HUMANITIES: PREHISTORY TO THE 15TH CENTURY



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Licensing

1: Prehistoric Culture

- 1.1: About This Module- Prehistoric Culture
- 1.2: The Paleolithic Era
- 1.3: Paleolithic Cave Art and Venus Figurines
- 1.4: The Mesolithic and Neolithic Era

2: Mesopotamia Culture

- 2.1: About This Module- Mesopotamia Culture
- 2.2: The Fertile Crescent
- 2.3: Mesopotamian Civilization Before the Ancient Dark Ages
- 2.4: The Ancient “Dark Ages” and the Rise of the Israelite State
- 2.5: Neo-Assyrian Civilization
- 2.6: The Neo-Babylonians and Persians

3: Egyptian Culture

- 3.1: About This Module- Egyptian Culture
- 3.2: The Nile and Egyptian Religion
- 3.3: The New Kingdom and the Amarna Period
- 3.4: Pre-Dynastic Egypt and The Old Kingdom
- 3.5: The First and Second Intermediate Period

4: Greek Culture

- 4.1: About This Module- Greek Culture
- 4.2: Cycladic, Minoan, and Mycenaean Civilization
- 4.3: The Greek Dark Ages, Classical Greece, and the Rise of Athens
- 4.4: Greek Religion, Philosophical Tradition, and Sculpture
- 4.5: The Hellenistic Age

5: Roman Culture

- 5.1: About This Module- Roman Culture
- 5.2: Early Rome
- 5.3: The Roman Republic
- 5.4: Transition to Empire and Rome Under Augustus
- 5.5: The Flavian, Nervan-Antonin, and Severan Dynasties
- 5.6: Rome’s Imperial Crisis and the Rise of Constantine

6: Roman and Christian Religious Culture

- 6.1: About This Module- Roman and Christian Religious Culture
- 6.2: Early Beliefs and the Roman Pantheon
- 6.3: Cults
- 6.4: Early Christian Religion and Culture

7: Byzantine and Muslim Culture

- 7.1: About This Module- Byzantine and Muslim Culture
- 7.2: The Byzantine Empire
- 7.3: Islamic Civilization

8: Western European Civilization During the Middle Ages

- 8.1: About This Module- Western European Civilization During the Middle Ages
- 8.2: Early Middle Ages and Western Society
- 8.3: The Rise of Islam, Carolingian Europe, New Kingdoms, and a Revived Byzantium
- 8.4: Art, Architecture, and Military and Technological Developments
- 8.5: High Middle Ages
- 8.6: The Late Middle Ages and Collapse of Byzantium

Index

Glossary

9.1: Footnote Attribution List

Detailed Licensing

Licensing

*A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in **Back Matter/Detailed Licensing**.*

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: Prehistoric Culture

1.1: About This Module- Prehistoric Culture

1.2: The Paleolithic Era

1.3: Paleolithic Cave Art and Venus Figurines

1.4: The Mesolithic and Neolithic Era

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1.1: About This Module- Prehistoric Culture

Module Introduction

Topics Covered:

- What is Culture?
- What is Civilization?
- Prehistoric Civilization (Paleolithic and Neolithic) to Include
  - The Agricultural Revolution
  - Venus Figurines
  - Stonehenge
  - Cave Art such as the Lascaux and Chauvet Cave Paintings

This module will introduce students to cultural expressions in both Paleolithic and Neolithic eras. Students will interpret cultural artifacts such as the Venus of Willendorf and Stonehenge to determine what these artifacts tell us about the daily lives of prehistoric men and women. Finally, the student will demonstrate proficiency in critical thought in two ways. First, students will sort events from Prehistoric era in historical order. Second, students will assess the extent to which religious belief motivated many of the artistic and architectural innovations from the Prehistoric era on this week's Discussion Board.

Historians divide time in two eras. The era before year one is identified as BCE (Before the Common Era) or previously BC (Before Christ). The era after year is identified as CE (Common Era) or previously AD (Anno Domini–Latin for the 'In the Year of Our Lord'). While the Christianized delineations of history sufficed in previous decades, scholars now prefer the more generic BCE and CE as they take into account that different religions have different starting points in history. Jewish tradition, for example, has seen the beginning of Creation as their first year. Muslims, on the other hand, identify Muhammad flight from Mecca as their first year (622 CE in the common calendar). Thus BCE and CE allow historians to speak about events in the past through a secular rather than religious lens.

Even so, the designations BCE/BC and CE/AD work the same. In the era of BCE/BC, time counts down backwards. Once you reach year one, however, time begins to march forward in the AD/CE era. Thus, Augustus comes to power in Rome in the year 27 BCE. He dies, however, in 14 CE. So, in essence, he ruled for 41 years. In terms of Jesus, many scholars now place his birth earlier than turn of the first millennia, sometime around 4 BCE.[1]

Learning Outcomes Related to this Module

1. Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
2. Recognize the relationships between cultural expressions and their contexts
3. Understand cultural expressions
4. Interpret and evaluate cultural artifacts and/or their contexts for significance

Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Sort events in historical order from the Prehistoric era.
- Identify characteristics that distinguish the Paleolithic from the Neolithic eras.
- Identify possible motivations for the creation of cave art during the Paleolithic era.
- Identify possible explanations as to why Prehistoric communities created Venus statuettes.
- Identify the reasons why the Neolithic era was revolutionary era in human history.
- Identify possible explanations for the construction of megalithic sites such as Stonehenge and explain how they may have functioned.
- Identify features that mark the end of the prehistoric era in human history. [1]

Assigned Readings

- Syllabus Reading: Course Syllabus and Course Documents
- Learning Unit – Prehistoric Culture

Assignments | Learning Activities

- Carefully review the Syllabus
- Review and submit Student Contract
- Participate in Introduction Discussion
- Complete assigned readings
- Review Learning Unit
- Participate in Discussion 1
- Complete Timeline Assessment 1
- Complete Assessment Module 1
- Review Capstone Project | Introduction

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1.2: The Paleolithic Era

Before the Rise of Civilization: The Paleolithic Era

The first humans evolved in Africa during the Paleolithic Era, or Stone Age, which spans the period of history from 2.5 million to about 10,000 BCE. During this time, humans lived in small groups as hunter-gatherers, with clear gender divisions for labor. The men hunted animals while the women gathered food, such as fruit, nuts and berries, from the local area. Simple tools made of stone, wood, and bone (such as hand axes, flints and spearheads) were used throughout the period. Fire was controlled, which created heat and light, and allowed for cooking.

Humankind gradually evolved from early members of the genus *Homo* such as *Homo habilis* , who used simple stone tools into fully behaviorally and anatomically modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) during the Paleolithic era. During the end of the Paleolithic, specifically the Middle and or Upper Paleolithic, humans began to produce the earliest works of art and engage in religious and spiritual behavior, such as burial and ritual. Paleolithic humans were nomads, who often moved their settlements as food became scarce. This eventually resulted in humans spreading out from Africa (beginning roughly 60,000 years ago) and into Eurasia, Southeast Asia, and Australia. By about 40,000 years ago, they had entered Europe, and by about 15,000 years ago, they had reached North America followed by South America.

During about 10,000 BCE, a major change occurred in the way humans lived; this would have a cascading effect on every part of human society and culture. That change was the Neolithic Revolution. [2]

Paleolithic Culture

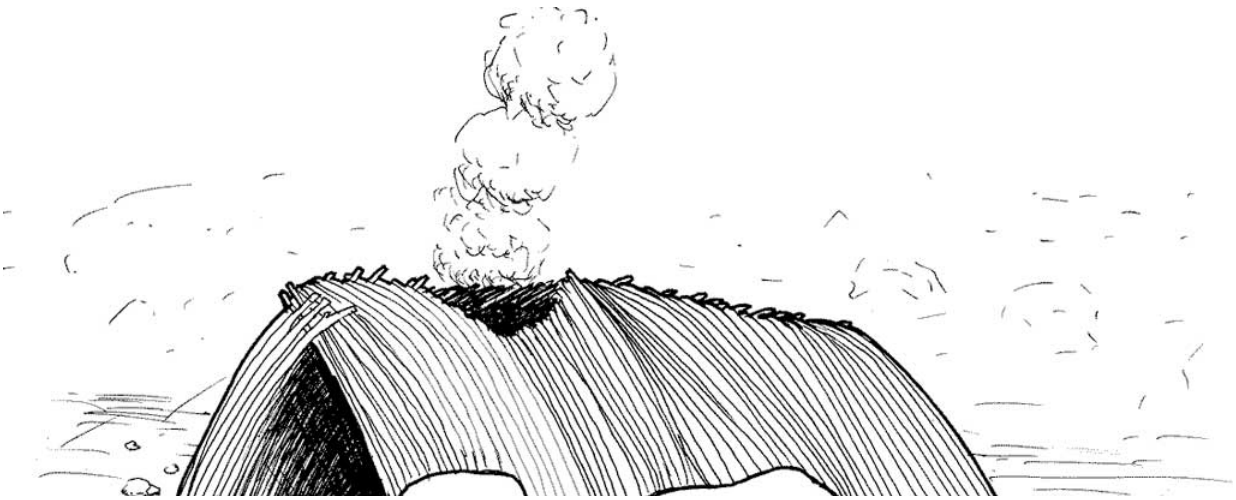
Paleolithic Society

A typical Paleolithic society followed a hunter-gatherer economy. Humans hunted wild animals for meat and gathered food, firewood, and materials for their tools, clothes, or shelters. The adoption of both technologies clothing and shelter cannot be dated exactly, but they were key to humanity's progress. As the Paleolithic era progressed, dwellings became more sophisticated, more elaborate, and more house-like. At the end of the Paleolithic era, humans began to produce works of art such as cave paintings, rock art, and jewelry, and began to engage in religious behavior such as burial and rituals .

Early men chose locations that could be defended against predators and rivals and that were shielded from inclement weather. Many such locations could be found near rivers, lakes, and streams, perhaps with low hilltops nearby that could serve as refuges. Since water can erode and change landscapes quite drastically, many of these campsites have been destroyed. Our understanding of Paleolithic dwellings is therefore limited. [3]

Dwellings and Shelters

As early as 380,000 BCE, humans were constructing temporary wood huts . Other types of houses existed; these were more frequently campsites in caves or in the open air with little in the way of formal structure. The oldest examples are shelters within caves, followed by houses of wood, straw, and rock. A few examples exist of houses built out of bones.



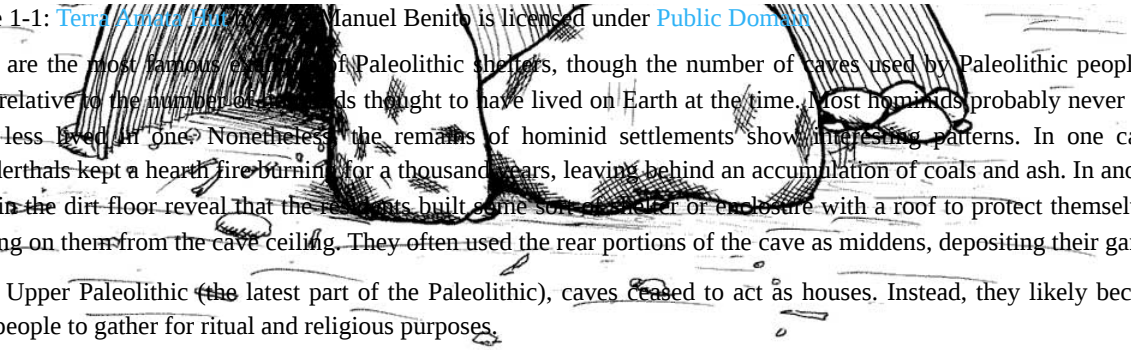


Figure 1-1: Terra Amata Hut. Jose-Manuel Benito is licensed under Public Domain

Caves are the most famous examples of Paleolithic shelters, though the number of caves used by Paleolithic people is drastically small relative to the number of hominids thought to have lived on Earth at the time. Most hominids probably never entered a cave, much less lived in one. Nonetheless, the remains of hominid settlements show interesting patterns. In one cave, a tribe of Neanderthals kept a hearth fire burning for a thousand years, leaving behind an accumulation of coals and ash. In another cave, post holes in the dirt floor reveal that the residents built some sort of shelter or enclosure with a roof to protect themselves from water dripping on them from the cave ceiling. They often used the rear portions of the cave as middens, depositing their garbage there.

In the Upper Paleolithic (the latest part of the Paleolithic), caves ceased to act as houses. Instead, they likely became places for early people to gather for ritual and religious purposes.

Modern archaeologists know of few types of shelter used by ancient peoples other than caves. Some examples do exist, but they are quite rare. In Siberia, a group of Russian scientists uncovered a house or tent with a frame constructed of mammoth bones. The great tusks supported the roof, while the skulls and thighbones formed the walls of the tent. Several families could live inside, where three small hearths, little more than rings of stones, kept people warm during the winter. Around 50,000 years ago, a group of Paleolithic humans camped on a lakeshore in southern France. At Terra Amata, these hunter-gatherers built a long and narrow house. The foundation was a ring of stones, with a flat threshold stone for a door at either end. Vertical posts down the middle of the house supported roofs and walls of sticks and twigs, probably covered over with a layer of straw. A hearth outside served as the kitchen, while a smaller hearth inside kept people warm. Their residents could easily abandon both dwellings. This is why they are not considered true houses, which was a development of the Neolithic period rather than the Paleolithic period. [3]

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1.3: Paleolithic Cave Art and Venus Figurines

Paleolithic Cave Art

Archeological discoveries across a broad swath of Europe (especially southern France and northern Spain) include over two hundred caves with spectacular paintings, drawings, and sculpture that are among the earliest undisputed examples of representational image-making. Paintings and engravings along the caves' walls and ceilings fall under the category of parietal art .

The most common themes in cave paintings are large wild animals, such as bison, horses, aurochs , and deer. Tracings of human hands and hand stencils were also very popular, as well as abstract patterns called finger flutings. The species found most often were suitable for hunting by humans, but were not necessarily the typical prey found in associated bone deposits. For example, the painters of Lascaux, France left mainly reindeer bones, but this species does not appear at all in the cave paintings; equine species are the most common. Drawings of humans were rare and were usually schematic as opposed to the detailed and naturalistic images of animals.

