos" Kouros the Greek artist is one step closer to the classical ideal where the body is understood as a system of actions and reactions of the different elements.

Aristodikos Kouros c. 510-500 BC

With this development the Greek artist was ready to take the next step towards understanding the human body as a system of parts that act and react to each other's movements. This consequently became one of the main preoccupations of the sculptors of the classical era.

Kritios Ephebe c 480 BC

The marble **Kritios Boy** or **Kritian Boy** is the first statue from classical antiquity known to use contrapposto (counterpoise); Kenneth Clark called it "the first beautiful nude in art." It is possible, even likely, that earlier Bronze statues had used the technique, but if they did, they have not survived

Whether or not the Athenian sculptor Kritios was the innovator, with the *Kritios Boy* the Greek artist has mastered a complete understanding of how the different parts of the body act as a system. The statue moves away from the rigid and stiff pose of the Archaic style. *Kritios Boy* presents a more relaxed and naturalistic contrapposto pose with the weight on one foot. This stance forces a chain of anatomical events: as the pelvis is pushed diagonally upwards on the left side, the right buttock relaxes, the spine acquires an "S" curve, and the shoulder line dips on the left to counteract the action of the pelvis.
It set the rule for later sculptors like Praxiteles and Lysippos, whose contrapposto, or ponderation, is more emphasised than the "subtle equilibrium of outline and axis which is to be the basis of classical art exhibited by the Kritios Boy's "delicate balance of movement."

The *Kritios Boy* exhibits a number of other critical innovations that distinguish it from the Archaic Kouroi from the seventh and sixth century BC that paved its way. The Archaic style relied more on geometrical shapes to define the contours of the human body. The muscular and skeletal structure of *Kritios Boy* are depicted with unforced lifelike accuracy of flesh and bone, with the rib cage naturally expanded as if in the act of breathing, with a relaxed attitude and hips which are distinctly narrower. Sculptors had begun to break away from the rules of the Archaic style and follow representation that was closer to nature.

First appearing in the early 5th century BC, contrapposto is considered a crucial development in the history of Ancient Greek art as it marks the first time in Western art that the human body is used to express a psychological disposition. The style was further developed and popularized by sculptors in the Hellenistic and Imperial Roman periods, fell out of use in the Middle ages, and was later revived during the Renaissance, for example Michaelangelo's *David*.

The ***Doryphoros,*** "Spear-Bearer"; of Polykleitos is one of the best known Greek sculptures of classical antiquity, depicting a solidly built, muscular, standing warrior, originally bearing a spear balanced on his left shoulder. Somewhat above life-size, the lost bronze original of the work would have been cast ca. 440 BC, but it is today known only from later (mainly Roman period) marble copies. The work nonetheless forms an important early example of both Classical Greek contrapposto and classical realism; as such, the iconic *Doryphoros* proved highly influential elsewhere in ancient art.

A well-preserved Roman period marble copy of the *Doryphoros* of Polykleitos

Polykleitos is known as the best sculptor of men, with the primary subjects of his works being male athletes with idealized body proportions. He was interested in the mathematical proportions of the human form, which led him to write an essay, the Kanon, on the proportions of humans. The *Doryphoros* is an illustration of his writings in Kanon on the proportions of the body parts. Polykleitos achieved a balance between muscular tensions and relaxation due to the chiastic principle that he relied on. "Scholars agree that Polykleitos based his calculations on a single module, perhaps the terminal section of the little finger, to determine the corresponding measurements of each body part". (Chiastic structure is a balance of contrasting elements; e.g. tension and relaxation in a sculpture, or A,B,B,A rhyme structure in poetry.)

Further sculptures attributed to Polykleitos are the *Discophoros* ("Discus-bearer"), *Diademenos* ("Youth tying a headband"), a *Hermes* and *Astragalizontes* ("Boys Playing at Knuckle-bones").

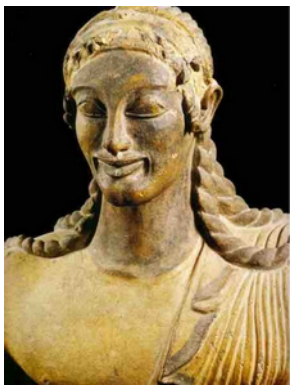
Sometime in the 2nd century CE, the Greek medical writer Galen wrote about the *Doryphoros* as the perfect visual expression of the Greeks' search for harmony and beauty, which is rendered in the perfectly proportioned sculpted male nude:

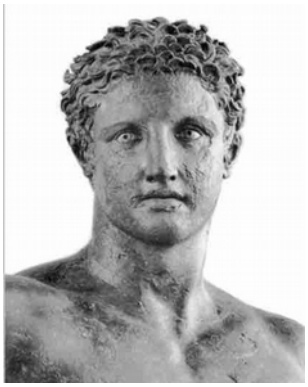
> *Chrysippos holds beauty to consist not in the commensurability or "symmetria" [ie proportions] of the constituent elements [of the body], but in the commensurability of the parts, such as that of finger to finger, and of all the fingers to the palm and wrist, and of those to the forearm, and of the forearm to the upper arm, and in fact, of everything to everything else, just as it is written in the Canon of Polyclitus. For having taught us in that work all the proportions of the body, Polyclitus supported his treatise with a work: he made a statue according to the tenets of his treatise, and called the statue, like the work, the 'Canon'.*

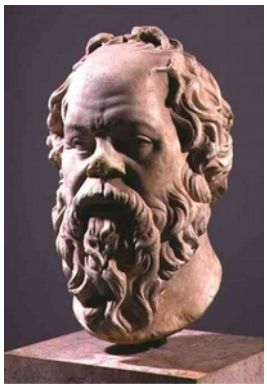
Statue B **Statue A**

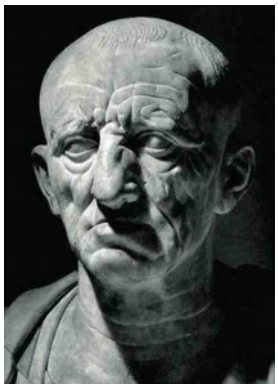
The ***Riace bronzes,*** also called the **Riace Warriors**, are two full-size Greek bronzes of naked bearded warriors, cast about 460–450 BC that were found in the sea near Riace in 1972. They are two of the few surviving full-size ancient Greek bronzes (which were usually melted down in later times), and as such demonstrate the superb technical craftsmanship and exquisite artistic features that were achieved at this time. The two bronze sculptures are simply known as “Statue A”, (1.98m.) referring to the one portraying a younger warrior, and “Statue B”, (1.97m.) the more mature-looking of the two.

