by a stroke of good luck or some inner genius, was combining the realism of the Hebrew prophetic view of history as the act of God, the psychological appeal of the mysteries in the Christian mysticism of Paul and the author of the Fourth Gospel, the status of the Stoic Logos absorbed into that same Gospel, and the idea of a transcendental God who had taken the initiative for the salvation of humanity. The classic secular idea of faith in humanity and nature had failed, and the new classic formulation of the religious faith was being born. Faith in humanity was in decline; faith in a transcendent God was taking its place. The mysteries of mythology and the forces of nature were about to yield to the mystery of a dying and rising God incarnate in a historic man.

It was doubtless this general shift to the transcendental dimension that led to the revival of Platonism in the philosophy of Plotinus, an Alexandrian of the third century (A.D. 204-270). Alexandria had been for a long time a great center of culture and combined high interest in both philosophy and the mystery religions. Perhaps it was due to his own temperament, perhaps due in some degree to the interest of the times, but in any case Plotinus was less interested in the rationalism of Plato than in his transcendentalism and mysticism. He seems to have taken as his point of departure the Platonic idea of the Form of the Good, which was the author of all knowledge of the being and essence of all things. You will recall that it was the Form of the Good that illuminated all things in the understanding of human beings, as the sun illuminated all things in the allegory of the cave. From Plato he also took the concept that the ultimately Real must of necessity be uncreated, indestructible, unchangeable, motionless, indivisible and, therefore, unextended.

But the question remained unanswered: Can the Form of the Good itself be known, and if so, how? Plato had given a sort of answer, but it was ambiguous. He seems to have argued both that the ultimate Reality is beyond being and hence beyond knowledge, and that it can be known by logical, rational method.

Plotinus chose to pursue the first alternative. He argued that whatever is knowable by thought has limits and implies something other. If I think my pencil, I think the paper on which I write with it, and the hand that holds it, and the mind that directs the hand. If I think the proposition "He is a bachelor," I think the other proposition "He is an unmarried person." Thus if we thought the ultimate Real, we would have to think some other "real" that was beyond it, and so limit the first Real, and so demonstrate that they both are not *the* Real, but only parts of some other Real, because *the* Real can have no other beyond it; this, he thought, is inherent in the concept of the Real. The Real, therefore, cannot be thought; only its parts can be thought. This presents a peculiar but intriguing conclusion: Thinking has led to the thought that the ultimate really Real cannot be known by thought.

This involves the observation that we cannot, therefore, think any attribute, property, or characteristic of the Real, for to think any property inhering in the Real would be to slip back into the same dilemma--that we would of necessity think some other property. If we say, for

example, that it is loving or jealous, then there must be some other which it loves or of which it is jealous, and thus the Real again becomes only one thing among others, and hence not *the* Real. So, also, the Real cannot itself be mind or thought because these have their objects, their others, and so on of any attribute whatsoever.

But the question of the relation between the Real and the world remains. Plotinus held that the Real is a power or force and the original cause of all things by a kind of overflowing fullness. The inner activity of the energy of the Real overflows in successive "emanations" which decrease in reality as their distance from the Real increases. The theoretical limit of these emanations is nothingness--all reality lost--and darkness; but actually this limit is never absolutely reached. The farthest actual limit is matter.

The first emanation, said Plotinus, is *Nous* (a Greek word of various meanings such as Mind, Intelligence, Spirit), believed to be the closest to the Real because as Pure Reason, its object--pure contemplation of reality--is closer to itself than is any other level of being, and because it is its nature to strive toward the unity of all things and to see things not as a succession of events in time but as timeless categories of relation "under the aspect of eternity." Thus real existence and the structure of the universe are one, because they are the creation of thought, of Nous.

From Nous emanates Soul, which is the source of all individual souls. Soul also emanates the whole natural world in accordance with the Platonic Forms. These emanations are not brought into being in a time sequence. The three (Nous, Soul, and the world) are co-eternal, like the Christian trinity. Their relation is dialectical, not spatial or temporal. In each of these levels of reality, therefore, something of the Real is lacking, and yet something of the Real is retained. The Absolute, the Real, therefore, is everywhere present though by diminution, and thus nowhere wholly present. But insofar as it is present, it is aware of its separation from its source and longs to return. This act of turning back to the source Plotinus called *epistrophe*.

The Real is not to be understood, however, as infinite in size but in power, and thus does not change and cannot fail. As the sun gives life to all things and makes sight of all things possible, yet itself is neither the things seen nor sight nor see-er, so the Real gives being to all things and knowledge of all things, yet itself is beyond being, and is unknowable by thought but knowable by the "intuitive thrust alone."

