Hellenistic and Roman Art and Architecture

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Bronze head of Demetrios the Besieger
Introduction

Hellenistic Period = 323 - 31 BCE
   - The death of Alexander to the Battle of Actium

Alexander’s empire divided up by his general
   - Antigonids, Seleucids, Ptolemies, and Attalids

Athens lost political significance, but remained culturally relative

Rome and Greece

In the Hellenistic period huge kingdoms replace the poleis - exploit their connection with Alexander the Great

Hellenistic Kingdoms were Unified by Greek Language

In the Hellenistic era, Rome gradually emerged as a power with which Hellenistic kings had to contend

Rome gained control over Greece in 146 BC - Roman General Mummius

In 133 BC, Attalos III bequeathed his kingdom to the Romans

By the end of the 1st c. BC all of the Macedonian kingdoms had fallen into Roman hands – Egypt was last

Monument to Gaius Julius Antiochus Epiphanes Philopappos, 65–116 CE
Corinthian Column

Seen for the first time at Temple of Apollo at Bassae in 420 B.C.

Corinthian capital:
- Fluted column with a base
- Bell-shaped capital with acanthus scrolls and leaves

The Corinthian order is a combination of the Ionic and Doric orders
- Like the Doric order it looked the same from every angle
- Like the Ionic, the capitals were very ornate and flowery
The Temple of Apollo at Bassae - Mixed Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian styles
What type of temple is this?
And this?

Temple of Hera at Selinus
... or this one?
Kingdom of Pergamon was established by Philetairos

- He was not a Macedonian himself, but may have been the son of Attalus (a Macedonian)
- He was a general under Antigonus, but shifted his allegiance to Lysimachus

He and his successors ruled Pergamon until they bequeathed the kingdom to Rome in 133 BC

- Attalid dynasty
Pergamon, view southwestward from the top of the theater overlooking the lower town and surrounding terrain.
Plan of the upper city, Pergamon. 3rd-2nd centuries BC (Temple of Trajan 2nd century AD)
Elevation of the Temple of Athena Polias Nikephoros, Pergamon, north front. c. 275-250 BC. Height (of columns) 17 ft 3 ins (5.26 m)
Reconstruction of the propylon to the Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros, Pergamon. c. 180-160 BCE. Pergamon Museum, Berlin
Hellenistic Sculpture

Sculpture marked by psychological presentation, executed in a realistic manner

Variety of types, poses, expressions, gestures, and groups - often taken to the point of caricature

Movement of sculpture towards realism

Old market woman. Height 4 ft 1 1/2 ins (1.26 m) Late 2nd- or early 1st-century BC copy of a 3rd-century original. Metropolitan Museum, New York
Chronological Phases of Sculpture

Early Hellenistic Phase dates from 323 to 250 BC
  – Period of transition

High Hellenistic Phase spans from 250-150 BC
  – This period is often called Pergamene Baroque; typified by sculptures from Great Altar at Pergamon

Late Hellenistic Phase saw a resurgence of Classicism, beginning in 150 BC
  – Corresponds with the Roman conquest of Greece

The ‘Old Drunkard’; Copy of Late 3rd c. BC Original
Demosthenes by Polyeuktos. Roman copy of a bronze portrait statue erected in Athens c. 280 BC. Marble. Height 6 ft 7 1/2 ins (2.02 m). Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, Copenhagen
Gaul and his wife. Roman copy of a c. 220 BC Hellenistic group. Marble. Height 6 ft 11 ins (2.11 m). Terme Museum, Rome
The Altar of Pergamon
The Great Altar, Pergamon, east frieze (detail): Zeus fighting giants. c. 175–150 BCE
Marble. Height (of frieze) 7 ft 7 ins. (2.30 m). Staatliche Museen, Berlin
Eros Asleep. c. 150-100 BCE Bronze. Length 34 ins (78 cm). Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Aphrodite, Pan, and Eros. From the clubhouse of the Poseidoniasts of Berytos (Beirut) on Delos. c. 100 BC. Marble. Height 4 ft 4 ins (1.32 m). National Museum, Athens
The Origins of Roman Art

Roman art influence by Greece and Etruria

Major changes occur after the Roman conquests of Magna Graecia and Greece
   – Hellenization of Romans

Roman art is eclectic

Funerary Mural, Poseidonia, Campania, Italy
Temples

Most important elements: temple and altar

*Cella* - room in which cult statue was located

Altar was always outside the temple

Public focus of religion

The Maison Carrée, Nîmes France
Let's compare a Greek and a Roman Temple.
Greek Temple
Temples - Greek Influences 1

Temple of Fortuna, Rome - Pseudo-Peripteral Temple
Temples - Greek Influences 2

So-called Temple of Hercules Victor, Rome - A Tholos (Round) Temple
Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus

Famous temple to Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill

Dedicated to three gods, known as the Capitoline Triad: Jupiter, Juno and Minerva
  – Each had their own room in the *cella* and cult statue

The original cult statue of Jupiter made out of terracotta, depicting a standing Jupiter holding his thunderbolt
  – He wore a purple toga trimmed in gold and on special occasions, his face was painted red

The initial construction started in the Regal period, but it was not dedicated in 509 BC
Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus

Pediment topped with Jupiter in a *quadriga*

Reconstructed in 80 CE by the emperor Domitian

Played a major role in Roman politics and religion
- New consuls sacrificed here
- Victorious generals ended their triumph here
The Pantheon - Temple to all the gods
Axonometric view of the Pantheon, Rome, 118-125 (John Burge)
The Pantheon
The Capitoline Wolf

Made of bronze, larger than life-size

Probably the production of an Etruscan workshop

Tense body, definition of musculature, ferocity of eyes and mouth - reminiscent of Etruscan art

The suckling infants were added in the Renaissance period

“Capitoline Wolf” from Rome, ca. 500-480 BCE
Image: Musei Capitolini.
Mid-Italic Art

Rome and surroundings were producing a distinctly “local” visual culture

Produced by Indigenous artists from the 3\textsuperscript{rd} c. BCE onwards

Exposed to some of the influences spilling over from Greece

Relief stele of a Shepherd from Lucera. 4\textsuperscript{th} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} c. BCE
The so-called portrait of Brutus. ca. 300 BCE
Contacts with Greece

Conquering of Greek territories and bring art back as spoils of war
- This practice begins with Marcellus in 211 B.C.

In 2nd and 1st c. B.C. Romans are erecting monuments and commissioning art in Greece
- ex. general Titus Quinctius Flamininus

Battle of Pydna, detail of the Victory Monument of Aemilius Paullus, Delphi, Greece, 168 B.C.
Classicizing Art in Rome

Classicizing = deliberate appropriation of Greek art

The Classicizing period in Rome began in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} c. B.C.

Led primarily to Roman copies of Greek statues
The So-Called
San Ildefonso Group
by the School of Praxiteles, from the Gardens of Sallust, Rome. Ca. 50-25 B.C.

What do you notice about this composition?
Draw on your background knowledge
to analyze this sculptural group.
The So-Called San Ildefonso Group

** Combines 3 different styles from 3 different centuries**

Leaning youth = *Apollo Sauroktonos* (Lizard-Slayer) by Praxiteles
- mid 4th c. BC

Torch bearing youth = Polykleitos’ statue of Kyniskos, a Greek athlete
- mid-5th c. BC
- The head is a copy of Polykleitos’ Doryphoros

The female is done in the Archaic style of the 6th c. BC.
- Not a copy of a specific work
Roman Portraiture

Before large-scale portraiture was used, wealthy patricians kept wax likenesses (*imagines*) of their ancestors.

Lifetime portraits of wealthy citizens become popular in the 1st c. B.C.

Early portraiture motivated by pride in one’s ancestors.
Republican Verism

An attempt by the sculptor at superrealism

- Literal representations of the individuals without alterations or beautification

Almost exclusively reserved for elderly men

- Any depictions of women are reserved for mature women

Designed to convey the elements of one’s character

Head of an old man, from Osimo, mid-1st c. B.C. (Kleiner, 2010)
The “Pseudo-Athlete”

In the Republican period, the Romans were known for often putting veristic heads onto idealized bodies

This is seen with the Tivoli General
- Veristic head with idealized Greek body
Changes under Augustus

Augustus as *Imperator*, from the Villa of Livia at Primaporta, early 1st c. AD copy of a bronze original from ca. 20 B.C. (After Kleiner 2010)

Augustus as Pontifex Maximus, from Va Labicana, Rome, after 12 B.C. (After Kleiner 2010)
How do these portraits differ?

Head of an old man, from Osimo, mid-1st c. B.C.  
(After Kleiner, 2010)

Bust of Augustus wearing the corona civica, early 1st c. AD, in the Munich Glyptothek Museum (Kleiner 2010)
The Julio-Claudians

Tiberius

Caligula

Claudius

Nero
Imperial Art Over Time

- Vespasian (69-79)
- Trajan (98-117)
- Hadrian (117-138)
- Marcus Aurelius (161-180)
- The Tetrarchs (293-313)
Discussion Questions

1. What major differences do you notice between the art of Classical Period and that from the Hellenistic Period?

2. What types of themes begin to permeate Hellenistic art?

3. Which Roman emperors drew heavily on Greek art and architecture for their own artistic and building programs?

4. What differences do we see between Greek art and the interpretations made by later artists?