The *Riace bronzes* are major additions to the surviving examples of ancient Greek sculpture. They belong to a transitional period from archaic Greek sculpture to the early Classical style, disguising their idealized geometry and impossible anatomy under a distracting and alluring "realistic" surface. They are fine examples of contrapposto - their weight is on the back legs, making them more realistic than is the case with many other Archaic stances. Their musculature is clear, yet not incised, and looks soft enough to be visible and realistic. The bronzes' turned heads not only confer movement, but also add life to the figures. The asymmetrical layout of their arms and legs adds realism to them. The eyes of Statue A are formed of calcite (originally supposed to be ivory), while their teeth are made with silver. Their lips and nipples are made of copper. At one time, they held spears and shields, but those have not been found. Additionally, Warrior B once wore a helmet pushed up over his head, and it is thought that Warrior A may have worn a wreath over his.









These four heads show the evolution of the sculpted face towards greater realism.

1: Etruscan (central Italy) Apollo of Veii, ca. 550–520 BC
2: Head of *Paris* or *Perseus*. Attributed to Euphranor of Corinth, ca. 340–330 BC
3: Portrait bust of Socrates. Marble, Roman artwork (1st century), perhaps a copy of a lost bronze statue made by the Greek sculptor Lysippos (ca. 390 – 300 BC)
4: Portrait bust, once thought to be of Cato the Elder. First century copy of an original 80 – 70 BC

The ***Charioteer of Delphi*** (also known as *The Rein-Holder*) is one of the best known ancient Greek statues, and one of the best preserved examples of classical bronze casts. It is considered a fine example of the "Severe" style, and one of the most important sculptures of ancient Greece, partly because it vividly represents the passage from the Archaic conventions to the Classical ideals. It exemplifies the balance between stylized geometric representation and idealized realism, thus capturing the moment in history when western civilization leaped forward to define its own foundations that braced it for the next few millennia.

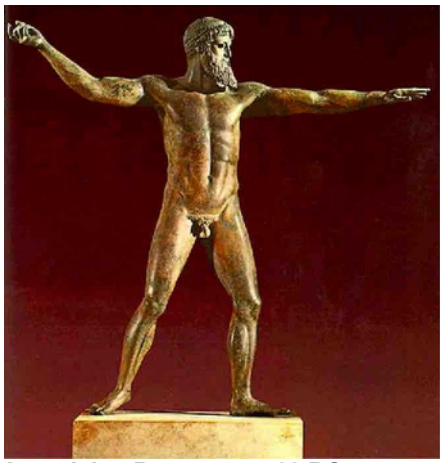
Iniohos (he who holds the reins) as is his Greek name, was part of a complex of statues that included his four horses and the chariot upon which he stood. With the exception of his missing left arm, the bronze statue is preserved in a remarkable state. Most of the surface details are evident as the attractive green patina has protected the bronze for centuries when it was buried underground.

The *Charioteer of Delphi*, 478 or 474 BC

What remains of the entire complex of statues besides the Charioteer are small parts of the horses and the reins as witnesses to the lost, grandiose, three dimensional composition.

The sculpture depicts the driver of the chariot race at the moment when he presents his chariot and horses to the spectators in recognition of his victory. Although victorious the charioteer stands with admirable modesty and faces the crowd in total control of his emotions. This Self-discipline was a sign of civilized man in Classical Greece, and a concept that permeates the art of this period. The ability to restrain one's emotions especially during the most challenging of moments came to define the entire Classical era of Greek art and thought.

The statue's eyelashes and the lips are made of copper, while the head band in the shape of a meander (an ornamental pattern of interlocking lines) is impressed in silver, and the eyes are made of onyx. The detailed curls of his wet hair and soft beard speak of the preceding race in intimate and subtle details that lend the sculpture an aura of luxury and idealized realism.



Artemision Bronze ca. 460 BC

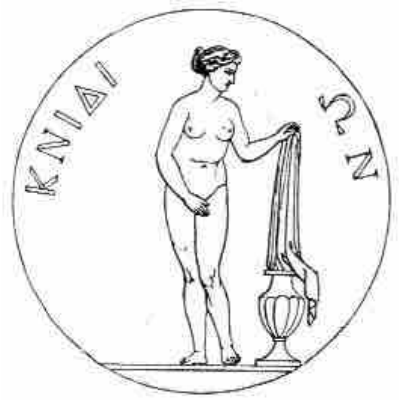
The **Artemision Bronze** (often called the **God from the Sea**) was recovered from the sea off Cape Artemision, in northern Euboea. It represents either Zeus or Poseidon, is 2.09 metres in height and would have held either a thunderbolt, if Zeus, or a trident if Poseidon. However, the iconography of Ancient Greek pottery portrays Poseidon wielding the trident, when in combat, in a stabbing motion; Zeus is depicted fighting with his arm raised, holding the lightning bolt overhead, in the same position as the Artemision Bronze. The empty eye-sockets were originally inset, probably with bone, as well as the eyebrows (with silver), the lips, and the nipples (with copper). The sculptor is unknown.

The statue is essentially a larger version of an extensive series of smaller solid bronze figurines extending back into the late 7th century BC, all of which strike the same pose and represent Zeus.

The god is caught at the moment of pause in the full potentiality of his coming movement, described by Carol Mattusch: "the figure has the potential for violence, is concentrating, poised to throw, but the action is just beginning, and we are left to contemplate the coming demonstration of strength." It is an original work of great strength in the Severe style that preceded the fifth-century classical style, dated to ca. 460 BC. A comparison can be made with the *Charioteer of Delphi* a roughly contemporaneous bronze.

