Ancient Greece

Epigonos (?), *Dying Gaul*, 230 B.C.

Alexandros of Antioch-on-the-Meander, *Venus de Milo*, 150-120 B.C.

IKTINOS and KALLIKRATES, *Parthenon*, 447-438 BCE
The Greek World
Artistic Periods

- Geometric (900-600 B.C.)
- Archaic (600-480 B.C)
- Early & High Classical (480-400 B.C.)
- Late Classical (400 – 323 B.C.)
- Hellenistic (323-30 B.C.)

No other culture has had as far-reaching or lasting an influence on art and civilization as that of ancient Greece.
Geometric Period

- Dates: ca. 900–600 BC; named because of the prevalence of geometric designs and patterns in the works of art.
- Conceptual (stylized) representation of human figures.

- **Krater** – ancient wide-mouthed bowl for mixing wine and water
- **Amphora** – ancient Greek two-handled jar used for general storage purposes, usually wine or oil
Krater vs Amphora

Geometric krater, from the Dipylon cemetery, Athens, Greece, ca. 740 BCE

DIPYLON PAINTER, Geometric amphora with mourning scene, from the Dipylon cemetery, Athens, Greece, ca. 750 BCE.
Mantiklos Apollo, statuette of a youth dedicated by Mantiklos to Apollo, from Thebes, Greece, ca. 700–680 BCE

Hero and centaur (Herakles and Nessos?), from Olympia, Greece, ca. 750–730 BCE
Archaic Period

• Dates: ca. 600 - 480 B.C.

• Gradual change from Geometric style to the Archaic style.

• It was influenced by the flowing forms and animals in Mesopotamian art.

• There was a growing emphasis on the human figure.
In a series of bands, reminiscent of geometric vases, native animals (boars) appear next to exotic lions and panthers as well as creatures inspired by eastern creatures like the sphinx and lamassu.

A Siren (part woman, part bird) is displayed on the neck.

Corinthian black-figure amphora with animal friezes, from Rhodes, Greece, ca. 625–600 BCE
kouros & kore

– Earliest figures of the Greek Archaic Period
– Function is unknown, but because they may have been found among the ruins of temples they are thought to be devotional or funerary statues.
– The men were depicted in the nude.
  • They were stylized, and followed artistic conventions. For example they might have had a slight smile which is now referred to as an “Archaic Smile”
Human Figure in Archaic Art

Male:
*kouros* (male youth)
*kouroi* (pl.)

Female:
*kore* (maiden)
*korai* (pl.).

Kouros, ca. 600 BCE.
Calf Bearer, dedicated by Rhonbos on the Acropolis, Athens, Greece, ca. 560 BCE

Peplos Kore, from the Acropolis, Athens, Greece, ca. 530 BCE
Kroisos, from Anavysos, Greece, ca. 530 BCE
Architecture

- Some of the greatest accomplishments of the Greeks are their architecture.
- During the Archaic period an architectural format was developed.
  - The architectural forms from the Archaic period are derived from the Mycenaean *megaron*, which became an important element in the Classical temple.
  - **Megaron** – architectural form consisting of an open porch (cella), a vestibule (lobby) and a large hall with a central throne or hearth (sacrificial pit)
  - **Cella** - the center room which housed the statue of the god or goddess of the temple and was often surrounded by a single or double row of columns
Architecture

Plan of Temple A, Prinias, Greece, ca. 625 BCE

Plan of a typical peripteral Greek temple.