The Soul, which is the emanation from Nous, has three functions in keeping with Plato's idea of soul: (1) discursive, synthetic thinking; (2) sensation; and (3) anima, the vital, life-giving function shared by vegetables as well as animals and people. It is also the source of all individual souls, which carry in themselves the whole nature of the cosmic soul, and because they do so and because they precede the material body (which in fact they create by their own activity) are eternal.

Freedom is the essence of the soul; however, when the soul exercises its freedom in ego-centric will and indulges itself in the world of material sensation to escape the discipline of reason and contemplation, evil emerges in the world. Thus the Real, Nous, and the World Soul do not produce nor are they responsible for sin and evil. In any case, evil is only a deprivation, a lack of real being and nothing positive in itself. It is a sort of shadow thing at the level of matter, the emanation most remote from the Real.

The moral struggle, therefore, is not against some genuine existing force or tempter but against a failure of the soul's own inner power to do what is right. But how is a soul to be saved from this "fallen" state? We have said that the Real cannot be known by thought. But if it cannot be known by thought, how then? By mystic vision, said Plotinus. But we must quickly assert that for Plotinus this mystic experience is not a substitute for thought but rather a vision which comes at the end of a long and arduous exercise of thought; it lies beyond thought and is won only when we have pressed and followed thought to its farthest limits. Careful and disciplined thought is its pre-condition. Thought must learn to turn from sensory experience to sensory forms, and from sensory forms to concepts and categories of thought and being, and so to pass to an understanding in thought of the whole articulated, rational structure of the universe. At this point, and only then, does the soul pass, said Plotinus, from thinking to contemplation of the whole, which it takes in now at a single glance, beyond all sense experience and all thought, and become united with the divine Reason from which it sprang. But arrival at the moment of beatific vision is not by pure dialectical reason alone. We must prepare for it also by a moral and ascetic life in which we withdraw the soul from participation in the "tumult of the flesh" and by a contemplation which moves from the beautiful things of the world to the forms of beauty. Thus the preparation is ascetic and aesthetic as well as rational. For the soul that resists this epistrophe, this turning back to its source, there is nothing but a continuing cycle of reincarnation in bodies appropriate to its character.

Plotinus was the last of the really great philosophers in the classic Platonic tradition. His immediate disciple, Porphyry, and his disciple, Iamblichus, could only elaborate his views and in so doing only debased them, even reducing them to magic.

It was only a little over fifty years after the death of Plotinus that Christianity was proclaimed the official religion of the empire by Constantine in A.D. 324, just a few years before the death of Iamblichus (d. A.D. 330). It was disestablished by Julian in favor of the old religions in 361 but reestablished again by Jovian in 363, the year of Julian's death.

There was a brief revival of Neo-Platonism in Athens led by Syrianus and Proclus in the fifth century. Proclus died in 485, and the schools of philosophy in Athens were closed by imperial decree in 529. Nothing significant had been added in the 260 years since the death of Plotinus in 270.

The classic world, we have said, died in the West with Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 180. Insofar as Plotinus' views were an extension of the Platonic tradition in the classic world, then it died with Plotinus in the East in A.D. 270. Plotinus' effort to adapt the classic philosophy of Plato to the rising flood of mysticism failed before the onset of Christian theology. Rooted in the historical concreteness of the Hebrew tradition of history as the act of God, it had caught the Logos-torch of a dying Stoicism and cast it in the popular form of a great mystery centered in the historic person of Jesus as the dying-rising savior God, and won the field. From this time on, for over one thousand years, until the birth of the modern world, philosophy and religion were to be one and the same thing within the confines of the Christian Church.

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ART

In the areas of law, administration, engineering, and military science, the contributions of the Romans were considerable and in many instances quite original. Their art, however, was a fusion of Hellenistic Greek and Etruscan, upon which they occasionally imprinted some of their own tastes and adaptations. It would not be improper to consider Roman art as merely part of the extension of the Hellenistic style that began in the fourth century B.C. and extended into the early Medieval Age.

The Romans admired the culture of Greece (no less than did the intellectuals of the Italian Renaissance some fifteen hundred years later), not only Greek forms but a multitude of Greek artists as well. It is quite probable that most of the art known as Roman was done by Greek artists working throughout the Roman world either as slaves or on commission. The Etruscans themselves, who were absorbed by the Romans, not only admired Greek art but also emulated Greek styles (with some important native ideas that will be discussed later) and thus reinforced the Greek influence on Roman art. In other words, Roman art, unlike that of Egypt, Crete, and Classical Greece, was not seminal or generative but derivative and eclectic in character.