The pigments used appear to be red and yellow ochre , manganese or carbon for black, and china clay for white. Some of the color may have been mixed with fat. The paint was applied by finger, chewed sticks, or fur for brushes. Sometimes the silhouette of the animal was incised in the rock first, and in some caves, many of the images were only engraved in this fashion, taking them out of a strict definition of "cave painting." (4)

Main Examples of Cave Paintings: France and Spain

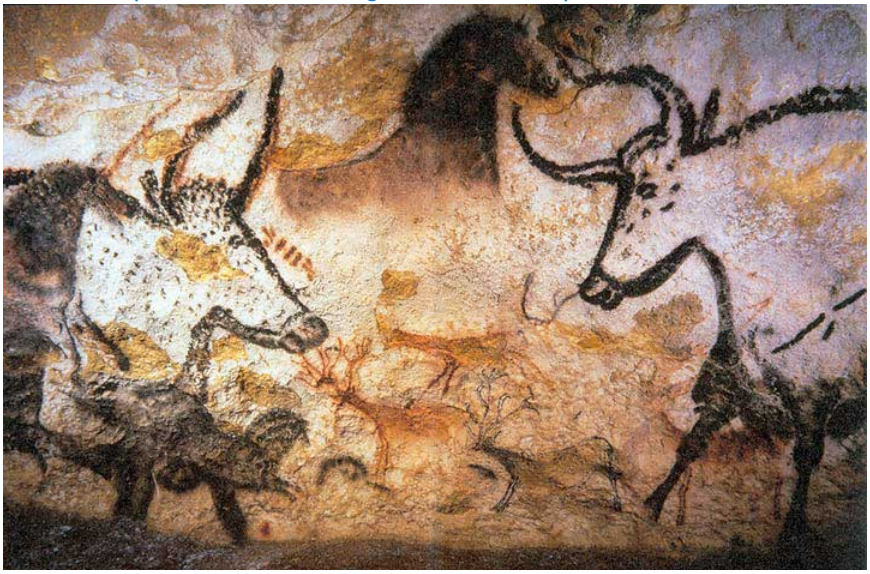


Figure 1-2: Lascaux painting by Prof saxx is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Lascaux (circa 15,000 BCE), in southwestern France, is an interconnected series of caves with one of the most impressive examples of artistic creations by Paleolithic humans.

Discovered in 1940, the cave contains nearly two thousand figures, which can be grouped into three main categories animals, human figures, and abstract signs. Over nine hundred images depict animals from the surrounding areas, such as horses, stags, aurochs, bison, lions, bears, and birds species that would have been hunted and eaten, and those identified as predators. The paintings contain no images of the surrounding landscape or the vegetation of the time.

The Chauvet–Pont–d'Arc Cave (circa 30,000 BCE) in the Ard'che department of southern France contains some of the earliest known paintings, as well as other evidence of Upper Paleolithic life. The Chauvet Cave is uncharacteristically large, and the quality, quantity, and condition of the artwork found on its walls have been called spectacular. Hundreds of animal paintings have been catalogued, depicting at least thirteen different species not only the familiar herbivores that predominate Paleolithic cave art, but also many predatory animals, such as cave lions, panthers, bears, and cave hyenas.



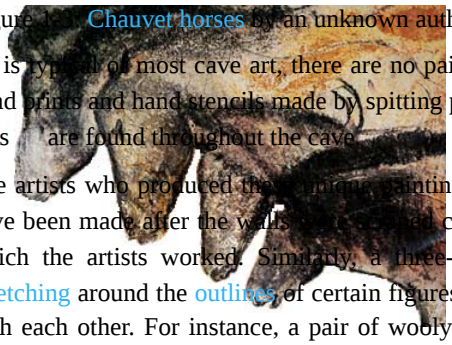


Figure 1-3: Chauvet horses by an unknown author from Wikimedia is licensed under Public Domain

As is typical of most cave art, there are no paintings of complete human figures in Chauvet. There are a few panels of red ochre hand prints and hand stencils made by spitting pigment over hands pressed against the cave surface. Abstract markings lines and dots are found throughout the cave.

The artists who produced the Chauvet paintings used techniques rarely found in other cave art. Many of the paintings appear to have been made after the walls were scraped clear of debris and concretions, leaving a smoother and noticeably lighter area upon which the artists worked. Similarly, a three-dimensional quality and the suggestion of movement are achieved by incising or etching around the outlines of certain figures. The art also includes scenes that were complex for its time animals interacting with each other. For instance, a pair of woolly rhinoceroses are seen butting horns in an apparent contest for territory or mating rights. (4)

Spain



Figure 1-4: Altamira Bison by Rameessos is licensed under Public Domain

Altamira (circa 18,000 BCE) is a cave in northern Spain famous for its Upper Paleolithic cave paintings featuring drawings and polychrome rock paintings of wild mammals and human hands. The cave has been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The long cave consists of a series of twisting passages and chambers. Human occupation was limited to the cave mouth, although paintings were created throughout the length of the cave. The artists used polychromy charcoal and ochre or haematite to create the images, often diluting these pigments to produce variations in intensity , creating an impression of chiaroscuro . They also exploited the natural contours in the cave walls to give their subjects a three-dimensional effect.

Like all prehistoric art, the purpose of these paintings remains obscure. In recent years, new research has suggested that the Lascaux paintings may incorporate prehistoric star charts. Some anthropologists and art historians also theorize that the paintings

could be an account of past hunting success, or they could represent a mystical ritual to improve future hunting endeavors. An alternative theory, broadly based on ethnographic studies of contemporary hunter-gatherer societies, is that the paintings pertained to shamanism. [4]

Venus Figurines

"Venus figurines" is an umbrella term for a number of prehistoric statuettes of women that have been found mostly in Europe, but also in Asia and Siberia, dating from the Upper Paleolithic. These figures are all quite small, between 4 and 25 cm tall, and carved mainly in steatite, limestone, bone, or ivory. These sculptures are collectively described as "Venus" figurines in reference to the Roman goddess of beauty, as early historians assumed they represented an ideal of beauty from the time.

The Venus figurines have sometimes been interpreted as representing a mother goddess; the abundance of such female imagery has led some to believe that Upper Paleolithic (and later Neolithic) societies had a female-centered religion and a female-dominated society. Various other explanations for the purpose of the figurines have been proposed, such as the hypothesis that the figurines were created as self-portraits of actual women.

Venus figures are characterized by shared stylistic features, such as an oval shape, large belly, wide-set thighs, large breasts, and the typical absence of arms and feet. Hundreds of these sculptures have been found both in open-air settlements and caves. The Venus of Hohle Fels, a 6 cm figure of a woman carved from a mammoth's tusk, was discovered in Germany's Hohle Fels cave in 2008 and represents one of the earliest found sculptures of this type.



Figure 1-5: Venus of Hohle Felsby Thilo Parg is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Additionally, the Venus of Willendorf is a particularly famous example of the Venus figure. While initially thought to be symbols of fertility, or of a fertility goddess, the true significance of the Venus figure remains obscure, as does much of prehistoric art. [5]





Figure 1-6: Venus of Willendorf by MatthiasKabel is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

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1.4: The Mesolithic and Neolithic Era

The Mesolithic Era

The Mesolithic Period, or Middle Stone Age, is an archaeological term describing specific cultures that fall between the Paleolithic and the Neolithic Periods. While the start and end dates of the Mesolithic Period vary by geographical region, it dated approximately from 10,000 BCE to 8,000 BCE.

The Paleolithic was an age of purely hunting and gathering, but toward the Mesolithic period the development of agriculture contributed to the rise of permanent settlements. The later Neolithic period is distinguished by the domestication of plants and animals. Some Mesolithic people continued with intensive hunting, while others practiced the initial stages of domestication. Some Mesolithic settlements were villages of huts , others walled cities. (6)

The Neolithic Era



Figure 1-7: An array of Neolithic artifacts by Michael Greenhalgh is under licensed CC BY-SA 2.5

The term Neolithic or New Stone Age is most frequently used in connection with agriculture, which is the time when cereal cultivation and animal domestication was introduced. Because agriculture developed at different times in different regions of the world, there is no single date for the beginning of the Neolithic. In the Near East, agriculture was developed around 9,000 BCE, in Southeast Europe around 7,000 BCE, and later in other regions. Even within a specific region, agriculture developed during different times. For example, agriculture first developed in Southeast Europe about 7,000 BCE, in Central Europe about 5,500 BCE, and Northern Europe about 4,000 BCE. In East Asia, the Neolithic goes from 6000 to 2000 BCE.

Pottery is another element that makes the dating of the Neolithic problematic. In some regions, the appearance of pottery is considered a symbol of the Neolithic, but this notion makes the term Neolithic even more ambiguous, since the use of pottery does not always occur after agriculture: in Japan, pottery appears before agriculture, while in the Near East agriculture pre-dates pottery production.

All these factors make the starting point of the Neolithic somewhat fuzzy. It should be remembered that the origin of the term lies in a late th century CE classification system and we must keep in mind its limitations. (6)

A Revolution?

In order to reflect the deep impact that agriculture had over the human population, an Australian archaeologist named Gordon Childe popularized the term “Neolithic Revolution” in the 1940s CE. However, today, it is believed that the impact of agricultural innovation was exaggerated in the past: the development of Neolithic culture appears to have been a gradual rather than a sudden change. Moreover, before agriculture was established, archaeological evidence has shown that there is usually a period of semi-nomadic life, where pre-agricultural societies might have a network of campsites and live in different locations according to how the resources respond to seasonal variations. Sometimes, one of these campsites might be adopted as a basecamp; the group might spend the majority of time there during the year exploiting local resources, including wild plants: this is a step closer to agriculture. Agriculture and foraging are not totally incompatible ways of life. This means that a group could perform hunter-gatherer activities for part of the year and some farming during the rest, perhaps on a small scale. Rather than a revolution, the archaeological record suggests that the adoption of agriculture is the result of small and gradual changes.

Agriculture was developed independently in several regions. Since its origin, the dominant pattern in these separate regions is the spread of agricultural economies and the reduction of hunting and gathering activities, to the point that today hunting economies only persist in marginal areas where farming is not possible, such as frozen arctic regions, densely forested areas, or arid deserts.

Major changes were introduced by agriculture, affecting the way human society was organized and how it used the earth, including forest clearance, root crops, and cereal cultivation that can be stored for long periods of time, along with the development of new technologies for farming and herding such as plows, irrigation systems, etc. More intensive agriculture implies more food available for more people, more villages, and a movement towards a more complex social and political organization. As the population density of the villages increase, they gradually evolve into towns and finally into cities. [7]

Changes During the Neolithic Era

By adopting a sedentary way of life, the Neolithic groups increased their awareness of territoriality. During the 9600–6900 BCE period in the Near East, there were also innovations in arrowheads, yet no important changes in the animals hunted was detected. However, human skeletons were found with arrowheads embedded in them and also some settlements such as Jericho were surrounded with a massive wall and ditch around this time. It seems that the evidence of this period is a testimony of inter-communal conflicts, not far from organized warfare. There were also additional innovations in stone tool production that became widespread and adopted by many groups in distant locations, which is evidence for the existence of important networks of exchange and cultural interaction.

Living in permanent settlements brought new ways of social organization. As the subsistence strategies of Neolithic communities became more efficient, the population of the different settlements increased. We know from anthropological works that the larger the group, the less egalitarian and more hierarchical a society becomes. Those in the community who were involved in the management and allocation of food resources increased their social importance. Archaeological evidence has shown that during the early Neolithic, houses did not have individual storage facilities: storage and those activities linked to food preparation for storage were managed at village level. At the site of Jarf el Ahmar, in north Syria, there is a large subterranean structure which was used as a communal storage facility. This construction is in a central location among the households and there is also evidence that several rituals were performed in it.

Another site in northern Syria named Tell Abu Hureyra, displays evidence for the transition from foraging to farming: it was a gradual process, which took several centuries. The first inhabitants of the site hunted gazelles, wild asses and wild cattle. Then, we see evidence of change: gazelle consumption dropped and the amount of sheep consumption rose (wild in the beginning and domesticated in the end). Sheep herding turned into the main source of meat and gazelle hunting became a minor activity. Human remains show an increase of tooth wear of all adults, which reflects the importance of ground cereal in the diet. It is interesting that once pottery was introduced, tooth wear rates decreased, but the frequency of bad teeth increased, which suggests that baked food made from stone-ground flour was largely replaced by dishes such as porridge and gruel, which were boiled in pots. [7]

One of the best known prehistoric sites in the United Kingdom, Avebury contains the largest stone circle in Europe. Located in the same county as Stonehenge, Avebury lies north of the better-known site. Constructed over several hundred years in the third millennium BCE, the monument comprises a large henge with a large outer stone circle and two separate smaller stone circles situated inside the center of the monument. Its original purpose is unknown, although archaeologists believe that it was likely used for ritual or ceremony . The Avebury monument was part of a larger prehistoric landscape containing several older monuments.

