

beheaded captives and mounds of booty to the arrogant parade of the king and his officers past the defeated army. The wall reliefs at Nineveh are especially literal. The implied brutality of the scenes of the sack of the Elamite capital is both descriptive and dramatic. Unnecessary cruelty seems to carry over into the hunting scenes as well. Animals always seem to have more spears and arrows in them than would actually be required to kill them. An outstanding example is the "wounded lioness" on the wall at Nineveh (650 B.C.).

The Assyrians always pictured themselves as powerful, thick-set people with exaggerated muscles and determined faces. By contrast, non-Assyrians are always pictured smaller and weaker. In spite of a stiffness, there is an air of naturalism to the later examples of relief carving. It was a worldly art depicting a race of "this world" people. Like the Mesopotamian civilizations that had preceded them, their religion was pessimistic and fatalistic.

The Assyrians apparently did not do sculpture in the round. The nearest examples to round, or free-standing, sculpture are the winged human-headed bulls at Khorsabad. They are 14 feet high by 16 feet long and are carved in soft limestone (c. 720 B.C.). On each side of a large rectangular block, the left and right sides of the body are cut very deep. From the front both sides of the figure can be seen and the human head is almost carved in the round. Because of this "double-sided" treatment, the bulls have six legs--two in back and four in front. The winged bulls stood on each side of the gateway to guard the king from his enemies and are the only examples of sculpture on a colossal scale in Mesopotamian art to this point.

In architecture the Assyrians expanded the Sumerian ziggurat into impressive and elaborate palace-fortresses. The ziggurat itself remained an important religious part of the complex, and by now the king was considered divine. Immediately adjacent to the ziggurat were the residential area, armory, stables, and army barracks. The entire complex was surrounded by high walls and guard towers. These citadels were fully capable of withstanding siege and of mobilizing for forays into the countryside on short notice. The citadel of Sargon II at Khorsabad (c. 720 B.C.) is the outstanding example of this architectural style. At the gate stood the huge winged bulls (see above) and both relief and murals of glazed tiles contributed to the impression of richness and absolute power. Another major example of this type of architecture was located at Nineveh (c. 650 B.C.).

Successive invasions by tribes of Medes and Scythians from the east of the valley finally crumbled the Assyrian Empire around 600 B.C. Under the Chaldeans, Babylon enjoyed a brief but illustrious flowering that lasted until the Persian conquest in 539 B.C. During this period what must have been the most magnificent ziggurat of the region--the Temple of Marduk--was built. It was a seven-stage tower built by Nebuchadnezzar and known in the Bible as the Tower of Babel. Nothing remains except the rough outline of the floor plan, but painstaking reconstruction of archaeological fragments and literary description give us some idea of its

magnificence. Herodotus' writings are a good source for a general understanding of its appearance. The walls were covered with glazed tile, which had replaced the relief carving of the earlier period. The top stage of the ziggurat was entirely blue to represent the sky. Levels were luxuriously planted with exotic trees, flowers, and greenery; there were aviaries and fountains. These were the legendary Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

Equally impressive must have been Nebuchadnezzar's palace, of which only the magnificent Ishtar Gate has been reconstructed. This was also profusely decorated with glazed tiles depicting various real and fanciful animals of astonishing grace and charm.

ARTS OF PERSIA

Until the defeat of Persia by Alexander in 331 B.C., the mighty Persian Empire extended from portions of the lower Balkans (north of Greece) across Asia Minor to the Indus River in western India. The nomadic Persians had arrived in the region of modern Iran around 800 B.C. and by 530 B.C. had become organized and strong enough under King Cyrus to subjugate Babylon and most of Egypt.

Persian art seems for the most part to be a synthesis of many styles from varying sources and is, therefore, quite eclectic in nature. Nevertheless, in the synthesizing a native elegance and highly original combination of influences did creep in. What the Persians borrowed from the Assyrians, for example, is never as heavy and crude nor are the obviously Egyptian borrowings as static. As nomadic peoples they developed no large scale monumental art, but when they conquered Asia Minor they seem to have instinctively recognized the cultural heritage of the peoples they had conquered. A "court style" was developed at Susa combining their own art forms with those of conquered peoples and those borrowed from outside Persia. It is recorded that craftsmen and architects of many nations and races were brought to Susa to glorify the empire.