Wealthy Roman patricians vied with one another for possession of Greek art objects, and many a general returned home from service in the far flung reaches of the empire with crates of art booty, the sale of which lined his pockets and made his retirement more comfortable. Undoubtedly there were many sensitive and intelligent individual collectors of art objects, but in general Rome had no real understanding of the reasons for the existence of art. As far as official Rome was concerned, the only purpose of art was to glorify, to be used as propaganda to impress the rest of the world with Roman grandeur and power, to become a showpiece. The artist himself enjoyed very little stature in Roman society, presumably because he was a slave, or at least a non-Roman. As the art historian Thomas Oliver Larkin states, "They had a mighty hankering for culture," so they accumulated art without really comprehending it, much like the old silver kings in Nevada who bought books for the libraries of their Carson City and Virginia City mansions by the running foot.

But as trivial as the contributions of the Romans to art might be, their achievements in technology and engineering were very grand indeed, and their architecture profoundly influenced the Western world.

THE ART OF HELLENISTIC GREECE

The Peloponnesian War left the Greek city-states financially bankrupt and spiritually drained, and their disorganization made them an easy mark for the ambitious Philip of Macedonia. Assassinated in a palace conspiracy in 336 B.C., he was succeeded by his brilliant son Alexander. Although the Greeks lost a measure of their individuality and independence along with many other features of the old way of life, the situation became stable. The barbarians of Macedonia recognized the refinement and wealth of the culture of the people they had conquered, and, like the Romans a century hence, embraced what they found and became its champions. Alexander, in effect, set out to spread the culture he admired throughout the empire. By his death in 323 B.C. in Babylon, he had succeeded. The Mediterranean world was Hellenized ("made Greek")--as far west as Spain and as far east as the Indus Valley of India (where some elements of the style were superimposed on the much older Far Eastern religious art). Actually, the Greek peninsula produced very little significant art after the death of Alexander. All of the vigor and creative activity was centered in the regions of Sicilly, Asia Minor, and North Africa, with the urban centers of these regions fostering the major intellectual and artistic activity during the Hellenistic Age.

As we have observed in the previous unit on the Golden Age of Greece, the seeds of the Hellenistic style had been sown by the artists who worked in the generation following Phidias. The career of Lysippus actually bridged the Macedonia conquest and continued to flourish under Alexander, to whom the artist became royal sculptor. The heroic idealization of the human being at the level of generalization, superior in spirit and exuding confidence, began to give way to the depiction of a lesser human being, a specific rather than generalized person, sometimes flawed and often bored in appearance.

This was due in part to the changes in the way people perceived themselves in the increasingly complex physical world. The influence of Aristotle and his passion for attempting to seek out and understand the "concrete" was to a great extent responsible for the decline that is especially present in the sculpture of the period. Historically, the passion for dealing with the concrete and identified specifics has led to art which deals with the surface reality of the visible world. The Hellenistic sculptor responded to this urge to be concrete and specific by developing techniques to enable him to "breathe life into stone" by capturing every individual aspect of human anatomy and personality, not of *a* person but of *the* particular person. What had previously been idealized examples of a human head now became individualized portraits of a specific person. Aristotle's observation that "Art is imitation" became the yardstick of much of the sculpture of the period. Even when poses became impossibly melodramatic, the anatomy and features were correct and true to what the artist could see.

The failure of much Hellenistic sculpture on the esthetic level is offset to some extent by the sheer technical virtuosity. The level of

technique is extraordinary, and the sculptors of this period are among the greatest carvers of stone and casters of bronze in the history of art. One problem with technique always exists: In periods of preoccupation with surface realism, technique often becomes the end rather than the means of making a statement. For the Romans there was certainly a premium on technical virtuosity, and it often got in the way of dealing with art at a deeper and more spiritual level. But in fairness to them, one must admit that the problem of the relationship of technique to concept has always been a difficult one to resolve and continues to be the basis for a good deal of argument even today.

Although Hellenistic art leaves a great deal to be desired at the level of pure esthetics and nobility of purpose when compared to the art of fifth-century Athens, the Cycladic idols, or the Egyptian Fourth Dynasty, it reflects perfectly the quality of life and the aspirations as well as the tensions of its time. The concept of group sculpture, seen only in bas relief up to then, was a daring innovation and one which required great technical skill and imagination. To make sculpture work from many different angles is extremely difficult; sculptured groups of figures increase the problems of satisfactory compositional solutions. And certainly a great deal of Hellenistic sculpture is conceived at a more "human" level, with depictions of old age, deformities, violent death, and genre scenes of ordinary people doing ordinary things. (Colossi and deified kings are exceptions.)