The chronology of Avebury's construction is unclear. It was not designed as a single monument but was the result of various projects undertaken at different times during late prehistory . Experts date the construction of the central cove to 3,000 BCE, the inner stone circle to 2,900 BCE, the outer circle and henge to 2,600 BCE, and the avenues to 2,400 BCE. The construction of Avebury and Stonehenge indicate that a stable agrarian economy had developed in this region of England by 4000 to 3500 BCE. [8]

Neolithic Culture

Neolithic societies produced female and animal statues, engravings , and elaborate pottery decoration. In Western Europe, though, this period is best represented by the megalithic (large stone) monuments and passage tomb structures found from Malta to Portugal, through France and Germany, and across southern England to most of Wales and Ireland. [8]

Stonehenge

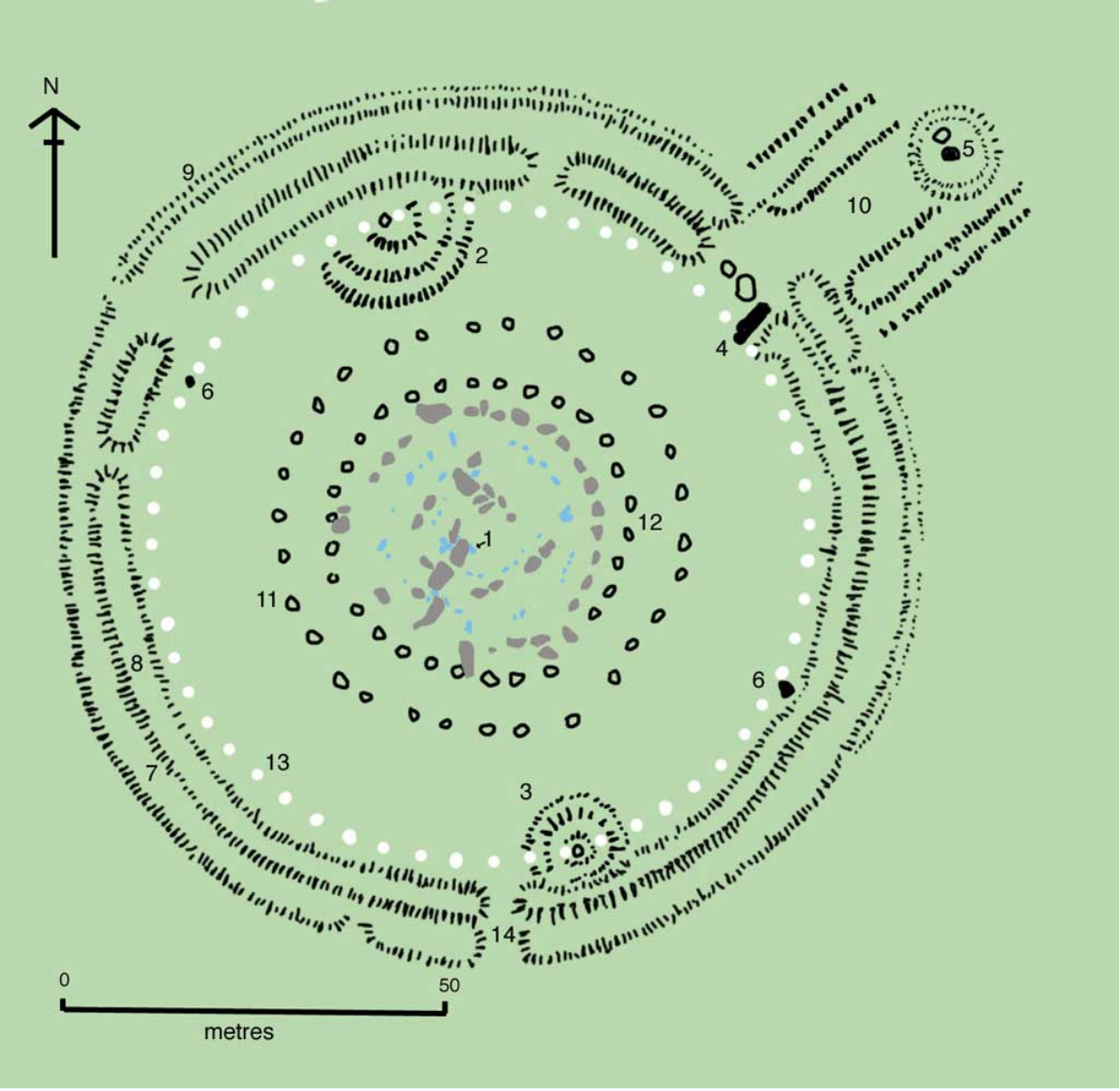


Figure 1-8: Above ground layout of Stonehenge Drawn by en:User:Adamsan is under licensed CC BY-SA 3.0

Perhaps the best known megalithic henge is Stonehenge, located on Salisbury Plain in the county of Wiltshire in south central England. Archaeologists believe it was constructed from 3000 BCE to 2000 BCE. The surrounding circular earth bank and ditch, which constitute the earliest phase of the monument, have been dated to about 3100 BCE. Radiocarbon dating suggests that the first bluestones in the innermost ring of Stonehenge were raised between 2400 and 2200 BCE, although they may have been at the site as early as 3000 BCE.

Although human remains have been found at the site, archaeologists are uncertain whether the site served funerarypurposes, ritual purposes, or both. Its alignments with the sunrise of the summer solstice and sunset of the winter solstice present the possibility that the site served as a rudimentary astronomical calendar to help early agrarian societies acclimate to the approaching growing season and harvest.



Figure 1-9: Stonehenge, Wiltshire, England by Diego Delso is under licensed CC BY-SA 4.0

Even the smallest bluestones weigh several tons each. These stones, so-called because they appear blue when wet, were quarried approximately 150 miles away in the Prescelli Mountains in southwest Wales. Even more impressive, the quarrying and transport of the stones took place without the aid of the wheel, requiring a sophisticated method of transport and construction involving felled trees and earthen mounds. The larger Sarcen stones that form the post–and–lintel ring and he free-standing trilithons were quarried approximately 25 miles to the north of Salisbury Plain, requiring the same transport system of felled trees and earthen mounds. [8]

Avebury



Figure 1-10: Avebury Hinges by Diliff is under licensed CC BY-SA 3.0

Passage Tombs

Passage tombs or graves consist of narrow passages made of large stones and one or multiple burial chambers covered in earth or stone. Megaliths were commonly used in the construction of passage tombs and typically date to the Neolithic. A common layout is the cruciform passage grave, characterized by a cross-shaped structure.



Figure 1-11: Newgrange Monument, Ireland by Popsracer is under licensed CC BY-SA 3.0

The Newgrange monument is comprised of a large mound built of alternating layers of earth and stones, covered with growing grass and with flat white quartz stones studded around the circumference. The mound covers 4500 square meters of ground. Within, a passage stretches through the structure ending at three small chambers.

Newgrange contains various examples of abstract Neolithic art carved onto its rocks. These are separated into 10 categories consisting of curvilinear forms like circles, spirals, arcs, serpentiforms, and dot-in-circles, as well as rectilinear examples such as chevrons, lozenges, radials, parallel lines, and offsets.

There is no agreement as to what the site was used for, but it has been speculated that it had some form of religious significance due to its alignment with the rising sun which floods the stone room with light on the winter solstice.[8]

The End of the Neolithic Era



Figure 1-12: greenish-metallic slab of copper by Chris 73 is under licensed CC BY-SA 3.0

At least two factors mark the transition from the prehistoric era to the ancient era. The first is the transition from stone to metal. Towards the end of the Neolithic era, copper metallurgy is introduced, which marks a transition period to the Bronze Age, sometimes referred to as the Chalcolithic or Eneolithic Era. Bronze is a mixture of copper and tin, which has greater hardness than copper, better casting properties, and a lower melting point. Bronze could be used for making weapons, something that was not possible with copper, which is not hard enough to endure combat conditions. In time, bronze became the primary material for tools and weapons, and a good part of the stone technology became obsolete, signaling the end of the Neolithic and thus, of the Stone Age. [7]

The second factor is the transition from oral storytelling to writing. Whereas prehistoric peoples depended upon word of mouth and images to pass along their culture and traditions, by 3000 BCE, humans living in Mesopotamians begin creating a written script to record their ideas. With this innovation in human history, the shift from pre-recorded history to recorded history begins. [1]

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Mesopotamia Culture

2.1: About This Module- Mesopotamia Culture
2.2: The Fertile Crescent
2.3: Mesopotamian Civilization Before the Ancient Dark Ages
2.4: The Ancient “Dark Ages” and the Rise of the Israelite State
2.5: Neo-Assyrian Civilization
2.6: The Neo-Babylonians and Persians

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2.1: About This Module- Mesopotamia Culture

Module Introduction

Topics Covered:

- Mesopotamian Civilization to Include
  - Hammurabi's Code
  - Epic of Gilgamesh
  - Royal Standard of Ur
  - Assyrian Art such as Ashurnasirpal's Killing Lions
  - The Ancient Israelites
  - The Assyrians
  - The Babylonians

This module introduces students to artistic, religious, and political expressions within Mesopotamian culture that developed between prehistory and the Hellenistic age. Students will determine what cultural artifacts such as Hammurabi's Code and the Lachish Inscription tell us about their historical contexts. Students will demonstrate understanding of cultural expressions by distinguishing the religious beliefs of the Mesopotamian and Israelites. Finally, students will also demonstrate proficiency in critical thought by assessing whether writing or metallurgy was a greater factor in the development of Mesopotamian civilization. [1]

Learning Outcomes Related to this Module

1. Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
2. Recognize the relationships between cultural expressions and their contexts
3. Understand cultural expressions
4. Interpret and evaluate cultural artifacts and/or their contexts for significance

Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Sort events in historical order from Mesopotamian civilization.
- Identify the function of the Ziggurat within Mesopotamian culture.
- Identify the importance of Mesopotamian inscriptions as written records of the ancient past.
- Identify the importance of Mesopotamian inscriptions as windows into the daily lives of ancient persons.
- Identify the impact of the ancient Dark Ages on traditional and peripheral powers in the Mesopotamian world.
- Identify major Mesopotamian figures and their achievements.
- Assess whether writing or metallurgy was a greater factor in the development of Mesopotamian civilization.[1]

Assigned Readings

- Learning Unit – Mesopotamian Culture

Assignments | Learning Activities

- Review Learning Unit
- Participate in Discussion 2
- Complete Timeline Assignment 2
- Complete Assessment Module 2

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2.2: The Fertile Crescent

Fertile Crescent



Figure 2-1: Map of the Fertile Crescent. Original image by NormanEinstein and uploaded by Jan van der Crabben is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Fertile Crescent is the region in the Middle East which curves, like a quarter-moon shape, from the Persian Gulf, through modern-day southern Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and northern Egypt. The term was first coined in 1916 by the

Egyptologist James Henry Breasted in his work Ancient Times: A History of the Early World, where he wrote, “This fertile crescent is approximately a semi-circle, with the open side toward the south, having the west end at the south-east corner of the Mediterranean, the center directly north of Arabia, and the east end at the north end of the Persian Gulf.” His phrase was widely circulated through the publications of the day becoming, finally, the common designation for this region. The Fertile Crescent is traditionally associated (in Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths) with the earthly location of the Garden of Eden.

Known as the Cradle of Civilization, the Fertile Crescent is regarded as the birthplace of agriculture, urbanization, writing, trade, science, history and organized religion and was first populated c.10,000 BCE when agriculture and the domestication of animals began in the region. By 9,000 BCE the cultivation of wild grains and cereals was wide-spread and, by 5000 BCE, irrigation of agricultural crops was fully developed. By 4500 BCE the cultivation of wool-bearing sheep was practiced widely. The first cities began to rise (Eridu, the first, according to the Sumerians, in 5400 BCE, then Uruk and the others) around 4500 BCE and cultivation of wheat and grains was practiced in addition to the further domestication of animals (by the year 3500 BCE the image of the breed of dog known as the Saluki was appearing regularly on vases and other ceramics as well as wall paintings). The unusually fertile soil of the region encouraged the further cultivation of wheat as well as rye, barley and legumes and some of the earliest beer in the world was brewed in the great cities along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (the most ancient evidence of beer brewing coming from the Sumerian Godin Tepe settlement in modern-day Iran). From 3400 BC, the priests (who were earlier the rulers of the cities) were responsible for the distribution of food and the careful monitoring of surplus for trade. [9]

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2.3: Mesopotamian Civilization Before the Ancient Dark Ages

Mesopotamian Civilization Before the Ancient Dark Ages

Sumerian Civilization

Sumer was an ancient civilization in southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) during the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages. Although the historical records in the region do not go back much further than ca. 2900 BCE, modern historians believe that Sumer was first settled between ca. 4500 and 4000 BCE by people who may or may not have spoken the Sumerian language. These people, now called the "Ubaidians," were the first to drain the marshes for agriculture; develop trade; and establish industries including weaving, leatherwork, metalwork, masonry, and pottery.

The Sumerian city of Eridu, which at that time bordered the Persian Gulf, is believed to be the world's first city. Here, three separate cultures fused — the peasant Ubaidian farmers, the nomadic Semitic-speaking pastoralists (farmers who raise livestock), and fisher folk. The surplus of storable food created by this economy allowed the region's population to settle in one place, instead of migrating as hunter-gatherers. It also allowed for a much greater population density, which required an extensive labor force and a division of labor with many specialized arts and crafts. (10)

Cuneiform

An early form of wedge-shaped writing called cuneiform developed in the early Sumerian period. During this time, cuneiform and pictograms suggest the abundance of pottery and other artistic traditions. In addition to the production of vessels, clay was also used to make tablets for inscribing written documents. Metal also served various purposes during the early Sumerian period. Smiths used a form of casting to create the blades for daggers. On the other hand, softer metals like copper and gold could be hammered into the forms of plates, necklaces, and collars. (10)

Ziggurats

By the late fourth millennium BCE, Sumer was divided into about a dozen independent city-states delineated by canals and other boundary makers. At each city center stood a temple dedicated to the particular patron god or goddess of the city. Priestly governors ruled over these temples and were intimately tied to the city's religious rites.(10)



Figure 2-2: Ziggurats Mesopothemia by unknown from Wikispaces.com is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

One of the most remarkable achievements of Mesopotamian architecture was the development of the ziggurat, a massive structure taking the form of a terraced step pyramid of successively receding stories or levels, with a shrine or temple at the summit. Like pyramids, ziggurats were built by stacking and piling. Ziggurats were not places of worship for the general public. Rather, only priests or other authorized religious officials were allowed inside to tend to cult statues and make offerings. The first surviving ziggurats date to the Sumerian culture in the fourth millennium BCE, but they continued to be a popular architectural form in the late third and early second millennium BCE as well. (11)

Figure 2-3: Great Ziggurat of Ur by Hardnfast is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

The Epic of Gilgamesh



Figure 2-4: Part of Tablet V, the Epic of Gilgamesh by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

Gilgamesh is the semi-mythic King of Uruk best known from The Epic of Gilgamesh (written c. 2150-1400 BCE) the great Sumerian/Babylonian poetic work which pre-dates Homer's writing by 1500 years and, therefore, stands as the oldest piece of epic western literature. In The Epic of Gilgamesh, the great king is thought to be too proud and arrogant by the gods and so they decide to teach him a lesson by sending the wild man, Enkidu, to humble him. Enkidu and Gilgamesh, after a fierce battle in which neither are bested, become friends and embark on adventures together. When Enkidu is struck with death, Gilgamesh falls into a deep grief and, recognizing his own mortality through the death of his friend, questions the meaning of life and the value of human accomplishment in the face of ultimate extinction. Casting away all of his old vanity and pride, Gilgamesh sets out on a quest to find the meaning of life and, finally, some way of defeating death. In doing so, he becomes the first epic hero in world literature.

The grief of Gilgamesh, and the questions his friend's death evoke, resonate with every human being who has wrestled with the meaning of life in the face of death. Although Gilgamesh ultimately fails to win immortality in the story, his deeds live on through the written word and, so, does he. (12)

Uruk Civilization

By the time of the Uruk period (ca. 4100–2900 BCE), the volume of trade goods transported along the canals and rivers of southern Mesopotamia facilitated the rise of many large, stratified, temple-centered cities where centralized administrations employed specialized workers. Artifacts of the Uruk civilization have been found over a wide area—from the Taurus Mountains in Turkey, to the Mediterranean Sea in the west, and as far east as Central Iran. The Uruk civilization, exported by Sumerian traders and colonists, had an effect on all surrounding peoples, who gradually developed their own comparable, competing economies and cultures.