Nomadic Persian metal and bone artifacts and the geometrically decorated vessels are of great interest. The early examples are known as Luristan bronzes (although all kinds of metals were used). These objects are especially beautiful and certain characteristics still prevail in contemporary Iranian metalwork. Cooking and storage vessels, harness gear and rein guides, and jewelry of all description were fashioned in bronze, copper, silver, and gold. Much of it was expertly inlaid with a variety of contrasting metals or with ivory and both precious and semi-precious stones. Persian metalsmiths were among the finest in the ancient world, as the Crusaders were to discover when comparing weapons.

Much Persian architecture was either destroyed by Alexander's invading armies or altered considerably according to Hellenistic tastes. Little or nothing of the palace at Susa remains, and since Persian religious

rituals involved open-pit fire altars out of doors, no temple architecture existed. Our only clues to Persian architecture of the early period are the ruins of Susa (c. 375 B.C.) and the partially reconstructed palace at Persepolis, with its magnificently columned audience hall.

The palace at Persepolis was begun in 520 B.C. by King Darius and completed about 460 B.C. by King Xerxes. Although certain architectural elements were borrowed from the Assyrians, the palace is lower in profile and much more open. Clusters of buildings were separated by streets, courts, and spaces. Despite the fact that it was the seat of Persian imperial power and heavily fortified, it did not have the ponderous fortress-like appearance of Assyrian models. The entire complex rested on a raised platform of earth and stone dominated by the Great Hall of Darius (called the Apadana). The Great Hall encompassed 250 square feet with a wood-beamed roof 40 feet high supported by 36 beautiful, slender Ionic columns. Although the fluted columns were undoubtedly inspired by the Ionic Greeks, the height and massing of them in the space suggests the influence of Egypt. There is some evidence that the architects were actually imported from Ionia. As assimilators of art styles, the Persians frequently imported artists as well as artistic motifs. The double stairway is also borrowed from Assyria. It later found its way into Roman architecture and still later into High Renaissance and Baroque plans. Stone post and lintel doorways of tall, narrow proportions reinforce the impression of height set by the vertical-horizontal relationship of the hall. The lintels are carved with vertical fluting consistent with the feeling of the building. The entire unit is executed with great consistency and unity of concept.

Relief carving abounds on many parts of the palace itself and on the platforms and stairs leading to it. It is clearly inspired by the long narrative bands found on Assyrian ziggurat-palaces but is much more sensitive and more delicately carved. Persian artists had a better feeling for the use of negative space, and though most of the wall space is utilized, there is no evidence of the *horror vacui* common to both Egyptian and Mesopotamian wall relief. The remarkable grace of the Luristan style animals is carried into the synthesis of Assyrian and Egyptian elements. The feeling for overlapping shapes and for the suggestion of anatomical volume beneath clothing displays the sculptor's understanding of the element of light and shadow as a means of establishing third dimension. Yet the reliefs are definitely subordinated to the architectural integrity (a principle often violated by the Hellenistic Greeks and the Romans). The fine balance achieved by using three-dimensional form without violating the architecture was most likely derived from the Ionians.

Wall relief was not religious. The panels depict the various royal ceremonies and attest to the glory of the king and empire. They suggest that royal ritual and ceremony had been developed to an extraordinarily complex level. Some unique examples of sculpture are the bull capitals of the columns. No precedent for them exists anywhere in architecture; they are Persian originals. The only possible sources for them are the Luristan vessels and symbolic poles of the nomadic kings of the eighth century B.C. The heads and foreparts of the animals are beautifully

stylized without ever losing the natural qualities of the animals themselves.

The minor arts survived and provide some outstanding examples of ceremonial cups (called rhytons), stirrups, bridles, and other metalwork. The passion for the decorative inherited from the various Eastern peoples with whom the Persians had allied themselves as early as the eighth century B.C. (Sassanians, Medes, Luristani, Achaemenids, etc.) never lost its strength, even under Greco-Roman domination.

Persian art was also the major influence on Byzantine and Ottoman styles and very strong elements of it were imported to the medieval West--book illumination, Romanesque carving, and Gothic stained glass.

ARTS OF PRE-CLASSICAL GREECE

Between the time of the Doric invasions (c. 1200 B.C.) and 776 B.C., which marks the founding of the Olympic Games, the city-states of Greece began to rebuild their culture and emerge from the Dark Age. The Greek culture was largely developed around the combination of surviving elements of Mycenaean and Cretan and Eastern influences. The Greek city-states in this period were politically quite different and very much geographically isolated by water, high, forbidding mountains, and deep, narrow valleys. It is believed that they shared, however, elements of a common language and religious mythology as well as a belief in and dependence upon individual physical and intellectual capabilities. Although wars between them doomed all possibility of Greek unification, there was a good deal of contact through participation in the Pan-Hellenic games. In fact, wars were even suspended so that rival city-states could participate in them.