Among the outstanding examples of sculpture that display varying aspects of the Hellenistic style are the *Dying Gaul* (c. 230 B.C.), the *Winged Victory of Samothrace* (c. 200 B.C.) and the *Laocoon* group (c. 190 B.C.). All three were carried off to Rome after the Battle of Corinth in 146 B.C. The *Dying Gaul* expresses the brutal reality of death in battle in a way that is most graphic and totally anti-Classical. It is highly individualized, but the technical handling is superb. Hellenistic Greece had discovered the unphilosophical way to die. We cannot be certain whether the Gaul dies with courage or not. The *Winged Victory* (eight feet in height) is a very powerful work with immensely dynamic qualities suggested by the slightly forward thrust of the body and by the implication of wind pressing the figure's garment against the movement of her body. The *Laocoon* portrays the drama of a Trojan priest and his two sons being strangled by snakes for defying the goddess Athena. It would be impossible to overestimate the influence of this statue on the sculptors of the Renaissance. In terms of both its style and meaning, the *Laocoon* becomes the most important single artistic influence on Michelangelo, who perceived immediately the possible allegorical significance in terms of his own inner tensions. The *Bound Slave*, which he completed for the tomb of Pope Julius shortly after seeing it, contains the central meaning of all of his mature works--the fundamental tension and unhappiness of the human being caught up in the eternal struggle between his own will and the will of God.

For centuries the Greek architects had perfected the basic style of the temple, and as long as the passion for balance and order prevailed, they continued to refine it without essentially changing it. The

Hellenistic world burst out of those defined boundaries, and the architects of the period were no longer willing to be constrained. Neither the temple plan nor the traditional Classical orders could express the qualities of the life of the time. The more ornate and considerably taller Corinthian column had been introduced in the pre-Hellenistic period but really came into its own after the death of Alexander. It seems to have been used first for enlarged versions of the pre-Doric period shrines called *tholos*, which were initially very small structures, round in shape and meant to roof over a piece of religious sculpture (variations can be found in shrines in Mexico, Italy, and Spain today). The *tholo* plan was enlarged to become a building, most often a sealed sanctuary, with rows of concentric colonnades. The form would become a very important one in Roman architecture.

Although many other structures were probably destroyed, or simply decayed and collapsed, a few examples of pure Greek Hellenistic buildings remain. Important examples are the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus (c. 330 B.C.), one of the earliest examples of innovative deviation from standard architecture, according to descriptions extant; and the Stoa of Attalos in the Athenian marketplace (c. 200 B.C.), with its double-decked colonnade, Doric on the first ground floor and squared Ionic on the second. (An important characteristic of Greek Hellenistic architecture is the mixture of the architectural orders, which the Romans, in their flamboyance, often employed.) Another example of pure Greek Hellenistic architecture is the Great Altar of Zeus and Athena at Pergamum (c. 180 B.C.), which seems to have been inspired by a style of outside altars, on a smaller scale, in use in Asia Minor, perhaps in Ionia. Its surface is rich with deeply cut writhing compositions of battles between gods and giants.

As is true of earlier Greek periods, painting survives mainly on the surface of pottery, although mosaics were very popular (an influence from Eastern sections of the empire, Damascus principally) and give us some clues as to subject matter and composition on a flat surface. We can presume that paintings discovered at Pompeii and on Sicily are examples of a long tradition in wall painting. The same qualities of naturalism present in Hellenistic sculpture are found in them. Various means of establishing the illusion of third dimension are used: Overlapping planes with diminishing intensity together with the rudiments of two-point perspective systems break through the flat wall space. Landscape is used in some paintings to suggest a "window" to the outside. Although light sources are not always consistent, shadowing systems make a convincing suggestion of volume and three-dimensional form. The Pompeii paintings, preserved by a fluke (the volcanic eruption), indicate that painted wall decoration was very popular in all parts of the Hellenistic world, as well as in the days of the Roman Empire.

ETRUSCAN ART

The origins of the Etruscans are still debated today, but the suggestion

that they were indigenous to the area (roughly the area of modern Tuscany) is now discounted. Modern anthropologists tentatively subscribe to the theory that the original Etruscans were Lydians from Asia and that substantial migrations from Crete in the years between 2000 and 1200 B.C. may have blended with them. There is some evidence to confirm this theory--a special approach to life and death not unlike that of Crete, and the high level of the art of fresco painting with figures distinctly Cretan in appearance.