Sumerian cities during the Uruk period were probably theocratic and likely headed by priest-kings (ensis), assisted by a council of elders, including both men and women. The later Sumerian pantheon (gods and goddesses) was likely modeled upon this political structure. There is little evidence of institutionalized violence or professional soldiers during the Uruk period. Towns generally lacked fortified walls, suggesting little, if any, need for defense. During this period, Uruk became the most urbanized city in the world, surpassing for the first time 50,000 inhabitants. (10)

Akkadian Civilization

The Akkadian Empire was the first political entity to make extensive and efficient use of bureaucracy and administration on a large scale and set the standard for future rulers and kingdoms. His story was long known throughout Mesopotamia where, in time, he came to be considered the greatest man who had ever lived, celebrated in glorious tales down through the Persian Empire, along with his grand-son Naram-Sin. The historian Paul Kriwaczek sums up the impact Sargon had on later generations in Mesopotamia, writing, "for at least 1,500 years after his death, Sargon the Great, founder of the Akkadian Empire, was regarded as a semi-sacred figure, the patron saint of all subsequent empires in the Mesopotamian realm" (111). Even so, where he came from and even his actual name are unknown.

`Sargon'—whose name means "True King" or Legitimate King"— was not the name given him at birth but the throne name he chose for himself. It is a Semitic, not Sumerian, name and so it is generally accepted that he was a Semite. Nothing certain is known of Sargon's birth or younger years. In fact, although his name was among the most famous in antiquity, he was unknown to the modern world until 1870 CE when the archaeologist Sir Henry Rawlinson published the Legend of Sargon which he had found in the library of Ashurbanipal while excavating Nineveh in 1867 CE.

The Legend of Sargon reads: *My mother was a changeling, my father I knew not, The brother of my father loved the hills, My home was in the highlands, where the herbs grow. My mother conceived me in secret, she gave birth to me in concealment. She set me in a basket of rushes, She sealed the lid with tar. She cast me into the river, but it did not rise over me, The water carried me to Akki, the drawer of water. He lifted me out as he dipped his jar into the river, He took me as his son, he raised me, He made me his gardener (Bauer, 95).*

After conquering Sumer, he either built a new city or renovated an older one, Akkad (also known as Agade) on the banks of the Euphrates River. This was a complete break with precedent in that, previously, the king of an existing city conquered another for the glory of the home city and the resources which would now be available. Sargon, on the other hand, conquered for no city, only for himself and, once he had control of the area, then built his own city to enjoy the benefits of conquest.

Forming an empire is one thing; but keeping it operating is quite another. Still, in administration, Sargon proved himself as capable as he was in military conquest. The Akkadian Empire created the first postal system where clay tablets inscribed in cuneiform Akkadian script were wrapped in outer clay envelopes marked with the name and address of the recipient and the seal of the sender. These letters could not be opened except by the person they were intended for because there was no way to open the clay envelope save by breaking it, thus ensuring privacy in correspondence. Sargon also standardized weights and measures for use in trade and daily commerce, initiated a system of taxation which was fair to all social classes, and engaged in numerous building projects such as the restoration of Babylon (which, according to some sources, he founded – though this is not generally accepted as true). He also created, trained, and equipped a full-time army — at least in the city of Akkad — where, as an inscription reads, 5400 soldiers "ate bread daily" with the king.

After Sargon's death, the empire passed to his son Rimush, who was forced to endure what his father had and put down the rebellions which contested his legitimacy. Rimush reigned for nine years and, when he died, the kingship passed to Sargon's other son, Manishtusu who ruled for the next fifteen years. Though both sons ruled well, the height of the Akkadian Empire was realized under Sargon's grandson, Naram-Sin. During his reign, the empire grew and flourished beyond the boundaries even Sargon had attained. After his death, his son Shar-Kali-Sharri became ruler and, at this time, the empire began to unravel as city-states broke away to form their own independent kingdoms. [13][14]

Babylonian Civilization

Babylon was founded at some point prior to the reign of Sargon of Akkad (also known as Sargon the Great) who ruled from 2334-2279 BCE and claimed to have built temples at Babylon (other ancient sources seem to indicate that Sargon himself founded the city). At that time, Babylon seems to have been a minor city or perhaps a large port town on the Euphrates River at the point where it runs closest to the river Tigris.

The known history of Babylon, then, begins with its most famous king: Hammurabi (1792-1750 BCE). This obscure Amorite prince ascended to the throne upon the abdication of his father, King Sin-Muballit, and fairly quickly transformed the city into one of the most powerful and influential in all of Mesopotamia. So successful was he in both diplomacy and war that, by 1755 BCE, he had united all of Mesopotamia under the rule of Babylon that, at this time, was the largest city in the world, and named his realm Babylonia. [15]



Figure 2-5: Code of Hammurabi by an unknown artist from Louvre Museum is licensed under CC BY 2.5

The Code of Hammurabi is one of the oldest deciphered writings of length in the world, and features a code of law from ancient Babylon in Mesopotamia. Written in about 1754 BCE by the sixth king of Babylon, Hammurabi, the Code was written on stone

stele and clay tablets. It consisted of 282 laws, with punishments that varied based on social status (slaves, free men, and property owners). It is most famous for the “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” (lex talionis) form of punishment. Other forms of codes of law had been in existence in the region around this time, including the Code of Ur-Nammu, king of Ur (c. 2050 BCE), the Laws of Eshnunna (c. 1930 BCE) and the codex of Lipit-Ishtar of Isin (c. 1870 BCE).

The laws were arranged in groups, so that citizens could easily read what was required of them. Some have seen the Code as an early form of constitutional government, and as an early form of the presumption of innocence, and the ability to present evidence in one’s case. Intent was often recognized and affected punishment, with neglect severely punished. Some of the provisions may have been codification of Hammurabi’s decisions, for the purpose of self-glorification. Nevertheless, the Code was studied, copied, and used as a model for legal reasoning for at least 1500 years after.

The prologue of the Code features Hammurabi stating that he wants “to make justice visible in the land, to destroy the wicked person and the evil-doer, that the strong might not injure the weak.” Major laws covered in the Code include slander, trade, slavery, the duties of workers, theft, liability, and divorce. Nearly half of the code focused on contracts, such as wages to be paid, terms of transactions, and liability in case of property damage. A third of the code focused on household and family issues, including inheritance, divorce, paternity and sexual behavior. One section establishes that a judge who incorrectly decides an issue may be removed from his position permanently. A few sections address military service.

One of the most well-known sections of the Code was law #196: “If a man destroy the eye of another man, they shall destroy his eye. If one break a man’s bone, they shall break his bone. If one destroy the eye of a freeman or break the bone of a freeman he shall pay one gold mina. If one destroy the eye of a man’s slave or break a bone of a man’s slave he shall pay one-half his price.” (16)

The Social Classes

Under Hammurabi’s reign, there were three social classes. The amelu was originally an elite person with full civil rights, whose birth, marriage and death were recorded. Although he had certain privileges, he also was liable for harsher punishment and higher fines. The king and his court, high officials, professionals and craftsmen belonged to this group. The mushkenu was a free man who may have been landless. He was required to accept monetary compensation, paid smaller fines and lived in a separate section of the city. The ardu was a slave whose master paid for his upkeep, but also took his compensation. Ardu could own property and other slaves, and could purchase his own freedom. (16)

Women’s Rights

Women entered into marriage through a contract arranged by her family. She came with a dowry, and the gifts given by the groom to the bride also came with her. Divorce was up to the husband, but after divorce he then had to restore the dowry and provide her with an income, and any children came under the woman’s custody. However, if the woman was considered a “bad wife” she might be sent away, or made a slave in the husband’s house. If a wife brought action against her husband for cruelty and neglect, she could have a legal separation if the case was proved. Otherwise, she might be drowned as punishment. Adultery was punished with drowning of both parties, unless a husband was willing to pardon his wife. (16)

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2.4: The Ancient “Dark Ages” and the Rise of the Israelite State

The Ancient “Dark Ages” and the Rise of the Israelite State

The Late Bronze Age (1700-1100 BCE) saw the Kassite Empire (from the modern-day area of Iran) replace Babylon as the regional power in Mesopotamia. By 1200, however, all of Mesopotamia entered a “dark age” period following a systemic collapse in the region, most likely precipitated by a band of naval raiders, more commonly called the “Sea Peoples.” The collapse of Mesopotamian Civilization allowed for smaller states—outside of the political periphery of the Tigris and Euphrates region—to become regional powers in their own right. The Kingdom of Israel in the modern region of Palestine was one of those nations to benefit from the ebbing of Mesopotamian influence during this age.



Figure 2-6: Merneptah Stele known as the Israel stela by Webscribe is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

To be sure, the Egyptian Merneptah Stele makes clear that a collection of people identified as Israel was present in Palestine by 1200 BCE. By the tenth century, these people were able to organize a formal government around the leadership of a king, first Saul, then David (c.1040-960 BCE). David chose the Canaanite city of Jerusalem as his capital and the biblical writer records that he moved the Ark of the Covenant there. As the Ark was thought to contain the living presence of God, bringing it to Jerusalem would have made the city both a political and religious center of considerable importance. David intended to build a great temple to house the Ark but that task fell to his son, Solomon (circa 960-920 BCE) whose rule corresponds to the height of Israelite grandeur. Solomon consolidated treaties with neighboring kingdoms such as Tyre to the north, Egypt, Sheba and sponsored building projects which made Jerusalem a great and opulent city (including, of course, the First Temple). The reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon (but especially the latter two) have been traditionally characterized as a `golden age’ of unity and prosperity.





Figure 2-7: Kingdoms of Israel and Judah map by Oldtidens Israel & Judea is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Culturally speaking, the political elite of the Kingdom of Israel promoted belief in a singular god named Yahweh. As such, the Israelites were unique from their Mesopotamian neighbors in that they were monotheistic rather than polytheistic, at least in principle. David and Solomon, especially, seem to have used this belief to their benefit in unifying the people but, upon Solomon's death (around 920 BCE) the kingdom split in half. Israel occupied the northern region with a capital at Samaria and the Kingdom of Judah in the south with Jerusalem as capital. The relationship between the two kingdoms would remain tenuous, with the two never achieving their level of influence during reigns of David and Solomon. Much of the reason for this was due to the resurgence of the Mesopotamian kingdom of Assur in the mid-tenth century, and the subsequent development of the Assyrian Empire. (13)(17)

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2.5: Neo-Assyrian Civilization

Neo-Assyrian Civilization

The Neo-Assyrian Empire (934-610 BCE or 912-612 BCE) was, according to many historians, the first true empire in the world. The Assyrians had expanded their territory from the city of Ashur over the centuries, and their fortunes rose and fell with successive rulers and circumstances in the Near East. Beginning with the reign of Adad Nirari II (912-891 BCE), the empire made great territorial expansions that resulted in its eventual control of a region which spanned the whole of Mesopotamia, part of Anatolia, the Levant, and Egypt. They fielded the most effective fighting force in the world at that time, the first to be armed with iron weapons, whose tactics in battle made them invincible. Their political and military policies have also given them the long-standing reputation for cruelty and ruthlessness. (18)

Assyrian Arts and Politics

The Assyrian state proved masterful in promoting their ruthlessness and vigor through visual representation.

Lion Hunts

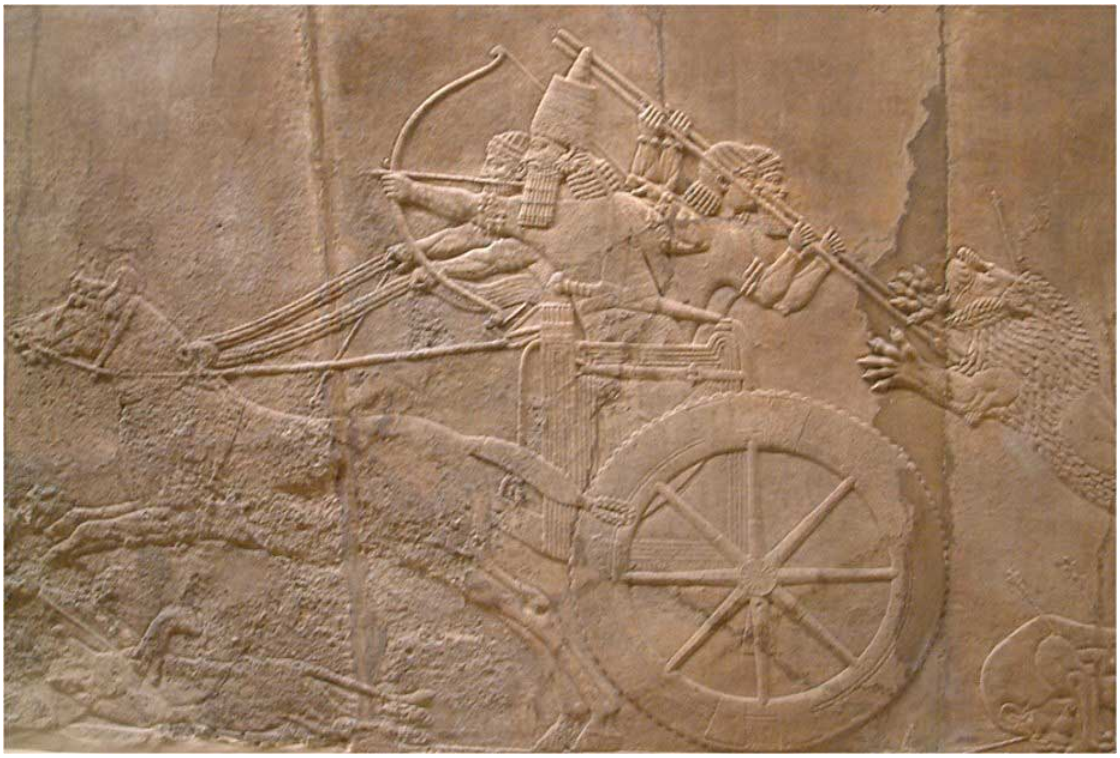


Figure 2-8: Ashurbanipal's Lion Hunt by Mark.murphy is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Lion hunter was one role of the Assyrian king. We know this primarily from lion hunt steles located in Nineveh dating back to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II. These steles illustrate the king capturing and killing lions. Without a doubt, these steles functioned as propaganda, promoting the virility and might of the king through his ability to conquer the fiercest of beasts.