The **Aphrodite of Knidos** (or Cnidus) was an Ancient Greek sculpture of the goddess Aphrodite created by Praxiteles of Athens around the 4th century BC. It is one of the first life-sized representations of the nude female form in Greek history, displaying an alternative idea to male heroic nudity. Aphrodite is shown nude, reaching for a bath towel while covering her pubis, which, in turn leaves her breasts exposed. Up until this point, Greek sculpture had been dominated by male nude figures. The original Greek sculpture is no longer in existence; however, many Roman copies survive of this influential work of art. Variants of the *Venus Pudica* (suggesting an action to cover the breasts) are the Venus de' Medici and the Capitoline Venus.

Roman copies of the Aphrodite of Knidos.



Engraving of a coin from Knidos showing the Aphrodite of Cnidus

The *Aphrodite of Knidos* was commissioned as the cult statue for the Temple of Aphrodite at Knidos. It depicted the goddess Aphrodite as she prepared for the ritual bath that restored her purity, discarding her drapery with one hand, while modestly shielding herself with the other. The placement of her hands obscures her pubic area, while simultaneously drawing attention to her exposed upper body. The statue is famed for its beauty, and is designed to be appreciated from every angle.

The ***Discobolus*** of Myron ("discus thrower") was completed at the start of the Classical Period. Dating from about 460–450 BC. it shows a youthful ancient Greek athlete throwing a discus. The original Greek bronze is lost but the work is known through numerous Roman copies, both full-scale ones in marble, which was cheaper than bronze, and smaller scaled versions in bronze.

Kenneth Clark has observed in *The Nude* that "by sheer intelligence Myron has created the enduring pattern of athletic energy. He has taken a moment of action so transitory that students of athletics still debate if it is feasible, and he has given it the completeness of a cameo."

The moment thus captured in the statue is an example of *rhythmos:* harmony and balance. Myron is often credited with being the first sculptor to master this style. Naturally, as always in Greek athletics, the *Discobolus* is completely nude. His pose is said to be unnatural to a human, and today considered a rather inefficient way to throw the discus. Also there is very little emotion shown in the discus thrower's face, and, Clark observes, "to a modern eye, it may seem that Myron's desire for perfection has made him suppress too rigorously the sense of strain in the individual muscles". The other trademark of Myron embodied in this sculpture is how well the body is proportioned, the *symmetria*.

The potential energy expressed in this sculpture's tightly wound pose, expressing the moment of stasis just before the release, is an example of the advancement of Classical sculpture from the Archaic. The torso shows no muscular strain, however, even though the limbs are outflung.

Aphrodite c100BC.

This fragmented ***Aphrodite*** from ca.100 BC shows well the contrapposto style: the twist of the torso and S curve of the full figure, along with the natural folds and flow of the clothing.

The ***Venus de Milo*** is one of the most famous works of ancient Greek sculpture. Initially it was attributed to the sculptor Praxiteles, but based on an inscription that was on its plinth, the statue is now thought to be the work of Alexandros of Antioch.

Created sometime between 130 and 100 BC, the statue is believed to depict Aphrodite, the Geek goddess of love and beauty. However, some scholars claim it is the sea-goddess Amphitrite, venerated on Milos. It is a marble sculpture, slightly larger than life size at 2.03 metres high. Part of an arm and the original plinth were lost following the statue's discovery. The statue is named after Aphrodite's Roman name, Venus, and the Greek island of Milos, where it was discovered.

Venus de Milo 130 – 100 BC.

Aphrodite Eros and Pan c100BC.

This delightful Sculptural group, 1.55 metres in height, showing Aphrodite repelling Pan with her sandal with the help of Eros, is carved in white marble from Paros in the Hellenistic Era, 100 BC.

The goddess was the embodiment of love and beauty, eliciting desire from deities and mortals alike. The *Iliad* cites her as being the daughter of Zeus and Dione, but later poems depict her birth as having sprung from sea foam near the island of Cythera.

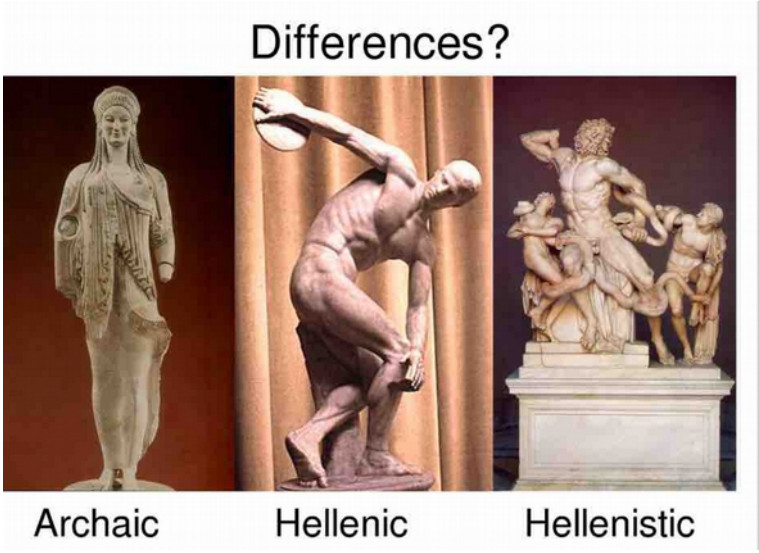
One of the most notable legends pertaining to Aphrodite is that of the *Judgment of Paris*. Paris—a young Trojan prince—was assigned the task of judging Athena, Hera, and Aphrodite and lay to rest the debate amongst the gods of which of them was the fairest. Rather than judge on looks alone, Paris took into account the bribes set forth by each goddess. Hera spoke of great riches and rule over a vast kingdom; Athena presented wisdom unparalleled to other men; Aphrodite promised marriage to the most beautiful woman on Earth (Helen). Paris accorded the victory to Aphrodite and awarded her the golden apple. The rape of Helen followed subsequently, and this legend was immortalized and famed in *The Iliad* as the cause of the Trojan War.

The ***Winged Victory of Samothrace***, also called the ***Nike of Samothrace***, was created in about the 2nd century BC. It is 2.44 metres high and has been described as "the greatest masterpiece of Hellenistic sculpture". It shows a mastery of form and movement which has impressed critics and artists since its discovery.