From the seventh century B.C. onward, Greek pottery and other items of trade were imported by Etruria, and from the late sixth century, as we have observed, Greek artists and craftsmen lent their services to all of the coastal regions of the Mediterranean world including Etruria. Thriving colonies of Greeks had been established in southern Italy and on Sicily. A great amount of Greek art from the Archaic period through the end of the Punic Wars (264 B.C.), when Etruria was absorbed by Rome, has been discovered in the tombs of wealthy Etruscans. Although Greek styles influenced both the Etruscans and the Romans, the Etruscans absorbed them to a greater extent and thus became an important link between Greece and Rome. For example, the *Arringatore* (Orator or Senator statue) of the second century appears to have been the link between Hellenistic Greek and Roman senator-types of statuary.

Although much Etruscan sculpture has the peculiar stamp of Etruscan adaptation, the influence is clearly Greek, from the Kori-types of the fifth century B.C. through the work of the period just prior to the Roman conquest. One unique Etruscan adaptation in terms of both treatment and purpose is the reclining figure of the stone burial sarcophagus (made of alabaster, limestone, terra cotta, and occasionally marble). Many figures are life-sized and have the feeling of being specific portraits rather than generalized types. While some sarcophagi lids bear a single figure, others contain portraits of a husband and wife. The side and end panels are decorated with carved inscriptions and deep-cut relief. The Etruscans also used funerary jars to hold the ashes of the dead. These are usually in the form of pottery, but occasionally they are made of bronze, engraved with rather elegant contour drawing and decoration which bears a great resemblance to Greek pottery styles.

Etruscan wall painting is interesting not only because of its use and subject matter but also because it gives us a clue as to what Greek painting must have looked like. Many of the decorative ideas used for panels and borders seem to have come from Attic pottery. The tombs at Tarquinia from the fifth century B.C. on contain some of the finest examples. Created as places where the dead were to dwell in their afterlife, the tombs contain paintings in the fresco style. The paintings of the later tombs, like those of the earlier ones, exhibit a technique and style that are Greek and Cretan, but the presentation of the subject is very un-Greek. Colors are often garish, and the paintings are filled with monsters and demons of the underworld, in sharp contrast to those of the earlier tombs which are filled with pleasant and cheerful subjects: banquets, hunting scenes, love-making, music, and dancing. The somber and at times even morbid paintings of the later tombs display a

strange fascination with frightening and macabre scenes, and the melancholy spirit reflects the changes in the lives of the Etruscans as they became dominated by the militaristic Romans.

Since the tombs were replicas of houses--some on a smaller scale to be sure--we have some understanding of how the Etruscans lived. Further, the Etruscan house became the model for the typical Roman house; even the palaces of the empire period are often enlarged versions of the Etruscan plan. Certain basic elements of the layout and floor plan have survived in standard Mediterranean architecture today. For example, the center patio with rooms opening off it, insuring a maximum of privacy, is a common feature in houses in southern Italy, Spain, and Mexico; and the concept of interior gardens was incorporated by Frank Lloyd Wright in his organic theory of architecture. Frescoes decorated the walls of the houses of the affluent.

Scholars disagree as to whether the invention of concrete as a building material was an Etruscan or a Roman innovation. The Etruscans did use the engineering principle of form-molded stucco and concrete on a small scale, but it was the Romans who were to exploit its possibilities on a daring scale. The Etruscans were also fine engineers. Streets were paved and systematically drained; water storage and delivery systems were in use; and cities, for the most part, were logically planned in terms of a basic grid with principal and secondary arteries for traffic.

Although the exact nature of the debt the Romans owed the Etruscans in engineering is arguable, there is little question that Roman engineering was on a scale matched only by Gothic builders until the Industrial Revolution in the late nineteenth century. Since they built prior to the invention of calculus for determining proportions of weight to stress and span to support, it must be assumed that their structural principles were developed on the basis of trial and error combined with sheer nerve. Along with their successes, buildings did collapse, and the casualties must have been frightful when calculations, on occasion, went wrong. However, the death of slaves was measured only in terms of property losses and not in terms of human lives.

THE ART OF THE ROMANS

Roman sculpture and painting seem so much a continuation of Greek Hellenistic styles that some scholars persist in the opinion that there is no such thing as Roman sculpture or painting. Without pursuing the argument in one direction or another, we can state, for purposes of this brief survey, that while there are some aspects of these arts which are uniquely Roman in character, they are essentially extensions of Hellenistic art; as has been stated earlier, most of the artists were actually Greeks to begin with. One significant feature of difference, however, is found in the canon of proportions for the human figure. Late Greek sculptors had begun to compress the figure and make it more bulky and muscular. Heads