Political Servitude





Figure 2-9: Jehu King of Israel giving tribute to King Shalmaneser III of Assyria cropped by Steven G. Johnson is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Assyrians made public their dominance over lesser nations by illustrating the kings of conquered nations bowing before the Assyrian king. In the relief above from the Black Obelisk Inscription, the stele portrays the Israelite king Jehu of Israel paying tribute to the Assyrian king and bowing in the dust before the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III. The cuneiform text on the obelisk suggests that "Jehu the son of Omri" brought gifts of gold, silver, lead, and spear shafts as a sign of loyalty to the Assyrian state.[19]

Mass Deportation



Figure 2-10: Lachish Inscription by Mike Peel is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

On conquering lands in rebellion, the Assyrians would regularly relocate the conquered peoples from their home territory to another portion of the empire. This became known as exile or mass deportation. The stele above represents the Assyrian deportation of the population of Lachish, following their defeat at the hands of the Assyrians in 701 BCE.

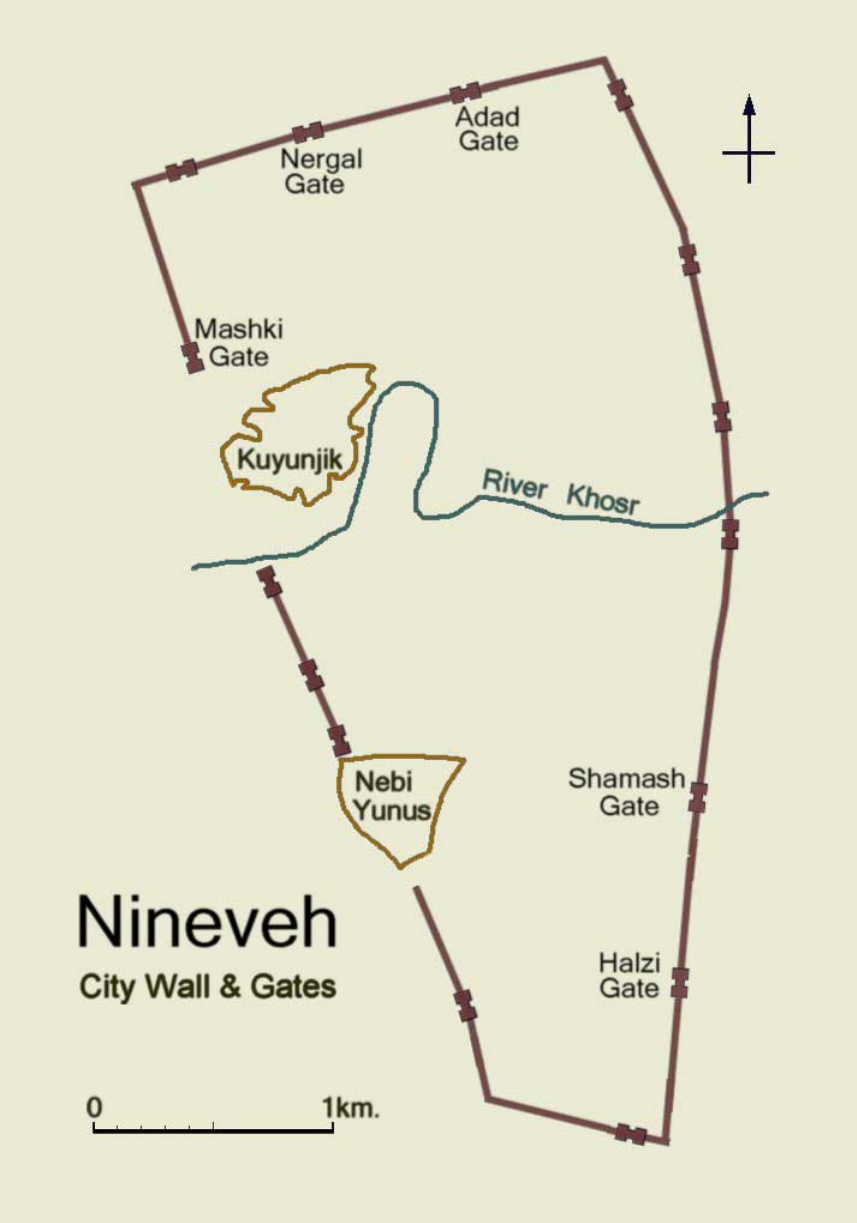


Figure 2-11: Nineveh map city walls & gates by Fredarch is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Nineveh was an ancient Assyrian city on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, and the capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Its ruins are across the river from the modern-day major city of Mosul in Iraq.

Today, Nineveh's location is marked by two large mounds, Kouyunjik and NabÄ« YÅ«nus "Prophet Jonah," and the remains of the city walls. These were fitted with fifteen monumental gateways which served as checkpoints on entering and exiting the ancient city, and were probably also used as barracks and armories. With the inner and outer doors shut, the gateways were virtual fortresses. Five of the gateways have been explored to some extent by archaeologists.

Nineveh was an important junction for commercial routes crossing the Tigris. Occupying a central position on the great highway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean, Nineveh united the East and the West, and received wealth from many sources. Thus, it became one of the oldest and greatest of all the region's ancient cities, and the capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The area was settled as early as 6000 BCE, and by 3000 BCE had become an important religious center for worship of the Assyrian goddess Ishtar.

It was not until the Neo-Assyrian Empire that Nineveh experienced a considerable architectural expansion. King Sennacherib is credited with making Nineveh a truly magnificent city during his rule (c. 700 BCE). He laid out new streets and squares and built within it the famous “palace without a rival”, the plan of which has been mostly recovered. It comprised at least 80 rooms, many of which were lined with sculpture. A large number of cuneiform tablets were found in the palace. The solid foundation was made out of limestone blocks and mud bricks. Some of the principal doorways were flanked by colossal stone-door figures that included many winged lions or bulls with the heads of men. The stone carvings in the walls include many battle and hunting scenes, as well as depicting Sennacherib’s men parading the spoils of war before him.

Nineveh’s greatness was short-lived. In around 627 BCE, after the death of its last great king Ashurbanipal, the Neo-Assyrian empire began to unravel due to a series of bitter civil wars, and Assyria was attacked by the Babylonians and Medes. From about 616 BCE, in a coalition with the Scythians and Cimmerians, they besieged Nineveh, sacking the town in 612, and later razing it to the ground.

The Assyrian empire as such came to an end by 605 BC, with the Medes and Babylonians dividing its colonies between them. Following its defeat in 612, the site remained largely unoccupied for centuries with only a scattering of Assyrians living amid the ruins until the Sassanian period, although Assyrians continue to live in the surrounding area to this day. [19]

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2.6: The Neo-Babylonians and Persians

The Neo-Babylonians

It was also during this period that Nebuchadnezzar supposedly built the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, although there is no definitive archeological evidence to establish their precise location. Ancient Greek and Roman writers describe the gardens in vivid detail. However, the lack of physical ruins has led many experts to speculate whether the Hanging Gardens existed at all. If this is the case, writers might have been describing ideal mythologized Eastern gardens or a famous garden built by the Assyrian king Sennacherib (704–681 BCE) at Nineveh roughly a century earlier. If the Hanging Gardens did exist, they were likely destroyed around the first century CE.



Figure 2-12: Nebuchadnezzar II inscription by Hanay is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Neo-Babylonian Empire, also known as the Chaldean Empire, was a civilization in Mesopotamia that began in 626 BC and ended in 539 BC.

During the preceding three centuries, Babylonia had been ruled by the Akkadians and Assyrians, but threw off the yoke of external domination after the death of Assurbanipal, the last strong Assyrian ruler. The Neo-Babylonian period was a renaissance that witnessed a great flourishing of art, architecture, and science.

The Neo-Babylonian rulers were motivated by the antiquity of their heritage and followed a traditionalist cultural policy, based on the ancient Sumero-Akkadian culture. Ancient artworks from the Old-Babylonian period were painstakingly restored and preserved, and treated with a respect verging on religious reverence. Neo-Babylonian art and architecture reached its zenith under King Nebuchadnezzar II, who ruled from 604–562 BC and was a great patron of urban development, bent on rebuilding all of Babylonia's cities to reflect their former glory.

It was Nebuchadnezzar II's vision and sponsorship that turned Babylon into the immense and beautiful city of legend. The city spread over three square miles, surrounded by moats and ringed by a double circuit of walls. The river Euphrates, which flowed through the city, was spanned by a beautiful stone bridge. At the heart of the city lay the ziggurat Etemenanki, literally "temple of the foundation of heaven and earth." Originally seven stories high, it is believed to have provided the inspiration for the biblical story of the Tower of Babel. (20)



Figure 2-13: Hanging Gardens of Babylon by Maarten van Heemskerck is licensed under Public Domain

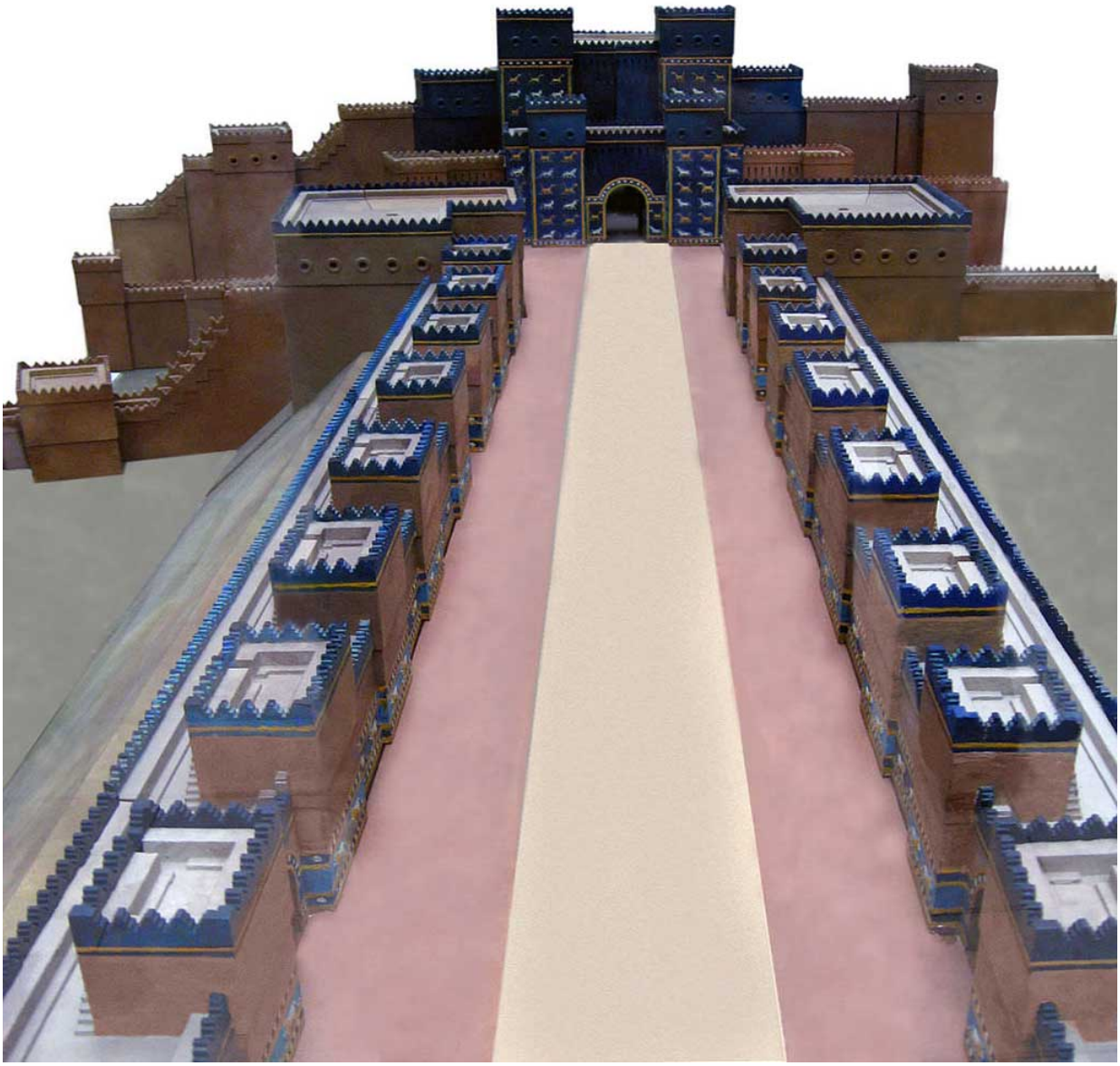


Figure 2-14: Model of the Ishtar Gate by Gryffindor is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 2-15: Lion of Babylon by Jan van der Crabben is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

Most of the evidence for Neo-Babylonian art and architecture is literary. The material evidence itself is mostly fragmentary. Some of the most important fragments that survive are from the Ishtar Gate, the eighth gate to the inner city of Babylon. It was constructed in 575 BC by order of Nebuchadnezzar II, using glazed brick with alternating rows of bas-relief dragons and aurochs. Dedicated to the Babylonian goddess Ishtar, it was a double gate, and its roofs and doors were made of cedar, according to the dedication plaque. Babylon's Processional Way, which was lined with brilliantly colorful glazed brick walls decorated with lions, ran through the middle of the gate. Statues of the Babylonian gods were paraded through the gate and down the Processional Way during New Year's celebrations. (20)

The Persians

By the 7 th century BCE, a group of ancient Iranian people had established the Median Empire, a vassal state under the Assyrian Empire that later tried to gain its independence in the 8th century BCE. After Assyria fell in 605 BCE, Cyaxares, king of the Medes, extended his rule west across Iran. (21)

Cyrus the Persian or “Great”



Figure 2-16: Cyrus II of Persia by Siamax is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Around 550 BCE, Cyrus II of Persia, who became known as Cyrus the Great, rose in rebellion against the Median Empire, eventually conquering the Medes to create the first Persian Empire, also known as the Achaemenid Empire. Cyrus utilized his tactical genius, as well as his understanding of the socio-political conditions governing his territories, to eventually assimilate the neighboring Lydian and Neo-Babylonian empires into the new Persian Empire. (21)

Cyrus, whose rule lasted between 29 and 31 years, until his death in battle in 530 BCE, controlled the vast Achaemenid Empire through the use of regional monarchs, called *satrap* , who each oversaw a territory called a*satrapy* . The basic rule of governance was based upon the loyalty and obedience of the *satrapy* to the central power, the king, and compliance with tax laws. Cyrus also connected the various regions of the empire through an innovative postal system that made use of an extensive roadway and relay stations.