The sculpture is one of a small number of major Hellenistic statues surviving in the original, rather than Roman copies. Only the right wing isn't original, and was added by mirroring the left wing. Created not only to honour the goddess, Nike, it was probably also to commemorate a naval action, and conveys a sense of action and triumph as well as portraying artful flowing drapery, as though the goddess were descending to alight upon the prow of a ship.

Nike's lost right arm is believed to have been raised, cupped round her mouth to deliver the shout of Victory. The work is notable for its convincing rendering of a pose where violent motion and sudden stillness meet, for its graceful balance and for the rendering of the figure's draped garments, compellingly depicted as if rippling in a strong sea breeze. The stylistic portrayal of the wings is a source of scholarly discussion, as the feather pattern resembles neither the wings of birds in nature nor wings in Greek art.

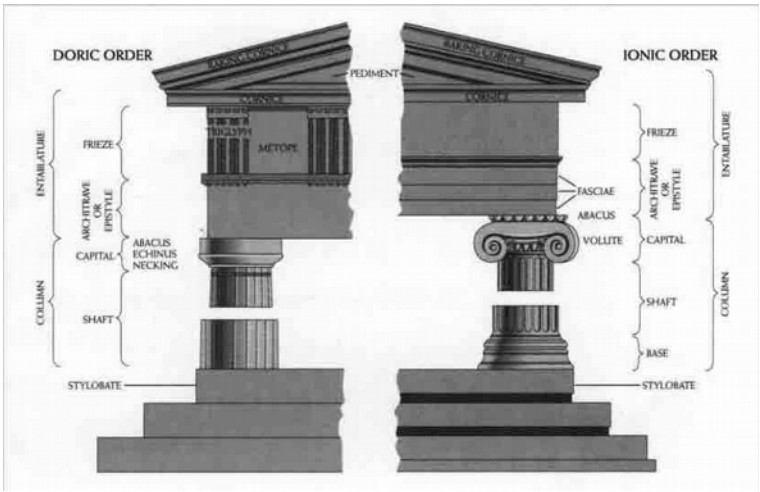
The art historian H. W. Jansonhas pointed out that unlike earlier Greek or Near Eastern sculptures, *Nike* creates a deliberate relationship to the imaginary space around the goddess, straining to keep steady in the wind that has carried her to the prow of the ship. This expanded space heightens the symbolic force of the work; the wind and the sea are suggested as metaphors of struggle, destiny and divine help or grace. This interplay between a statue and the space around it would become a common device in baroque and romantic art, about two thousand years later. It is present in Michelangelo's sculpture of *David*: David's gaze and pose indicates the position of his adversary Goliath and his awareness of the moment of action, a perception of space around and in front of the statue which is rare in ancient art.



Kore* 520 – 510 BC** ***Discobolus **ca. 460-450 BC** ***Laocoön and His Sons*** **ca. 200 BC**

This stylistic comparison shows the development from the static single figures of the Archaic period to the figures and groups full of movement and energy over the course of 500 years.

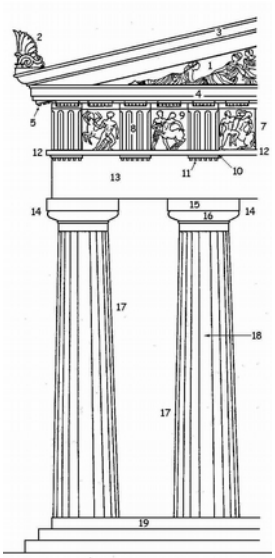
An **order** in architecture is a certain assemblage of parts subject to uniform established proportions, regulated by the office that each part has to perform. Stemming from Ancient Geek and Roman civilization to the present day the **architectural orders** are the styles of classical architecture, each distinguished by its proportions and characteristic profiles and details, and most readily recognizable by the type of column employed. The three orders of architecture — the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian — originated in Greece.



To these the Romans added the Tuscan order, which they made simpler than Doric, and the Composite, which was more ornamental than the Corinthian.

Whereas the orders were essentially structural in Ancient Greek architecture, which made little use of the arch until its late period; in Roman architecture, where the arch was often dominant, the orders became increasingly decorative elements, except in porticos and similar uses. Columns, over the course of years, shrank into half-columns emerging from walls or turned into pilasters.

The architectural order of a classical building is akin to the mode or key of classical music; the grammar or rhetoric of a written composition. It is established by certain *modules* like the intervals of music, and it raises certain expectations in an audience attuned to its language.



The **Doric** is the most easily recognized of the orders, by the simple circular capitals at the top of columns. Originating in the western Doric region of Greece, it is the earliest and in its essence the simplest of the orders, though still with complex details in the entablature above.

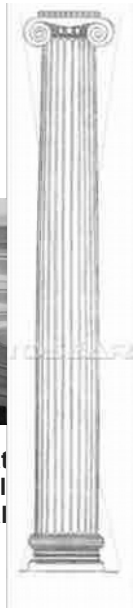
The Greek Doric column was fluted or smooth-surfaced, and had no base, dropping straight into the stylobate or platform on which the temple or other building stood. The capital was a simple circular form, with some mouldings, under a square cushion that is very wide in early versions, but later more restrained. Above a plain architrave, the complexity comes in the frieze, where the two features originally unique to the Doric, the triglyph and guttae (water repelling projections beneath the triglyphs) are skeuomorphic memories of the beams and retaining pegs of the wooden constructions that preceded stone Doric temples. In stone they are purely ornamental.

The **Ionic** capital is characterized by the use of volutes. The Ionic columns normally stand on a base which separates the shaft of the column from the stylobate or platform while the cap is usually enriched with egg-and-dart.

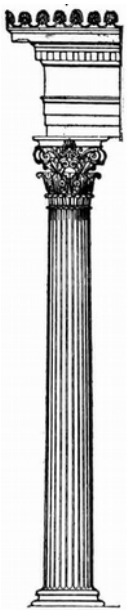
Egg-and-dart, also known as egg-and-tongue, egg and anchor, or egg and star, are terms that refer to an ornamental device adorning the fundamental quarter-round, convex ovolo profile of moulding, consisting of alternating details on the face of the ovolo —typically an egg-shaped object alternating with a V-shaped element (e.g. an arrow, anchor, or dart). The device is carved or otherwise fashioned into ovolos composed of wood, stone, plaster, or other materials.