The Greeks made themselves influential in the entire Mediterranean as traders and merchants, and colonists followed them to the outposts of Sicily, North Africa, Italy, and elsewhere in the Latin world. They absorbed some foreign influences but were much more likely to carry the traditional elements of their own culture with them wherever they went (like the British in the nineteenth century).

The Greek religion, like that of Mesopotamia, was concerned with the physical world rather than with an afterlife but was not nearly so pessimistic because of their passionate belief in the human intellect. The Greek philosophical ideal of order, reason, and intellect was reflected in all of its art and religion. The Greeks strove for balance and system within the environment of the natural world and humanized their gods to relate to it. Greek gods were, therefore, anthropomorphic, and some even exhibited human frailties. As was the case with many ancient cultures, gods and religious mythology became an important reservoir for subject matter in the arts.

A great deal more research remains to be done on the period covered by this unit, particularly as it relates to later developments in Greek art. Of the period known as the Greek Dark Age, which lasted from the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization around 1200 B.C. until about the ninth century B.C., there is growing dispute concerning dates, styles, and origins. Actually, until the late nineteenth century, when systematic excavations of ancient sites followed earlier discoveries made at the Acropolis and other Classical locations, the preponderance of scholars believed that Classical Greek realism had simply been "invented" through some miracle. It is now known that Classical sculpture, for example, did not suddenly emerge full-blown but evolved in stages from the severe, stiff Geometric examples of the ninth century B.C. to the full flower of realistic anatomy and expressive grace characteristic of the late fifth and early fourth centuries B.C. Twentieth century art historians are now more confident in making the logical connection between the Classical style and earlier forms. One of the reasons for the misunderstanding of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century art historians was the fact that many of their opinions were formed from studying Roman copies of late--rather than truly Classical--Greek art. The German archeologist Winckelmann published his monumental volumes on the *History of Ancient Art* in the 1770's. In them he made some dreadfully wrong assumptions about the Greeks generally, based on erroneous interpretations of Roman art and architecture.

The understanding of the pre-Classical period (c. 1100-479 B.C.) is, then, far from complete and subject to question in terms of its relationship to subsequent stylistic developments in Greek art. In general, however, the following classifications and dates are used:

Geometric period	c. 1100 - 700 B.C.
Oriental (Archaic) period	c. 700 - 479 B.C.
Classical period	c. 480 - 400 B.C.
Hellenistic period	c. 400 - 146 B.C.

In both archeology and art each of these periods is further subdivided into periods which need not concern us in this brief survey. The above periods are useful in developing a broad understanding of the stylistic evolution of Greek art.

It seems certain that the qualities of order and system based on a passion for logic and clarity became well established during the Geometric period. This concern is the most apparent in Greek pottery where specific forms had perhaps evolved even prior to the twelfth century. Six basic forms, each with but slight variations, continued to be used into Roman times. They are:

Hydria	- meaning "water"
Likythos	- meaning "oil flask"
Krater	- meaning "to mix" (water and wine)
Amphora	- meaning "to carry on two sides" (referring to two handles)

- Kylix - meaning "to roll" (rolled out on a pottery wheel for drinking)
Oinochoe - meaning "to pour out wine" (pitcher)

All forms had handles, and occasionally hydrias, lekythos, and amphoras had lids. Greek pottery was almost always used as a surface for the painter; other examples of Greek painting are non-existent. Vases of the Geometric period were decorated with highly abstract patterns most often in bands around the surface. Motifs used were zig-zags, triangles, squares, dots, and checkmarks. Sometimes the pattern was very "tight," but often an "open" pattern related to Mycenaean ware was used. By the eighth century stylized representations of both animals and the human figure had been introduced. This style is often called Dipylon ware (named for the Dipylon cemetery near Athens). Bands of figures are integrated with older Geometric motifs. Dipylon ware, except for the geometric ornamentation, is narrative painting telling of wars, funeral processions, hunts, and the like. As was the case in both Egyptian and Mesopotamian art, the figures were executed according to conventions--in terms of both pose and treatment. In the main the figures are in silhouette, but occasionally a key line is introduced to define a portion of the anatomy (arm against a body, eye, etc.). Vases varied in size from 10 to 12 inches to 5 feet high in the case of storage amphoras.