**Peripteral** - Having a single row of columns on all sides
Architectural Elements

DORIC ORDER
- Raking cornice
- Pediment
- Cornice
- Frieze
- Triglyph
- Metope
- Architrave
- Capital
- Abacus
- Echinus
- Shaft
- Stylobate

IONIC ORDER
- Raking cornice
- Pediment
- Cornice
- Frieze
- Architrave
- Abacus
- Volute
- Capital
- Shaft
- Base
- Stylobate
Columns

1. Steps
   (a) Stereobate
   (b) Stylabate
2. Shaft
   (a) Doric drum
   (b) Flute
   (c) Base
3. Capital
   (a) Necking
   (b) Echinos
   (c) Abacus
   (d) Volute
4. Column
5. Architrave
6. Frieze
   (a) Metope
   (b) Triglyph
7. Cornice
8. Entablature

| Doric drum | DORIC | IONIC | CORINTHIAN |
| 1b         | 1b    | 1b    | 1b         |
| 2b         | 2b    | 2b    | 2b         |
| 3a         | 3a    | 3a    | 3a         |
| 3b         | 3b    | 3b    | 3b         |
| 3c         | 3c    | 3c    | 3c         |
| 3d         | 3d    | 3d    | 3d         |
| 4          | 4     | 4     | 4          |
| 5          | 5     | 5     | 5          |
| 6          | 6     | 6     | 6          |
| 7          | 7     | 7     | 7          |
| 8          | 8     | 8     | 8          |
Temple of Hera I ("Basilica"), and plan, Paestum, Italy, ca. 550 BCE.
Vase Painting

EXEKIAS, Achilles and Ajax playing a dice game (detail from an Athenian black-figure amphora), from Vulci, Italy, ca. 540–530 BCE.

ANDOKIDES PAINTER, Achilles and Ajax playing a dice game (amphora), from Orvieto, Italy, ca. 525–520 BCE. Red-figure side (right).
Transition to the Classical Period

- Historical event: 480 B.C. Persian defeat, Classical period begins
- Implied movement was the greatest advancement in the arts of the Early Classical period.
- Artists were more keenly aware of nature.
- The most copied subjects were Myron’s Discus-thrower (*Diskobolos*) & Polykleitos’ *Doryphoros* (Spear Bearer).
Dying warrior, from the west pediment (top), from the east pediment (below) of the Temple of Aphaia, Aegina, Greece, ca. 500–490 BCE

Archaic Style – posed, rigid, looking out at viewer

Classical Style – Natural, human, oblivious to the viewer, in pain
The seer is reacting to his vision. He foresees a tragic outcome.

**Note:** depiction of old age is rare in Greek art. Mostly a Roman technique.

Seer, from the east pediment of the Temple of Zeus, Olympia, Greece, ca. 470–456 BCE
Posture in Statuary

_Kritios Boy (left)_ is the earliest known example of _contrapposto_, a relaxed and natural stance. Notice how his weight shifts to his left leg and how his head turns slightly to his right. Notice absence of Archaic smile.

This Riace Warrior (right), like most Classical Greek statues, was sculpted in bronze. Most Classical bronzes have not survived. Much of the Classical Greek sculptures today are Roman marble copies.
Zeus (or Poseidon?), from the sea off Cape Artemision, Greece, ca. 460–450 BCE. Bronze
MYRON, *Diskobolos (Discus Thrower)*. Roman marble copy of a bronze original of ca. 450 BCE
Doryphoros (Spear Thrower), POLYKEITOS

• Originally titled *Canon*
• Established Polykleitos’ canon of proportions, setting ideal correlations among body parts
• *Contrapposto*
• Notice the harmony of opposites

POLYKLEITOS, *Doryphoros (Spear Bearer)*. Roman marble copy from Pompeii, Italy, after a bronze original of ca. 450–440 BCE
Acropolis – Classical Architecture

• After the Persians destroyed the Acropolis, the Greeks mounted a massive building campaign under Pericles to rebuild it. (But they didn’t want to use the same stone as it had been defiled.)

• The first major work that was rebuilt was a temple, The Parthenon, to the goddess Athena – protector of Athens.