Egg-and-dart moulding at the top of an Ionic capital at the Jefferson Memorial

Egg-and-dart enrichment of the ovolo moulding of the Ionic capital was used by ancient Greek builders, an example being the Erechtheion at the Acropolis of Athens. It was used later by the Romans and continues to adorn capitals of modern buildings built in Classical styles.



Of the three classical canonic orders, the Ionic order has the narrowest columns. Since Vitruvius, a female character has been attributed to the Ionic (in contrast to the masculine Doric).



The **Corinthian** order is the last developed of the three principal classical orders. When classical architecture was revived during the Renaissance the **Tuscan** and **Composite** were added. The Corinthian, with its offshoot the Composite, is the most ornate of the orders, being characterized by slender fluted columns and elaborate capitals decorated with acanthus leaves and scrolls.

The Corinthian order is named for the Greek city-state of Corinth, to which it was connected in the period. However, according to the Roman architectural historian Vitruvius (ca. 80–70 BC – after ca. 15 BC), the column was created by the sculptor Callimachus, probably an Athenian, who drew acanthus leaves growing around a votive basket. Its earliest use can be traced back to the Late Classical Period (430–323 BC). The earliest Corinthian capital was found in Bassae, dated at 427 BC.

Proportion is a defining characteristic of the Corinthian order: the "coherent integration of dimensions and ratios in accordance with the principles of '*symmetria'* are noted by Mark Wilson Jones, who finds that the ratio of total column height to column-shaft height is in a 6:5 ratio, so that, secondarily, the full height of column with capital is often a multiple of 6 Roman feet, while the column height itself is a multiple of 5.

In its proportions, the Corinthian column is similar to the Iconic column, though it is more slender, and stands apart by its distinctive carved capital. The abacus upon the capital has concave sides to conform to the out-scrolling corners of the capital, and it may have a rosette at the centre of each side. Corinthian columns were erected on the top level of the Roman Colosseum, holding up the least weight, and also having the slenderest ratio of thickness to height.

The **Parthenon** is a former temple on the Athenian Acropolis, dedicated to the goddess Athena, whom the people of Athens considered their patron. Construction began in 447 BC when the Athenian Empire was at the peak of its power. It was completed in 438 BC, although decoration of the building continued until 432 BC. It is the most important surviving building of Classical Greece and is considered the zenith of the Doric order. Its decorative sculptures are considered some of the high points of Greek art. The Parthenon is regarded as an enduring symbol of Ancient Greece, Athenian democracy and Western civilisation; and one of the world's greatest cultural monuments. To the Athenians who built it, the Parthenon and other Periclean monuments of the Acropolis were seen fundamentally as a celebration of Hellenic victory over the Persian invaders, and as a thanksgiving to the gods for that victory.

Reconstructed colour scheme of the entablature on a Doric temple

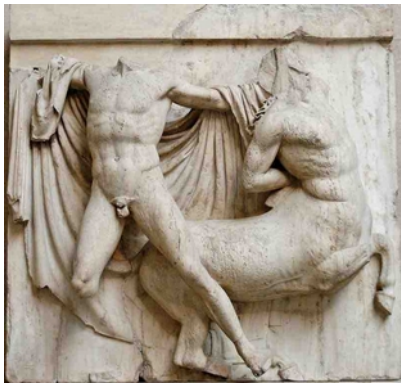
Varvakeion Athena

Athena Parthenos is a lost massive chryselephantine (gold and ivory) sculpture of the Greek Goddess Athena, made by Phidias and his assistants, beginning the work around 447 BC, and housed in the Parthenon. It was the most renowned cult image of Athens, and considered one of the greatest achievements of the most acclaimed sculptor of ancient Greece. *Parthenos* 'maiden, virgin' was an epithet of Athena. There have been many replicas and works inspired by the statue, in both ancient and modern times. Athena was the Greek goddess of wisdom.

The statue depicts Athena after winning in combat. With her left hand, she supports a shield with carvings of an Athenian battle against the Amazons. On her right rests the winged goddess of victory Nike. Her left knee is slightly bent, her weight slightly shifted to her right leg. Her peplos is cinched at the waist by a pair of serpents, whose tails entwine at the back. Locks of hair trail onto the goddess's breastplate. The Nike on her outstretched right hand is winged. The exact position of Athena's spear, often omitted, is not fully determined.

The statue was 26 cubits (around 11.5 metres) tall and stood on a pedestal measuring 4 by 8 metres. The sculpture was assembled on a wooden core, covered with shaped bronze plates covered in turn with removable gold plates, with ivory surfaces on the goddess's face and arms; the gold weighed 44 talents, the equivalent of about 1,100 kilograms. The Roman Varvakeion Athena (200–250 CE) is considered to be the most faithful reproduction of the chryselephantine statue made by Phidias.

The **metopes of the Parthenon** are the surviving set of what were originally 92 square carved plaques of Pentelic marble originally located above the columns of the peristyle on the Acropolis. Possibly made by several artists, the master builder was certainly Phidias. Carved between 447 and 442 BC most of them are much damaged, being systematically destroyed by Christians at the time of the transformation of the Parthenon into a church towards the sixth or the seventh century CE. Typically, they represent two characters per metope either in action or repose.



South Metope of Centaurs and Lapiths

Each side of the building represents a fight: Amazonomachy (a mythical battle between the ancient Greeks and the Amazons) in the west, the fall of Troy in the north, gigantomachy (the battle between the Giants and the Olympian Gods) in the east and the fight of Centaurs and Lapiths in the south. The warlike theme seems to be an evocation of the opposition between order and chaos, between the human and the animal (sometimes animal tendencies in the human), between civilization and barbarism. This general theme is considered to be a metaphor for the Median wars and thus the triumph of the city of Athens.

Fallen Warrior from the Pediment, Parthenon

Trojan archer from the temple of Aphaia II

Further destruction was caused in 1687 when a powder magazine installed in the building by the Ottomans exploded during the siege of Athens by the Venetians. The best preserved metopes are those of the Lapiths and Centaurs from the south side, now in the British Museum.