Cyrus the Great was recognized for achievements in human rights and politics, having influenced both Eastern and Western Civilization. The ancient Babylonians called him “The Liberator,” while the modern nation of Iran calls Cyrus its “father.” (22)

The book of Isaiah in the Hebrew Bible remembers him as a savior or “messiah’. This is for good reason. Cyrus granted the descendants of the exiled kingdom of Judah to return home to Israel in 540 BCE following Babylonian captivity (c.f. Isa 45:1). The Cyrus Cylinder serves as a testament of the Persian king’s magnanimous treatment of captured persons.

The Cyrus Cylinder

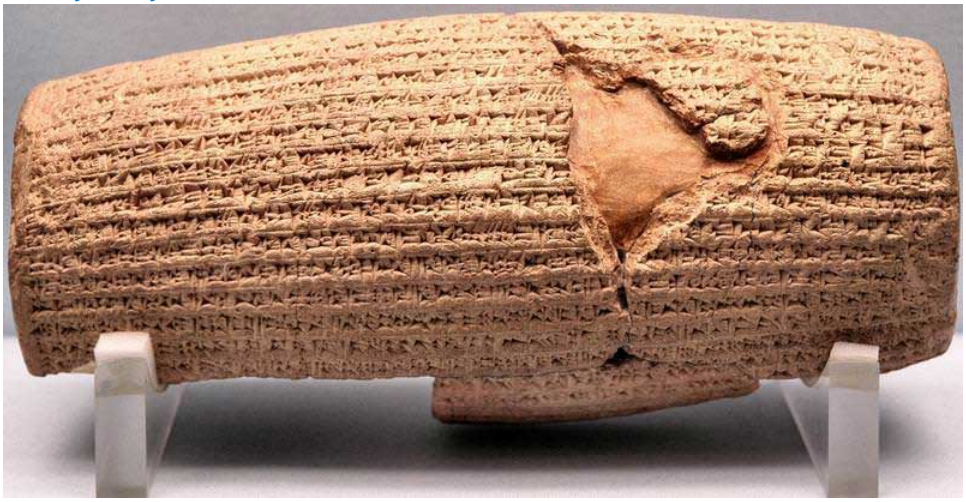


Figure 2-17: Cyrus Cylinder Original image by kourosh e kabir. Uploaded by Antoine Simonin is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Cyrus Cylinder is an ancient clay artifact, now broken into several fragments, that has been called the oldest-known charter of universal human rights and a symbol of his humanitarian rule. The cylinder dates from the 6 thcentury BCE, and was discovered in the ruins of Babylon in Mesopotamia, now Iraq, in 1879. In addition to describing the genealogy of Cyrus, the declaration in Akkadian cuneiform script on the cylinder is considered by many Biblical scholars to be evidence of Cyrus's policy of repatriation of the Jewish people following their captivity in Babylon.

The historical nature of the cylinder has been debated, with some scholars arguing that Cyrus did not make a specific decree, but rather that the cylinder articulated his general policy allowing exiles to return to their homelands and rebuild their temples. (22)

Darius I

When Darius I (550-486 BCE), also known as Darius the Great , ascended the throne of the Achaemenid Empire in 522 BCE, he established Aramaic as the official language and devised a codification of laws for Egypt. Darius also sponsored work on construction projects throughout the empire, focusing on improvement of the cities of Susa,Pasargadae , Persepolis, Babylon, and various municipalities in Egypt.

When Darius moved his capital from Pasargadae to Persepolis, he revolutionized the economy by placing it on a silver and gold coinage and introducing a regulated and sustainable tax system. This structure precisely tailored the taxes of each satrapy based on its projected productivity and economic potential. For example, Babylon was assessed for the highest amount of silver taxes, while Egypt owed grain in addition to silver taxes. (22)



Figure 2-18: Well preserved Achamenid reliefs from Persepolis by travelling runes is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Behistun Inscription

Sometime after his coronation, Darius ordered an inscription to be carved on a limestone cliff of Mount Behistun in modern Iran. The Behistun Inscription, the text of which Darius wrote, came to have great linguistic significance as a crucial clue in deciphering cuneiform script.

The inscription begins by tracing the ancestry of Darius, followed by a description of a sequence of events following the deaths of the previous two Achaemenid emperors, Cyrus the Great and Cyrus's son, Cambyses II, in which Darius fought 19 battles in one year to put down numerous rebellions throughout the Persian lands.

The inscription, which is approximately 15 meters high and 25 meters wide, includes three versions of the text in three different cuneiform languages: Old Persian, Elamite and Babylonian, which was a version of Akkadian. Researchers were able to compare the scripts and use it to help decipher ancient languages, in this way making the Behistun Inscription as valuable to cuneiform as the Rosetta Stone is to Egyptian hieroglyphs. [22]



Figure 2-19:Bisotun Iran Relief Achamenid Period by Hara1603 is licensed underPublic Domain

The Persian Empire After Darius I

Between c. 500–400 BCE, Darius the Great and his son, Xerxes I, ruled the Persian Plateau and all of the territories formerly held by the Assyrian Empire, including Mesopotamia, the Levant, and Cyprus. It eventually came to control Egypt, as well. This expansion continued even further afield with Anatolia and the Armenian Plateau, much of the Southern Caucasus, Macedonia, parts of Greece and Thrace, Central Asia as far as the Aral Sea, the Oxus and Jaxartes areas, the Hindu Kush and the western Indus basin, and parts of northern Arabia and northern Libya.

This unprecedented area of control under a single ruler stretched from the Indus Valley in the east to Thrace and Macedon on the northeastern border of Greece. At its height, the Achaemenid Empire ruled over 44% of the world's population, the highest such figure for any empire in history. [21]

Conclusion

After Cyrus II took Babylon, the bulk of Mesopotamia became part of the Persian Empire, and this period saw a rapid cultural decline, most notably in the loss of the knowledge of cuneiform script. The conquest of the Persians by Alexander the Great in 331 BCE brought Hellenization of the culture and religion, and even though Alexander tried to again make Babylon a city of consequence, its days of glory were a thing of the past. After his death, Alexander's general Seleucus took control of the region and founded the Seleucid Dynasty which ruled until 126 BCE when the land was conquered by the Parthians who were, in turn, dominated by the Sassanians (a people of Persian descent).

By the time of the conquest by the Roman Empire (116 CE), Mesopotamia was a largely Hellenized region, lacking in any unity, which had forgotten the old gods and the old ways. The Romans improved the infrastructure of their colonies significantly through their introduction of better roads and plumbing and brought Roman Law to the land. The entire culture of the region once known as

Mesopotamia was swept away in the final conquest of the area by Muslim Arabs in the 7 th century CE which resulted in the unification of law, language, religion and culture under Islam. (13)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Egyptian Culture

3.1: About This Module- Egyptian Culture
3.2: The Nile and Egyptian Religion
3.3: The New Kingdom and the Amarna Period
3.4: Pre-Dynastic Egypt and The Old Kingdom
3.5: The First and Second Intermediate Period

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3.1: About This Module- Egyptian Culture

Topics Covered:

- Egyptian Civilization to Include
  - Menkaure and his wife
  - Senusret
  - Hatshepsut
  - Akhenaten and Nefertiti
  - Egyptian Creation Myth
  - Book of the Dead

This module introduces students to artistic, religious, and political expressions within Egyptian culture that developed between prehistory and the Hellenistic age. Students will determine what cultural artifacts such as the Narmer Palette and Ramses Great Temple tell us about their historical context. Students will demonstrate understanding of cultural expressions by distinguishing Amarna era art from the art of other Egyptian eras. Finally, students will also demonstrate proficiency in critical thought by assessing how far Pharaonic depictions remained the same from the Old Kingdom to the New Kingdom of Egypt. (1)

Learning Outcomes Related to this Module

1. Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
2. Recognize the relationships between cultural expressions and their contexts
3. Understand cultural expressions
4. Interpret and evaluate cultural artifacts and/or their contexts for significance

Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Sort events in historical order from Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilization.
- Compare the role of the Nile in Egyptian culture with the role of the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamian culture.
- Identify developments in Pyramid architecture within Egyptian culture.
- Identify key elements of religious belief in ancient Egypt.
- Identify distinctions between the Kingdom and Intermediate periods in Ancient Egypt.
- Identify how the Amarna period in ancient Egypt is distinct from prior dynastic periods.
- Identify major Egyptian figures and their achievements. (1)

Assigned Readings

- Learning Unit – Ancient Egypt

Assignments | Learning Activities

- Review Learning Unit
- Participate in Discussion 3
- Complete Timeline Assignment 3
- Complete Assessment Module 3

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3.2: The Nile and Egyptian Religion

Overview

Egypt is a country in North Africa, on the Mediterranean Sea, and is among the oldest civilizations on earth. The name 'Egypt' comes from the Greek Aegyptos which was the Greek pronunciation of the Egyptian name 'Hwt-Ka-Ptah' (which means "House of the Spirit of Ptah", who was a very early God of the Ancient Egyptians). In the early Old Kingdom, Egypt was simply known as 'Kemet' which means 'Black Land' so named for the rich, dark soil along the Nile River where the first settlements began.

Later, the country was known simply as Misr which means 'country', a name still in use by Egyptians for their nation in the present day. Egypt thrived for thousands of years (from c. 8,000 BCE to c. 525 BCE) as an independent nation whose culture was famous for great cultural advances in every area of human knowledge, from the arts to science to technology and religion. The great monuments which Egypt is still celebrated for reflect the depth and grandeur of Egyptian culture which influenced so many ancient civilizations, among them Greece and Rome. (23)

The Nile

The principle of harmony (known to the Egyptians as ma'at) was of the highest importance in Egyptian life (and in the afterlife) and their religion was fully integrated into every aspect of existence. The geography of Nile River may have influenced this belief. Unlike the Tigris and Euphrates which needed to be tamed on account of their unpredictable natures, the Nile's consistent rise in the middle of July and fall in September gave Egyptians a dependable source of nourishment for vegetation over the year.

Not surprisingly, the Egyptians came to believe that the gods caused the river's annual floods which deposited the fertile black soil along the arid banks. According to some myths, it was Isis who taught the people the skills of agriculture (in others, it is Osiris) and, in time, the people would develop canals, irrigation, and sophisticated systems to work the land. The Nile was also an important recreational resource for the Egyptians.

The river became known as the "Father of Life" and the "Mother of All Men" and was considered a manifestation of the god Hapi, who blessed the land with life, as well as with the goddess Ma'at, who embodied the concepts of truth, harmony, and balance. The Nile was also linked to the ancient goddesses Hathor and, later, as noted, with Isis and Osiris. The god Khnum, who became the god of rebirth and creation in later dynasties, was originally the god of the source of the Nile who controlled its flow and sent the necessary yearly flood which the people depended on to fertilize the land. (24)(25)

Egyptian Religion

The Egyptian Gods

The first written records of religious practice in Egypt come from around 3400 BCE in the Predynastic Period of Egypt (6000-3150 BCE). Deities such as Isis, Osiris, Ptah, Hathor, Atum, Set, Nephthys, and Horus were already established as potent forces to be recognized fairly early on. The Egyptian Creation Myth is similar to the beginning of the Mesopotamian story in that, originally, there was only chaotic, slow-swirling waters. This ocean was without bounds, depthless, and silent until, upon its surface, there rose a hill of earth (known as the ben-ben, the primordial mound, which, it is thought, the pyramids symbolize) and the great god Atum (the sun) stood upon the ben-ben and spoke, giving birth to the god Shu (of the air) the goddess Tefnut (of moisture) the god Geb (of earth) and the goddess Nut (of sky). Atum had intended Nut as his bride but she fell in love with Geb. Angry with the lovers, Atum separated them by stretching Nut across the sky high away from Geb on the earth.

Although the lovers were separated during the day, they came together at night and Nut bore three sons, Osiris, Set and Horus, and two daughters, Isis and Nephthys. Osiris, as eldest, was announced as 'Lord of all the Earth' when he was born and was given his sister Isis as a wife. Set, consumed by jealousy, hated his brother and killed him to assume the throne. Isis then embalmed her husband's body and, with powerful charms, resurrected Osiris who returned from the dead to bring life to the people of Egypt. Osiris later served as the Supreme Judge of the souls of the dead in the Hall of Truth and, by weighing the heart of the soul in the balances, decided who was granted eternal life. (24)

The Egyptian Afterlife

The Egyptian afterlife was known as the Field of Reeds and was a mirror-image of life on earth down to one's favorite tree and stream and dog. Those one loved in life would either be waiting when one arrived or would follow after. The Egyptians viewed earthly existence as simply one part of an eternal journey and were so concerned about passing easily to the next phase that they created their elaborate tombs (the pyramids), temples, and funerary inscriptions (the Pyramid Texts, the Book of the Dead) to help the soul's passage from this world to the next.