By around 700 B.C. increased contact with Egypt and Asia Minor accounted for an "Orientalizing" of the decorative aspects of Greek pottery as well as sculpture. The distinctive pottery of the Proto-Attic, or Archaic, period are the black-figured (650-530 B.C.) and the red-figured (530-480 B.C.) ware. The geometric abstractions of both forms were greatly reduced in favor of more negative space, and the pictorial representations included scenes from everyday life as well as from myths and legends. The decorative elements owe more to the Egyptians than to earlier Greek motifs. Commonly used are rosettes, flowers, stylized palm leaves and gracefully interlocked bands and spirals.

Black-figured ware is painted on reddish clay on which outline drawing is filled in with flat black glaze. Occasional details are often incised and filled in with white or violet color on the black silhouette. On the later red-figured ware, the background is flat black glaze painted to leave the red body of the clay in silhouette. Lines that define the details of the figure and costume are painted on the red body, which is not filled in. In red-figured ware the drawing is much freer with a better three-dimension concept displayed.

Order and system also prevailed in the architecture of the period. The earliest order of architecture is known as Doric, but its origin is not clear. Both the Egyptians and the Minoans used column and beam (post and lintel) but the Mycenaeans did not. It is possible, but not highly probable, that the Doric invaders from the north did. In any case, the Doric column, a heavy, unadorned (at first) round post with a plain cushion capital, is known to have been made originally of wood. It was later fluted (from Egyptian mortuary temples?) and by 800 B.C. was made of stone cylinders doweled together with bronze. In this period Greeks

apparently did not live in elaborate houses or palaces. Civic affairs centered around the temple, and thus the temple becomes the example of true Greek monumental architecture and, like the pottery, reflects the logical nature of the Greek mind with its canons of style. All aspects of the temple were established according to the Greek aesthetic judgment of what constituted proportion and scale in human terms. The cella (interior building used for a shrine and treasury) was proportioned to the platform in both area and height. The architrave (lintel), diameter, height, and swelling of the column were interrelated proportionately, and each of the columns in a row was related to the spaces between the columns. The vertical mass of the steps and platform balanced the height of the columns and the profile of the roof--all in all, an outstanding example of the search for the ideal through a rational approach. The Temple of Paestum (Italy, c. 560 B.C.) is an outstanding example of a Doric building from the Archaic period; buildings of the Acropolis, though built on old Mycenaean foundations, are from the Classical period.

The Treasury of Siphnians (Delphi, c. 530 B.C.) is representative of the transition from Doric to Ionic during the Archaic period. The columns are not the traditional Ionic but are figure columns, like the caryatid (maiden) columns on the Erechtheum built 75 years later. The triglyph and metope divisions on the frieze, however, are clearly Ionic, and the profile of the temple is slightly higher than is characteristic of Doric.

During the Geometric period Greek sculpture was painted wood but, like the wooden temples of that time, is completely gone. Early contacts with Egypt and travel to the island group of the Cyclades may have inspired the Greek sculptor to make use of the more permanent medium of stone.

The Kore (clothed maiden) and Kouros (nude male) of the Archaic period seem to have been adopted from Egyptian models, but their resemblance to Egyptian "classical" sculpture is only superficial.¹ Although the standing figures have a similar stance--one leg, usually the left one, forward but in a state of balance with the other; arms rather stiffly straight at each side; no axial articulation between the hips and shoulders--the figure is alert and alive. The four-sided concept of the Egyptians has been broken, with the block penetrated to make space between the legs and between the arms and the torso. Where the expression of Egyptian sculpture is serene and other-worldly in a kind of transcendental way, the Greek statues of the Archaic period suggest a certain awareness and expressiveness. Coiffeured long hair cascades about the shoulders of the Kouros and in convincingly naturalistic braids around the shoulders of the Kore figures. The male figures are more naturalistic anatomically than either the pharaoh statues or the Mesopotamian gods and kings. The females are depicted with the rhythmic folds of garments helping to define the feminine form. The study of both anatomy and ideal proportions for the human

¹The Kouri seem to have been demi-gods for use as grave markings or offerings of some kind. Many are life-sized and some are larger than life.

figure as the Greeks became more "person-centered" resulted in the transition between the figure of the late Archaic period and those of the Classical period. The interpretation in the Classical period, in turn, would evolve from the idealized to the individualized complex poses of the Hellenistic period.

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FOR FURTHER READING

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