This colourfully painted reconstructed life-size sculpture of a warrior from the east pediment of the Temple of Aphaia II shows that originally the sculptures, along with the temples, were painted to give them greater realism. Ironically, it is the purity of the white marble, when these were rediscovered or reassessed during the 15th/16th centuries, that has inspired sculptors from the Renaissance to modern times.

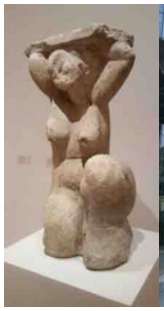
The Caryatid porch of the Erechtheion, Acropolis

A **caryatid** is a sculpted female figure serving as an architectural support taking the place of a column, or a pillar supporting an entablature on her head. The Greek term *karyatides* literally means "maidens of Karyai, an ancient Peloponnese town. Karyai had a temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis: "As Karyatis she rejoiced in the dances of the nut-tree village of Karyai, those Karyatides, who in their ecstatic round-dance carried on their heads baskets of live reeds, as if they were dancing plants".

The origins of the term are unclear. Vitruvius, possibly wrongly, stated that the female figures of the Erechtheion represented the punishment of the women who were condemned to slavery after betraying Athens in the Persian Wars. However, well before the Persian Wars, female figures were used as decorative supports in Greece and the ancient Near East. Whatever the origin may have been, the association of caryatids with slavery persists and is prevalent in Renaissance art.

A sculpted male statue serving as an architectural support, an **atlas** or **telamon,** is a male version of a caryatid.

The caryatids have inspired artists ever since their 'rediscovery' during the Renaissance.



Modigliani, *Caryatid* **Supreme court, Poland**

Laocoön and his sons c.200 BC

The statue of ***Laocoön and His Sons*** has been one of the most famous ancient sculptures ever since it was excavated in Rome in 1506 and placed on public display in the Vatican,where it remains. It is very likely the same statue praised in the highest terms by the main Roman writer on art, Pliny the Elder. The figures are near life-size and the group is a little over 2 m. in height. It shows the Trojan priest Laocoön and his sons being attacked by sea serpents.

The group has been called "the prototypical icon of human agony" in Western art, and unlike the agony often depicted in Christian art showing the Passion of Jesus and martyrs, this suffering has no redemptive power or reward. The suffering is shown through the contorted expressions of the faces which are matched by the struggling bodies, especially that of Laocoön himself, with every part of his body straining.

Pliny attributes the work, to three Greek sculptors but does not give a date or patron. In style it is considered "one of the finest examples of the "Hellenistic baroque" and certainly in the Greek tradition, but it is not known whether it is an original work or a copy of an earlier sculpture.

In Virgil, Laocoön was a priest of Poseidon who was killed with both his sons after attempting to expose the ruse of the Trojan Horse by striking it with a spear. In Sophocles, on the other hand, he was a priest of Apollo, who should have been celibate but had married. The serpents killed only the two sons, leaving Laocoön himself alive to suffer. In other versions he was killed for having had sex with his wife in the temple of Poseidon, or simply making a sacrifice in the temple with his wife present. In this second group of versions, the snakes were sent by Poseidon and in the first by Poseidon and Athena, or Apollo, and the deaths were interpreted by the Trojans as proof that the horse was a sacred object. The two versions have rather different morals: Laocoön was either punished for doing wrong, or for being right.

Ancient Greek pottery, due to its relative durability, comprises a large part of the archaeological record of ancient Greece, and since there is so much of it (over 100,000 painted vases are recorded), it has exerted a disproportionately large influence on our understanding of Greek society. The shards of pots discarded or buried in the 1st millennium BC are still the best guide available to understand the customary life and mind of the ancient Greeks. There were several vessels produced locally for everyday and kitchen use. Finer pottery from regions such as Attica was imported by other civilizations throughout the Mediterranean.

Vase, Archaic period

Various types and shapes of vases were used throughout the region. Not all were purely utilitarian; large Geometric amphorae were used as grave markers, kraters in Apulia served as tomb offerings and Panathenaic Amphorae seem to have been looked on partly as *objets d'art*, as were later terracotta figurines. Some were highly decorative and meant for elite consumption and domestic beautification as much as serving a storage or other function, such as the krater with its usual use in diluting wine.

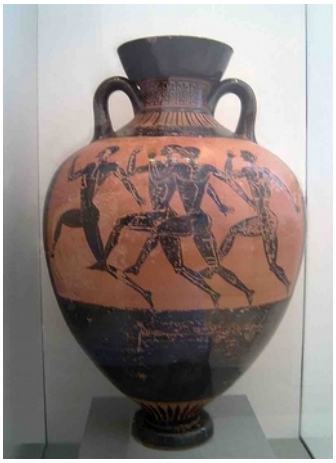
The rise of vase painting saw increasing decoration. Geometric art in Greek pottery was contiguous with the late Dark Age and early Archaic Greece, which saw the rise of the Orientalizing period.

Black-figure pottery painting is one of the styles of painting on antique Greek vases. It was especially common between the 7th and 5th centuries BC, although there are later specimens Stylistically it can be distinguished from the preceding orientalising period and the subsequent red figure pottery style. Figures and ornaments in silhouette were painted on the body of the vessel. Delicate contours were incised into the paint before firing, and details could be reinforced and highlighted with opaque colours, usually white and red.

Exekias (545-520 BC) is generally considered to be the absolute master of the black-figure style, which reaches its apex with him. His significance is not only due to his masterful vase painting, but also to his high quality and innovative pottery. He signed 12 of his surviving vessels as potter, two as both painter and potter. His scenes are usually monumental and the figures emanate a dignity previously unknown in painting. In many cases he broke with Attic conventions. For his most famous vessel, the Dionysus cup, he was the first to use a coral-red interior coating instead of the customary red colour.

Amphora by Exekias, Achilles and Ajax engaged in a board game, c.540-530 BC

Also masterly is an amphora with his visualization of Ajax and Achilles engaged in a board game. Not only is the portrayal detailed, Exekias even conveys the outcome of the game. Almost in the style of a speech balloon he has both players announce the numbers they cast with their dice—Ajax a three and Achilles a four. This is the oldest known depiction of this scene, of which there is no mention in classical literature.