The gods cared for one after death just as they had in life from the beginning of time. The goddess Qebhet brought water to the thirsty souls in the land of the dead and other goddesses such as Selket and Nephthys cared for and protected the souls as they journeyed to the Field of Reeds. An ancient Egyptian understood that, from birth to death and even after death, the universe had been ordered by the gods and everyone had a place in that order. (24)

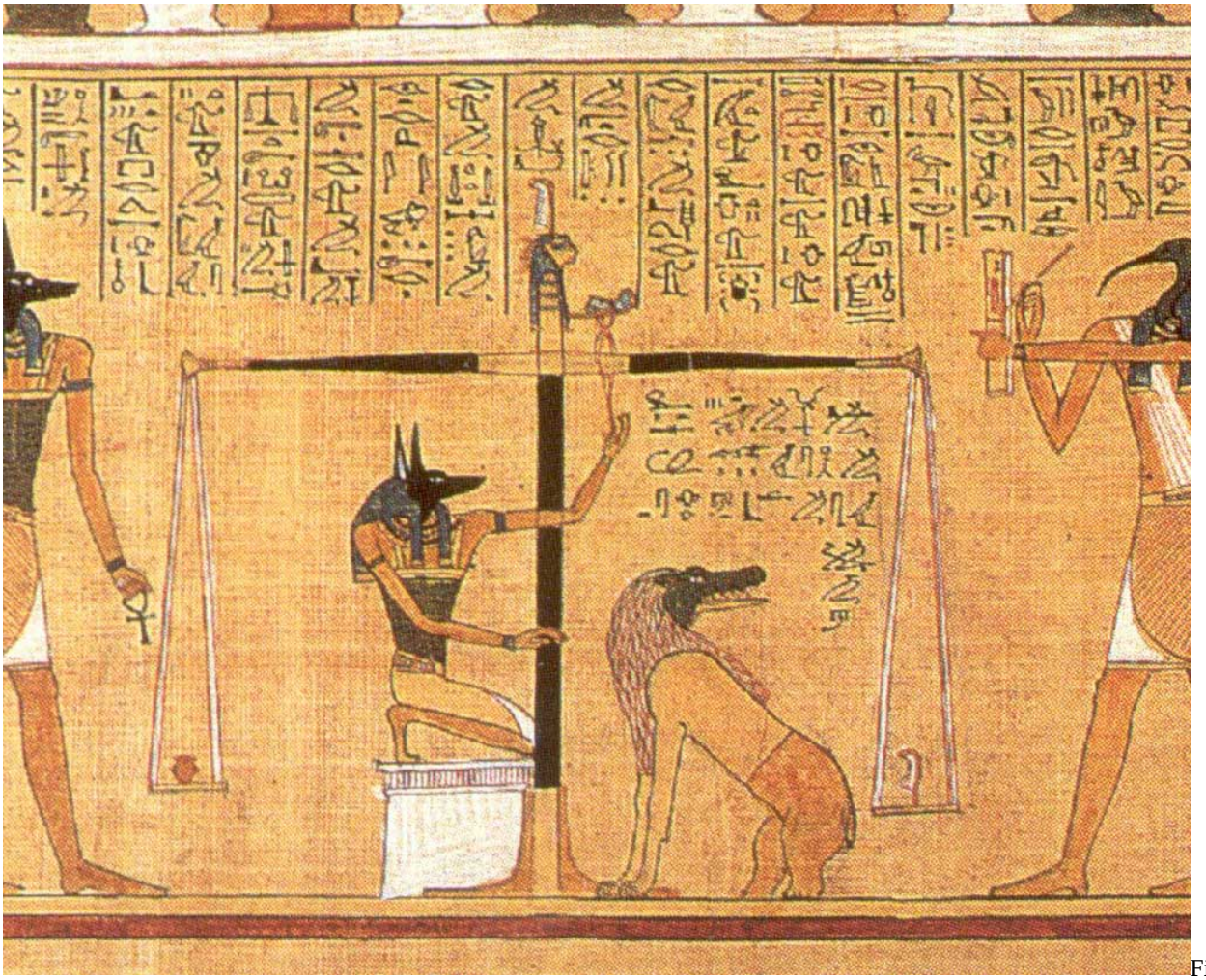


Figure 3-1: Weighing of the heart by National Geographic, Ancient Egyptians is licensed under Public Domain

The Book of the Dead

The Book of the Dead originated from concepts depicted in tomb paintings and inscriptions from as early as the Third Dynasty of Egypt (c. 2670 – 2613 BCE). By the 12 th Dynasty (1991 – 1802 BCE) these spells, with accompanying illustrations, were written on papyrus and placed in tombs and graves with the dead. The spells served as instructions for how the dead might overcome the perils of the afterlife. They also served, however, to provide the soul with fore-knowledge of what would be expected at every stage. According the Book, when a person died, they were guided by Anubis to the Hall of Truth (also known as The Hall of Two Truths) where they would make the Negative Confession (also known as The Declaration of Innocence). This was a list of 42 sins the person could honestly say they had never indulged in.

Once the Negative Confession was made, Osiris, Thoth, Anubis, and the Forty-Two Judges would confer and, if the confession was accepted, the heart of the deceased was then weighed in the balance against the white feather of Ma'at, the feather of truth. If the heart was found to be lighter than the feather, the soul passed on toward paradise; if the heart was heavier, it was thrown onto the floor where it was devoured by the monster goddess Ammut and the soul would cease to exist. (26)

With respect to the soul, the Egyptians believed it consisted of nine separate parts: the Khat was the physical body; the Ka one's double-form; the Ba a human-headed bird aspect which could speed between earth and the heavens; Shuyet was the shadow self; Akh the immortal, transformed self, Sahu and Sechem aspects of the Akh; Ab was the heart, the source of good and evil; Ren was one's secret name. All nine of these aspects were part of one's earthly existence and, at death, the Akh (with the Sahu and Sechem) appeared before the great god Osiris in the Hall of Truth and in the presence of the Forty-Two Judges to have one's heart (Ab) weighed in the balance on a golden scale against the white feather of truth. (27)

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3.3: The New Kingdom and the Amarna Period

The New Kingdom and the Amarna Period

Ahmose I initiated what is known as the period of the New Kingdom (1570â€“1069 BCE) which again saw great prosperity in the land under a strong central government. The title of pharaoh for the ruler of Egypt comes from the period of the New Kingdom; earlier monarchs were simply known as kings. Many of the Egyptian sovereigns best known today ruled during this period and the majority of the great structures of antiquity such as the Ramesseum, Abu Simbel, the temples of Karnak and Luxor, and the tombs of the Valley of the Kings and Valley of the Queens come from this time. Between 1504-1492 BCE the pharaoh Tuthmosis I consolidated his power and expanded the boundaries of Egypt to the Euphrates River in the north, Syria and Palestine to the west, and Nubia to the south. His reign was followed by Queen Hatshepsut (1479â€“1458 BCE). [(23)]

Hatshepsut

Hatshepsut (1479â€“1458 BCE) was the first female ruler of ancient Egypt to reign as a male with the full authority of pharaoh. Her name means “Foremost of Noble Women” or “She is First Among Noble Women”. She began her reign as regent to her stepson Thuthmose III (1458â€“1425 BCE) who would succeed her and, initially, ruled as a woman as depicted in statuary. In around the seventh year of her reign, however, she chose to be depicted as a male pharaoh in statuary and reliefs though still referring to herself as female in her inscriptions.



Figure 3-17: Hatshepsut by Postdlf is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5



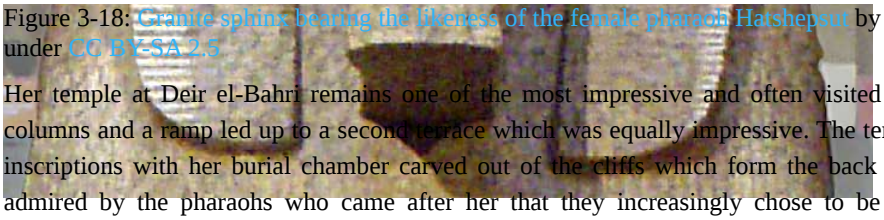


Figure 3-18: Granite sphinx bearing the likeness of the female pharaoh Hatshepsut by Keith Schengili-Roberts is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5

Her temple at Deir el-Bahri remains one of the most impressive and often visited in Egypt. The lower terrace was lined with columns and a ramp led up to a second terrace which was equally impressive. The temple was decorated with statuary, reliefs, and inscriptions with her burial chamber carved out of the cliffs which form the back of the building. Hatshepsut's temple was so admired by the pharaohs who came after her that they increasingly chose to be buried nearby and this necropolis came to eventually be known as the Valley of the Kings. (35)

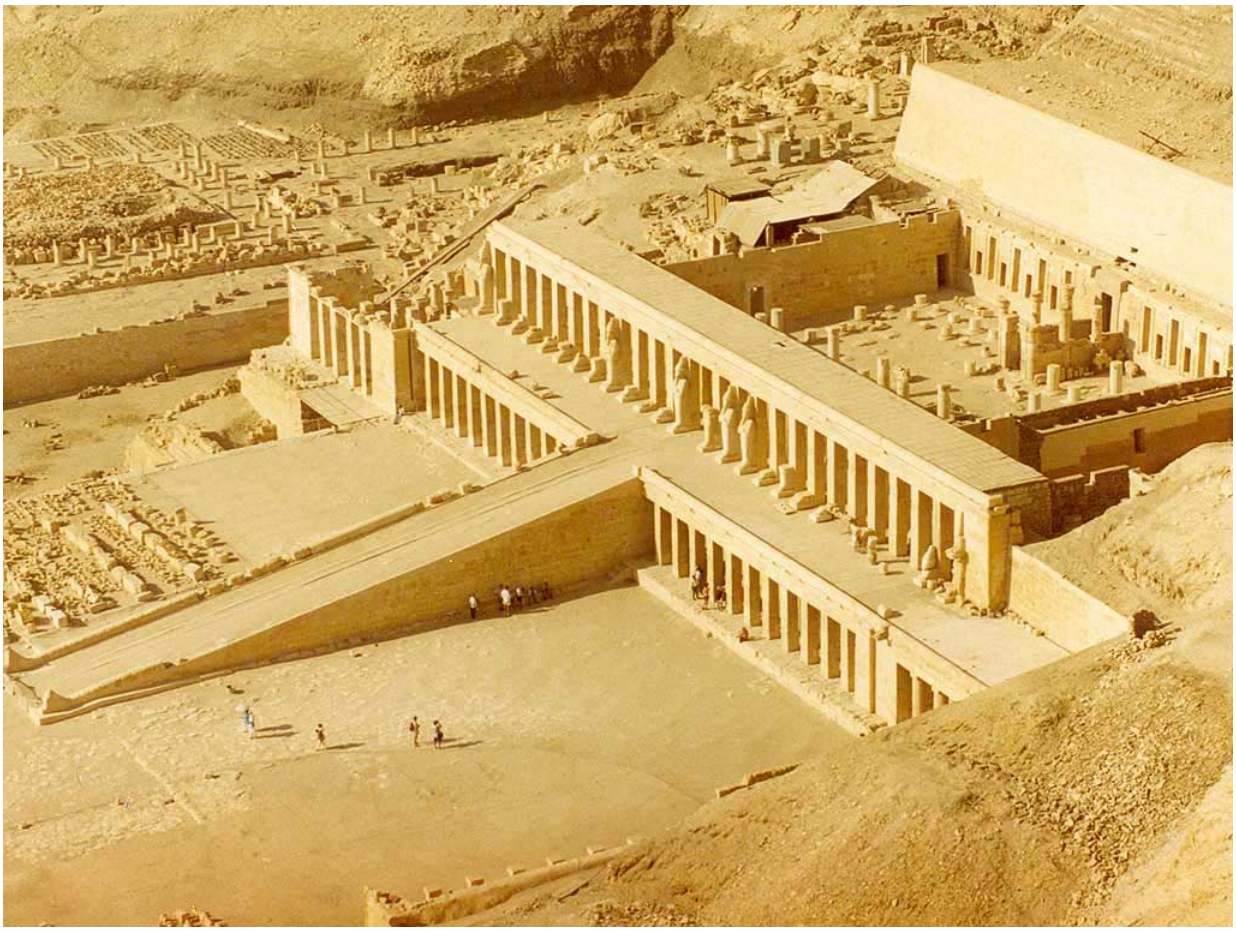


Figure 3-19: Temple of Hatshepsut. Original image by N/A. Uploaded by Joshua J. Mark is licensed under CC BY 3.0

Her successor, Tuthmosis III, carried on her policies (although he tried to eradicate all memory of her as, it is thought, he did not want her to serve as a role model for other women since only males were considered worthy to rule) and, by the time of his death in 1425 BCE, Egypt was a great and powerful nation. The prosperity led to, among other things, an increase in the brewing of beer in many different varieties and more leisure time for sports. Advances in medicine led to improvements in health. (23)


Egyptian sculpture
4

Figure 3-20: King Amenhotep III by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

Amenhotep III (c. 1386â€“1353 BCE) was the ninth king of the 18 th dynasty of Egypt. Amenhotep's father, Tuthmosis IV, left his son an empire of immense size, wealth, and power. He was only twelve years old when he came to the throne and married Tiye in a royal ceremony. It is a significant aspect of Amenhotep's relationship with his wife that, immediately after their marriage, she was elevated to the rank of Great Royal Wife, an honor which Amenhotep's mother, Mutemwiya, was never accorded and which effectively meant that Tiye outranked the king's mother in courtly matters.

Amenhotep III's vision was of an Egypt so splendid that it would leave one in awe, and the over 250 buildings, temples, statuary, and stele he ordered constructed attest to his success in this. The statues which Durant mentions are today known as the Colossi of Memnon and are the only pieces left of Amenhotep III's mortuary temple. Their immense size and intricacy of detail, however, suggest that the temple itself â€“ and his other building projects no longer extant â€“ were equally or even more impressive.

There was another power in Egypt which had been growing long before Amenhotep III came to the throne: the cult of Amun. Land ownership meant wealth in Egypt and, by Amenhotep III's time, the priests of Amun owned almost as much land as the king. In accordance with traditional religious practice, Amenhotep III did nothing to interfere with the work of the priests, but it is thought that their immense wealth, and threat to the power of the throne, had a profound effect on his son. The god Aten was only one of many gods worshipped in ancient Egypt but, for the royal family, he had a special significance which would later become manifest in the religious edicts of Akhenaten. The cult of Amun continued to grow and amass wealth and, in doing so, continued to pose a threat to the royal family and the authority of the throne. (36)





Figure 3-21: Amenhotep IV/Akhenaten by Ram Manikis is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Akhenaten (r. 1353â€“1336 BCE) was a pharaoh of Egypt of the 18 th Dynasty. His reign as Amenhotep IV lasted five years during which he followed the policies of his father and the religious traditions of Egypt. However, in the fifth year, he underwent a dramatic religious transformation, changed his devotion from the cult of Amun to that of Aten. He then moved his seat of power from the traditional palace at Thebes to one he built at the city he founded, Akhetaten, changed his name to Akhenaten, and continued the religious reforms which resulted in his being despised as `the heretic king' by some later writers while admired as a champion of monotheism by others. His religious reforms were not without controversy at the time.

To be sure, the polytheism of the ancient Egyptians encouraged a world view where peace and balance were emphasized and religious tolerance was not considered an issue; there is not even a word directly corresponding to the concept of `religious tolerance' in the ancient Egyptian texts. A hallmark of any monotheistic belief system, however, is that it encourages the belief that, in order for it to be right, other systems must necessarily be wrong; and this insistence on being the sole administrator of ultimate truth leads to intolerance of other beliefs and their suppression; this is precisely what happened in Egypt. The names of the god Amun and the other gods were chiseled from monuments throughout Egypt, the temples were closed, and the old practices outlawed.

The Amarna Letters, (correspondence found in the city of Amarna between the kings of Egypt and those of foreign nations) which provide evidence of Akhenaten's negligence, also show him to have a keen sense of foreign policy when the situation interested him. He strongly rebuked Abdiashirta for his actions against Ribaddi and for his friendship with the Hittites who were then Egypt's enemy. While there are, then, examples of Akhenaten looking after state affairs, there are more which substantiate the claim of his disregard for anything other than his religious reforms and life in the palace.