• The Parthenon was designed by architects Iktinos and Kallikrates, and is the best example of the Doric order. – **Entasis** - the swell of each column in the middle. The reasons from this are debatable.
  • Some think it was for function; Others think it was to correct perceptual distortions.
Aerial View, Acropolis, Athens, Greece
1. **Parthenon**
2. Old Temple of Athena

3. **Erechtheum**
4. Statue of Athena Promachos

5. **Propylaea**
6. Temple of Athena Nike
7. Eleusinion
8. Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia
9. Chalkotheke
10. Pandroseion
11. Arrephorion

12. Altar of Athena
13. Sanctuary of Zeus Polieus
14. Sanctuary of Pandion
15. Odeon of Herodes Atticus
16. Stoa of Eumenes
17. Sanctuary of Asclepius or Asclepieion
18. Theatre of Dionysus Eleuthereus
19. Odeon of Pericles
20. Temenos of Dionysus Eleuthereus
21. Aglaureion
IKTINOS and KALLIKRATES, Parthenon, (Temple of Athena Parthenos, looking southeast), Acropolis, Athens, Greece, 447–438 BCE. Doric Temple
PHIDIAS, *Athena Parthenos*, in the *cella* of the Parthenon, Acropolis, Athens, Greece, ca. 438 BCE. Model of the lost statue. 38”
Lapith versus centaur, *metope* from the south side of the Parthenon, Acropolis, Athens, Greece, ca. 447-438 BCE
Three goddesses (Hestia, Dione, and Aphrodite?), from the east pediment of the Parthenon, Acropolis, Athens, Greece, ca. 438–432 BCE

Helios and his horses, and Dionysos (Herakles?), from the east pediment of the Parthenon, Acropolis, Athens, Greece, ca. 438–432 BCE
The great civic festival that was the center of Athenian public life, as the Presidential inauguration is in American life, was the Panathenaic Festival Procession, which also took place every four years.

Details of the Panathenaic Festival procession frieze, from the Parthenon, Acropolis, Athens, Greece, ca. 447–438.

Elders and maidens of east frieze.
Erechtheion (looking northwest), Acropolis, Athens, Greece, ca. 421–405 BCE

Ionic Temple

The ancient wooden image of the goddess, Athena *Polais* was housed here. This was the most important ritual image of the goddess on the Acropolis, the one brought out of the sanctum to receive the *peplos* brought by the Panathenaic Festival Procession.
Purpose of a caryatid was to act as architectural support.

*Caryatid* - female figurative pillars

Replaced the Ionic column.

Caryatid from the south porch of the Erechtheion, Acropolis, Athens, Greece, ca. 421–405 BCE
In the Geometric era, painted vases were used to mark graves of the wealthy; in the Archaic period, korai & steles were used. This grave stele continues in the Archaic tradition.

Hegoso, an Athenian woman from a prominent family, is shown in a women’s room in a Greek house. The servant girl, and the jewelry box which she is handing Hegoso, are symbolic of Hegoso’s father’s wealth and property.

*Epitaph* - short text honoring a deceased person, that is inscribed on their tombstone or plaque.

Grave stele of Hegeso, from the Dipylon cemetery, Athens, Greece, ca. 400 BCE
Late Classical Period

• 400 – 323 B.C; time of chronic warfare
  – devastating Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta (431-404 B.C.). Athens succumbs to the Spartans, the pre-eminent military and navy power in the Classical world
  – the Macedonians (Phillip II) invade Greece and defeat the united city states at the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 B.C.
  – 336 B.C. Phillip II is assassinated, his son Alexander the Great becomes ruler. Launches a massive military campaign and overthrows the Persian Empire (act of revenge) and took control of Egypt (est. Alexandria) and India.
• All of these events effected the appearance of art
PRAXITELES

• Bold step to render a goddess in the nude

• Retains superhuman beauty but also includes sensuous and humanizing qualities – different from the cold, aloof gods and athletes used in earlier eras.

• Modesty is depicted

Praxiteles

• Notice S-curve of the body (pronounced *contrapposto*)

• New standard of adult and child interaction

• Humanized the gods

Praxiteles(?), Hermes and the infant Dionysos, from the Temple of Hera, Olympia, Greece. Copy of a statue by Praxiteles of ca. 340 BCE or an original work of ca. 330–270 BCE by a son or grandson.
contrapposto

The use of *contrapposto* was also found on pottery and wall murals – not just sculptures.