Competition painted on a Panathenaic prize amphora, c. 480/470 BC

Among black-figure Attic vases, the Panathenaic prize amphoras play a special role. After 566 BC—when the Panathenaic celebrations were introduced or reorganized—they were the prize for the winners of sport competitions and were filled with olive oil, one of the city's main export goods. On the front they routinely bore the image of the goddess Athena standing between two pillars on which cockerels perched; on the back there was a sports scene. The shape was always the same and was only modified slightly over the long period of its production. The belly amphora was, as its name suggests, originally especially bulbous, with a short neck and a long, narrow foot. Around 530 BC the necks become shorter and the body somewhat narrower. Around 400 BC the vase shoulders were considerably reduced in width and the curve of the vase body looked constricted. After 366 BC the vases were again more elegant and become even narrower.

Red-figure pottery developed in Athens around 520 BC and remained in use until the late 3rd century BC. It replaced the previously dominant style of black-figure vase painting within a few decades. Its modern name is based on the figural depictions in red colour on a black background, in contrast to the preceding black-figure style with black figures on a red background. The most important areas of production, apart from Attica, were in southern Italy. The style was also adopted in other parts of Greece. Etruria (central Italy) also became an important centre of production outside the Greek World.

Bilingual Amphora 530-520 BC by the Andokides Painter

The **Andokides Painter** was an ancient Athenian vase painter, active from approximately 530 to 515 B.C. His work is unsigned and his true name unknown. He was identified as a unique artistic personality through stylistic traits found in common among several paintings. This corpus was then attributed by John D. Beazley to the Andokides Painter, a name derived from the potter Andokides, whose signature appears on several of the vases bearing the painter's work. He is often credited with being the originator of the red-figure vase painting technique. To be sure, he is certainly one of the earliest painters to work in the style. In total, fourteen amphorae and two cups are attributed to his hand. Six of the amphorae are "bilingual", meaning they display both red-figure and black-figure scenes.

Attic red-figure vases were exported throughout Greece and beyond. For a long time, they dominated the market for fine ceramics. Only few centres of pottery production could compete with Athens in terms of innovation, quality and production capacity. Of the red figure vases produced in Athens alone, more than 40,000 specimens and fragments survive today. From the second most important production centre, Southern Italy, more than 20,000 vases and fragments are preserved. Starting with the studies by John D. Beazley and Arthur Dale Trendall, the study of this style of art has made enormous progress. Some vases can be ascribed to individual artists or schools. The images provide evidence for the exploration of Greek cultural history, everyday life, iconography and mythology.

A **stele** is a stone or wooden slab, generally taller than it is wide, erected in the ancient world as a monument. The surface of the stele often has text, ornamentation, or both. These may be inscribed, carved in relief, or painted. Stelae were created for many reasons. Grave stelae were used for funerary or commemorative purposes. Stelae as slabs of stone would also be used as ancient Greek and Roman government notices or as boundary markers. Stelae were occasionally erected as memorials to battles.

This Attic Grave relief (160 cm. high and 91 cm. wide) was carved from around 350-340 BC. On the architrave the main depicted individuals are identified by an inscription as **Thraseas** and **Euandria**.

Funeral Stele of Thrasea and Euandria, c. 365 BC

Grave monuments of this kind were regularly set up along streets of graves at the edges of Greek cities, and this stele is an early example of this new type of depiction. At the time of its creation, the relief was deeper and the figural depictions distinct from the background. The figures although blocky, retain a strong, plastic liveliness. On the left stands the bearded Thraseas, wearing a cloak. On the right sits Euandria, wearing a cloak and a chiton on a cushioned stool. She wears sandals on her feet which rest on a footstool. The two hold hands and look into each other's eyes as a symbol of their former connection and of their parting by death. A servant woman with the short hair typical of slaves is depicted with her head in her hands as a strong symbol of the household's grief. This gesture with the cheek cupped in her hand is one of deep grief, also seen in other artworks. The young slave adds further depth to the relief, since she is found in the background and worked in less detail.

Panel and wall painting

The Greeks seem to have valued painting above even sculpture, and by the Hellenistic period the informed appreciation and even the practice of painting were components in a gentlemanly education. By the end of the Hellenistic period, technical developments included modelling to indicate contours in forms, shadows, foreshortening, some probably imprecise form of perspective, interior and landscape backgrounds, and the use of changing colours to suggest distance in landscapes, so that "Greek artists had all the technical devices needed for fully illusionistic painting". However, due to the perishable nature of the materials used and the major upheavals at the end of antiquity, not one of the famous works of Greek panel painting has survived, nor even any of the copies that doubtlessly existed.

One of the Pitsa panels, the only surviving panel paintings from Archaic Greece

The most common and respected form of art, according to authors like Pliny or Pausanius, were panel paintings, individual, portable paintings on wood boards. The techniques used were encaustic (wax) painting and tempera. Such paintings normally depicted figure scenes, portraits and still-lifes; we have descriptions of many compositions. They were collected and often displayed in public spaces.,

The tradition of wall painting in Greece goes back at least to the Minoan and Mycenaean Bronze Age, with the lavish fresco decoration of sites like Knossos, Tiryns and Mycenae. It is not clear, whether there is any continuity between these antecedents and later Greek wall paintings.

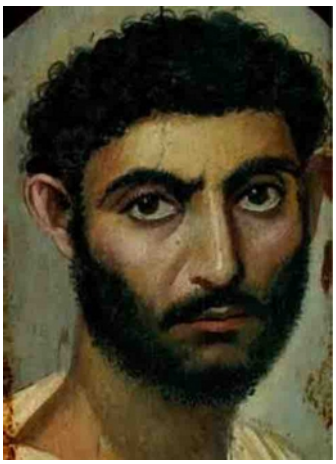
Wall paintings are frequently described in Pausanias, and many appear to have been produced in the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Due to the lack of architecture surviving intact, not many are preserved. The most notable examples are a monumental Archaic 7th-century BC scene of hoplite combat from inside a temple at Kalapodi (near Thebes), and the elaborate frescoes from the 4th-century "Grave of Phillipp" and the *Tomb of Persephone* at Vergina in Macedonia, or the tomb at Agios Athanasios, Thessaloniki, sometimes suggested to be closely linked to the high-quality panel paintings mentioned above.