Artist painting a marble statue of Herakles (Apulian red-figure column krater), ca. 350–320 BCE
Lysippos

• introduced a new canon of proportions where the bodies were more slender than those of Polykleitos Doryphoros (Spear-bearer), 450 -40 B.C.

• wanted the viewer to see the statue from all angles, not just a frontal view

Lysippos, Apoxyomenos (Scraper). Roman marble copy of a bronze original of ca. 330 BCE,
- exaggerated muscle development. Herakles is so tired that he needs to lean on his club in order to remain standing – humanizing technique

- he holds the golden apples behind his back – another technique Lysippos used in order to engage the view to enjoy the statue from multiple angles.

Lysippos, Weary Herakles (*Farnese Herakles*). Roman marble copy from Rome, Italy, signed by GLYKON OF ATHENS, of a bronze original of ca. 320 BCE.
Alexander the Great

- Official artist was Lysippos
- Tutored by Aristotle; By the age of 30, his empire spanned from modern day Greece to India.
- Alexander's creation of Greek colonies resulted in the spreading of Greek culture in the east and in a new Hellenistic civilization, aspects of which were still evident in the traditions of the Byzantine Empire in the mid-15th century.
- Alexander was associated with Achilles, a classical hero from *The Iliad*, and remains prominent in the history and myth of Greek and non-Greek cultures.
- He became the measure against which military leaders compared themselves.
GNOSIS, Stag hunt, from Pella, Greece, ca. 300 BCE. Pebble mosaic, figural panel

Mosaic - new artistic medium

Earliest mosaicist’s signature known
Philoxenos of Eretria, *Battle of Issus, (Alexander Mosaic)* ca. 310 BCE. Roman copy, from the House of the Faun, Pompeii, Italy, late second or early first century BCE. Tesserae mosaic

**Subject:** Alexander the Great vs. Darius III @ Issus when Darius fled the battle in humiliating defeat.
Polykleitos the Younger, Theater, Epidauros, Greece, ca. 350 BCE

Auditorium is situated on a hillside, seats were stone benches, 55 rows of seats, 12,000 spectators – harmonious in proportion & acoustics allowed every single person in the audience to hear the actors and chorus.
Columns

Polykleitos the Younger, *Corinthian* capital, from the tholos, Epidauros, Greece, ca. 350 BCE.
Sculpture in the Hellenistic Period

• Human and identifiable aspects: long, bushy/curly hair, mustaches & torques (neck bands)

• twisting posture, theatrical gestures, emotional intensity = psychological impact

Epigonos(?), Gallic chieftain killing himself and his wife. Roman marble copy of a bronze original of ca. 230–220 BCE
Epigonos(?), Dying Gaul. Roman marble copy of a bronze original of ca. 230–220 BCE

- Human and identifiable aspects:
- long, bushy/curly hair, mustaches & torques (neck bands)
Venus de Milo

Hestia, Diane, Aphrodite, from the Parthenon

ALEXANDROS OF ANTIOCH-ON-THE-MEANDER, Aphrodite (*Venus de Milo*), from Melos, Greece, ca. 150–125 B.C.
New vs. Traditional Ideals

Sleeping satyr (*Barberini Faun*), from Rome, Italy, ca. 230–200 B.C.

Seated boxer, from Rome, Italy, ca. 100–50 B.C.

*1st work that is NOT idealized in the Classical world*
Realism vs. Idealism

Old market woman, ca. 150–100 B.C.

Polykeutos, Demosthenes. Roman marble copy of a bronze original of ca. 280 B.C.

In the Hellenistic period we come to portraits that are interested in specific individual idiosyncrasies and personalities.
ATHANADOROS, HAGESANDROS, and POLYDOROS OF RHODES, Laocoön and his sons, from Rome, Italy, early first century CE

It shows the Trojan priest Laocoön and his sons Antiphantes and Thymbraeus being strangled by sea serpents.