Greek wall painting tradition is also reflected in contemporary grave decorations in the Greek colonies in Italy, e.g. the famous *Tomb of the Diver* at Paestum. Some scholars suggest that the celebrated Roman frescoes at sites such as Pompeii are the direct descendants of Greek tradition, and that some of them copy famous panel paintings.

We know the names of many famous painters, mainly of the Classical and Hellenistic periods, from literature. The most famous of all ancient Greek painters was Apelles of Kos, whom Pliny the Elder lauded as having "surpassed all the other painters who either preceded or succeeded him."

Paintings of Ancient Macedonian soldiers, arms, and armaments, from the tomb of Agios Athanasios,Thessaloniki 4th c BC

Fayum Mummy Portraits



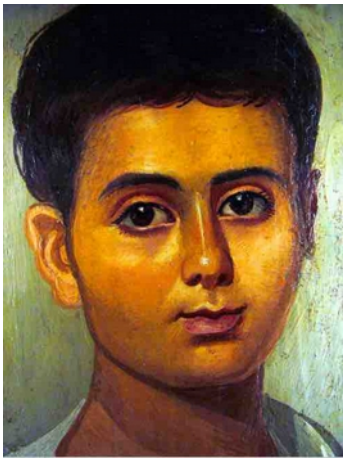
Fayum mummy portraits are a type of naturalistic portrait painted on cartonnage (linen or papyrus covered with plaster) attached to Upper class mummies from Roman Egypt. They belong to the tradition of panel painting, one of the most highly regarded forms of art in the Classical world. The Fayum portraits are the only large body of art from that tradition to have survived. They were formerly, and incorrectly, called Coptic portraits.

While mummy cases date back to pharaonic times, the Faiyum mummy portraits were an innovation dating to the Imperial Roman era, from the late 1st century BC or the early 1st century AD onwards.

A Fayum painting in situ, still attached to its original linen clad mummy

The portraits covered the faces of bodies that were mummified for burial. Extant examples indicate that they were mounted into the bands of cloth that were used to wrap the bodies. Almost all have now been detached from the mummies. They usually depict a single person, showing the head, or head and upper chest, viewed frontally. In terms of artistic tradition, the images clearly derive more from Greco-Roman rather than Egyptian artistic traditions.

Two groups of portraits can be distinguished by technique: one of encaustic (wax) paintings, the other in tempera. The former are usually of higher quality.

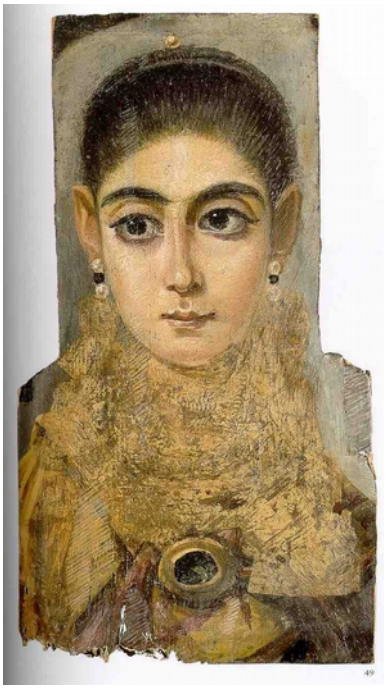


Portrait of a boy, identified by inscription as Eutyches, between 100 and 150 AD

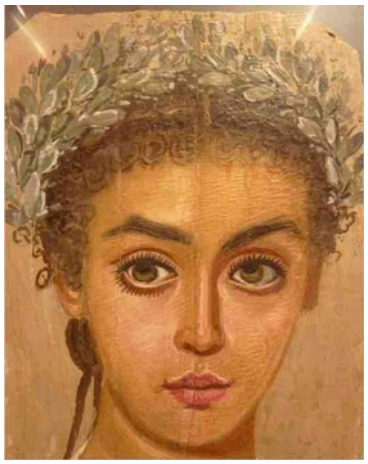
Fayum paintings have been celebrated for more than a century for the vividness and immediacy of the connection that they seem to establish between modern viewers and long-dead Egyptians. “They tempt us to imagine,” the archaeologist John Prag remarks, “that we can literally and figuratively come face to face with the past.” For John Berger, “the Fayum portraits touch us as if they had been painted last month.” And, reviewing an exhibition of portraits held at the Metropolitan Museum in New York at the turn of the century, Holland Cotter of the *New York Times* detected a whole gamut of human emotions in them – “despair, bafflement, anger” – and likened visiting the show to “attending a party among friends.”

The quality of these portraits range from schematic, cartoon-like representations to finely detailed naturalistic impressions of such extraordinarily realism and modernity that we could imagine meeting them in the street. They would have been commissioned by only the wealthiest of families. However, there is some controversy about whether they are accurate portrayals of the deceased or idealised interpretations appropriate to the after life. It has been suggested that factories produced a standard range of faces which would have details of hair, beards, jewellery etc. added as required to personalise the image. Nevertheless, the best of them have a quality that evokes not just the 'look' but the personality behind the face.

The portraits invariably have enlarged eyes. The reason for this is not known but perhaps to indicate the personality more strongly.



Mummy portrait of a young woman, 3rd century AD



Mummy portrait of a young woman, 2nd century AD

Many Fayum paintings – like this portrait of a girl dated to roughly 120-150 AD – feature subjects with abnormally large eyes. Are these paintings examples of Roman-era kitsch, the products of artists of limited talent – or a deliberate feature with religious overtones?

It is not clear when their production ended, but recent research suggests the middle of the 3rd century. They are among the very few survivors of the panel painting tradition of the classical world, which was continued into Byzantine and Western traditions in the post-classical world, including the local tradition of Coptic iconography in Egypt.

About 900 mummy portraits are known, the majority being found in the necropolis of Faiyum. Due to the hot dry Egyptian climate, the paintings are mostly very well preserved, often retaining their brilliant colours seemingly unfaded by time.