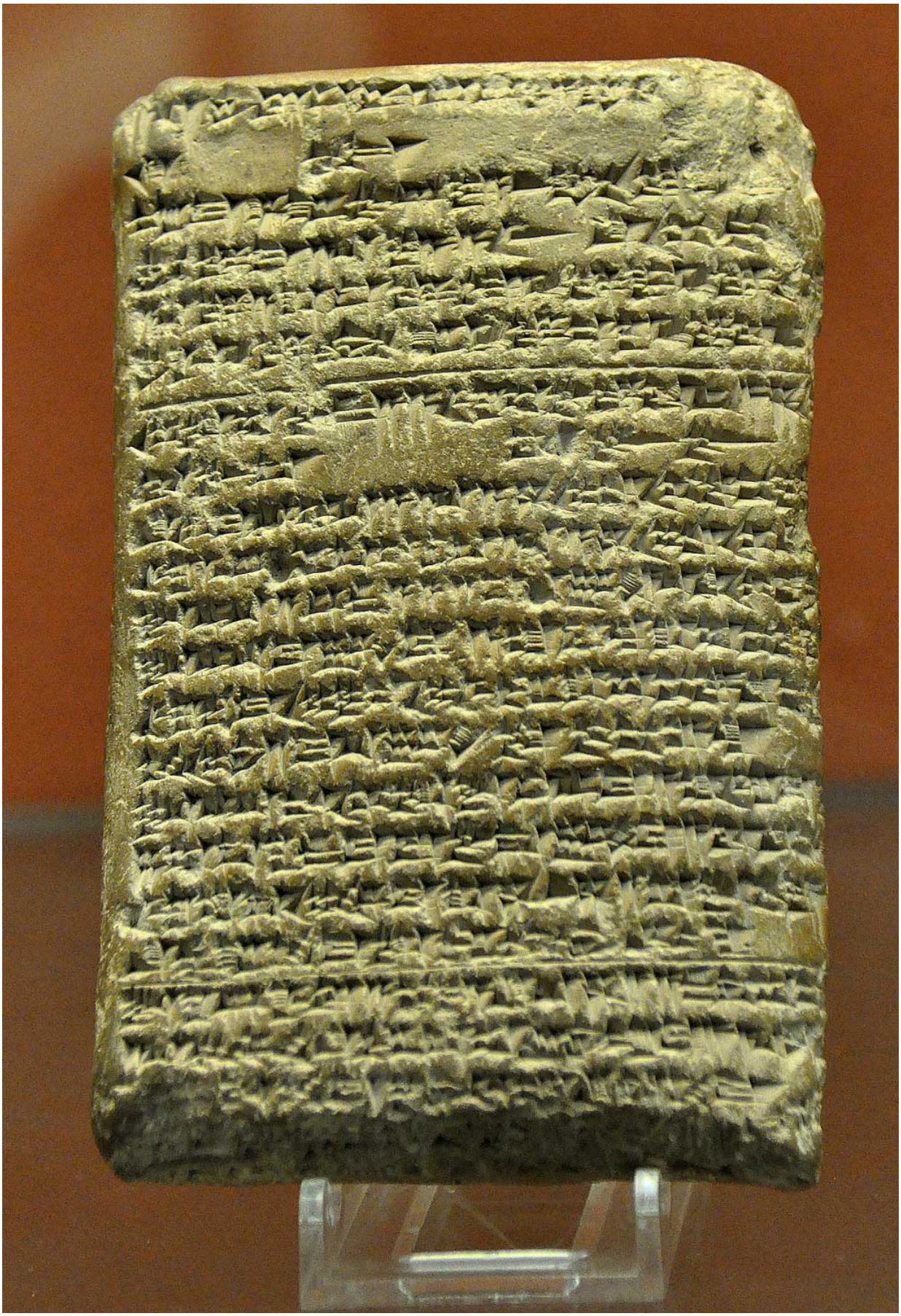


Figure 3-22: Sixth Armana Letter Tablet by Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin | CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

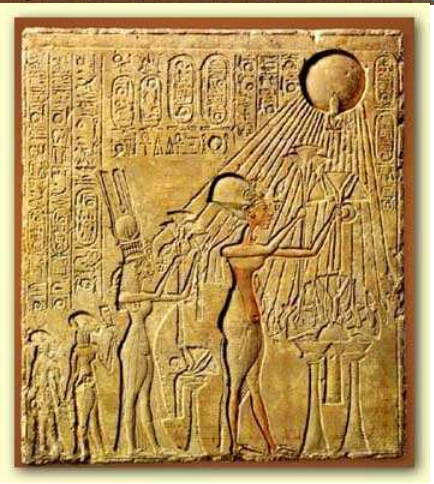


Figure 3-23: Akhenaten by Maksim is licensed under Public Domain

Unlike the images from other dynasties of Egyptian history, the art from the Amarna Period depicts the royal family with elongated necks and arms and spindly legs. Scholars have theorized that perhaps the king “suffered from a genetic disorder called Marfan’s syndrome” (Hawass, 36) which would account for these depictions of him and his family as so lean and seemingly oddly-proportioned. A much more likely reason for this style of art, however, is the king’s religious beliefs. The Aten was seen as the one true god who presided over all and infused all living things. It was envisioned as a sun disk whose rays ended in hands touching and caressing those on earth.

Perhaps, then, the elongation of the figures in these images was meant to show human transformation when touched by the power of the Aten. The famous Stele of Akhenaten, depicting the royal family, shows the rays of the Aten touching them all and each of them, even Nefertiti, depicted with the same elongation as the king. To consider these images as realistic depictions of the royal family, afflicted with some disorder, seems to be a mistake in that there would be no reason for Nefertiti to share in the king’s supposed disorder. The depiction, then, could illustrate Akhenaten and Nefertiti as those who had been transformed to god-like status by their devotion to the Aten to such an extent that their faith is seen even in their children. [37]



Figure 3-24: Tutankhamun & Ankhsenamun by Pataki Márta is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

Akhenaten's reign was followed by his son, the most recognizable Egyptian ruler in the modern day, Tutankhamun, who reigned from 1336â€“1327 BCE. He was originally named `Tutankhaten' to reflect the religious beliefs of his father. Upon assuming the throne, he deemed it was necessary to restore harmony in ancient Egypt by reinstating the traditional beliefs and practices. Thus, he changed his name to `Tutankhamun' to honor the ancient god Amun. He restored the ancient temples, removed all references to his father's single deity, and returned the capital to Thebes.

King Tutankhamun's reign was mysteriously cut short by an early death. His fame today rests mainly on the magnificent artifacts found in his tomb and the sensational discovery (which was headline news worldwide) on 4 November 1922 CE. The `Mummy's Curse', or `Curse of Tutankhamun', has only amplified his celebrity. (38)

Ramesses II

The greatest ruler of the New Kingdom, however, was Ramesses II (also known as Ramesses the Great, 1279â€“1213 BCE). Ramesses was the son of Seti I and Queen Tuya and accompanied his father on military campaigns in Libya and Palestine at the age of 14. By the age of 22 Ramesses was leading his own campaigns in Nubia with his own sons and was named co-ruler with Seti. After the death of Seti I in 1290 BCE, Ramesses assumed the throne and at once began military campaigns to restore the borders of Egypt, ensure trade routes, and take back from the Hittites what he felt rightfully belonged to him.

In the second year of his reign, Ramesses defeated the Sea Peoples off the coast of the Nile Delta. Ramesses next launched a military campaign into Canaan which had been a Hittite vassal state since the reign of the Hittite king Suppiluliuma I. This campaign was successful and Ramesses returned home with plunder and Canaanite (and probably Hittite) royalty as prisoners. In late 1275 BCE, Ramesses prepared his army to march on Kadesh and waited only for the omens to be auspicious and word from his spies in Syria as to the enemy's strength and position. In 1274 BCE, when all seemed in his favor, he led some twenty thousand men into battle. According to his own reports, it was only owing to his own personal courage and calm in battle (and the goodwill of the gods) that he was able to turn the tide against the Hittites.

After the Battle of Kadesh, Ramesses devoted himself to improving Egypt's infrastructure, strengthening its borders, and commissioning vast building projects commemorating his victory of 1274 and his other accomplishments. One of those building projects was that of the Abu Simble temple complex. (39)

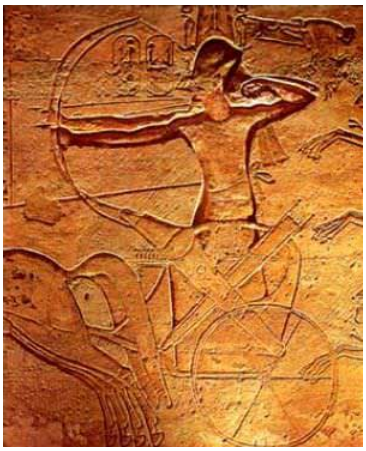


Figure 3-25: Ramesses II at The Battle of Kadesh by Cave cattum is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 3-26: Abu Simbel Temple of Ramesses II by Than217 is licensed under Public Domain

The Great Temple stands 98 feet high and 115 feet long with four seated colossi flanking the entrance, two to each side, depicting Ramesses II on his throne; each one 65 feet tall. Beneath these giant figures are smaller statues (still larger than life-sized) depicting Ramesses' conquered enemies, the Nubians, Libyans, and Hittites. Further statues represent his family members and various protecting gods and symbols of power. Passing between the colossi, through the central entrance, the interior of the temple is decorated with engravings showing Ramesses and Nefertari paying homage to the gods. Ramesses' great victory at Kadesh (considered by modern scholars to be more of a draw than an Egyptian triumph) is also depicted in detail across the north wall of the Hypostyle Hall. The Small Temple stands nearby at a height of 40 feet and 92 feet long. This temple is also adorned by colossi across the front facade, three on either side of the doorway, depicting Ramesses and his queen Nefertari (four statues of the king and two of the queen) at a height of 32 feet. (40)

Although Ramesses has been popularly associated with the pharaoh of the biblical Book of Exodus, there is absolutely no evidence to support this claim. Extensive archaeological excavations at Giza and elsewhere throughout Egypt have unearthed ample evidence that the building projects completed under the reign of Ramesses II (and every other king of Egypt) used skilled and unskilled Egyptian laborers who were either paid for their time or who volunteered as part of their civic duty. The custom of Egyptian citizens volunteering their time to work on the king's building projects is well documented and it was even thought that, in the afterlife, souls would be called upon to work for Osiris, Lord of the Dead, on the building projects he would want. (39)

The Decline of Egypt and the Rise of Alexander the Great

His successor, Ramesses III, followed his policies but, by this time, Egypt's great wealth had attracted the attention of the Sea Peoples who began to make regular incursions along the coast. The Sea Peoples, like the Hyksos, are of unknown origin but are thought to have come from the southern Aegean area. Between 1276–1178 BCE the Sea Peoples were a threat to Egyptian security (Ramesses II had defeated them in a naval battle early in his reign). After his death, however, they increased their efforts, sacking

Kadesh, which was then under Egyptian control, and ravaging the coast. Between 1180–1178 BCE Ramesses III fought them off, finally defeating them at the Battle of Xois in 1178 BCE.

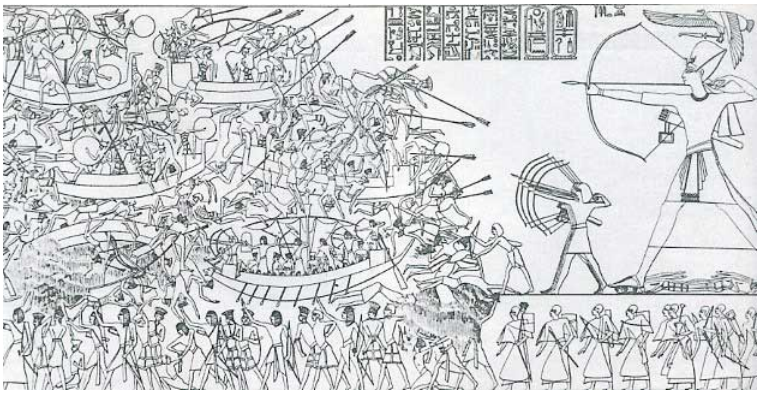


Figure 3-27: Seevölker by Seebeer is licensed under Public Domain

Following the reign of Ramesses III, his successors attempted to maintain his policies but increasingly met with resistance from the people of Egypt, those in the conquered territories, and, especially, the priestly class. In the years after Tutankhamun had restored the old religion of Amun, and especially during the great time of prosperity under Ramesses II, the priests of Amun had acquired large tracts of land and amassed great wealth which now threatened the central government and disrupted the unity of Egypt. By the time of Ramesses XI (1107–1077 BCE), the end of the 20 th Dynasty, the government had become so weakened by the power and corruption of the clergy that the country again fractured and central administration collapsed, initiating the so-called Third Intermediate Period of 1069–525 BCE. (23)

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3.4: Pre-Dynastic Egypt and The Old Kingdom

Pre-Dynastic Egypt

Hunter-gathering nomads sought the cool of the water source of the Nile River Valley and began to settle in the region sometime prior to 6000 BCE. Organized farming began in the region c. 5000 BCE and communities known as the Badarian Culture began to flourish alongside the river. Industry developed at about this same time as evidenced by faience workshops discovered at Abydos dating to c. 5500 BCE. The Badarian were followed by the Amratian, the Gerzean, and the Naqada cultures (also known as Naqada I, Naqada II, and Naqada III), all of which contributed significantly to the development of what became Egyptian civilization.

The written history of the land begins at some point between 3400 and 3200 BCE when Hieroglyphic Script is developed by the Naqada Culture III. By 3500 BCE mummification of the dead was in practice at the city of Hierakonpolis and large stone tombs built at Abydos. As in other cultures world-wide, the small agrarian communities became centralized and grew into larger urban centers. [23]



Figure 3-2: The Narmer Palette by unknown author from Wikimedia is licensed under Public Domain

Over time, Egypt became divided into Upper (the south) and Lower (the north, closer to the Mediterranean Sea) divisions. Upper Egypt was more urbanized with cities like Thinis, Hierakonpolis, and Naqda developing fairly rapidly. Lower Egypt was more rural (generally speaking) with rich agricultural fields stretching up from the Nile River. Both regions developed steadily over thousands of years throughout the Predynastic Period of Egypt until trade with other cultures and civilizations led to increased development of Upper Egypt who then conquered its neighbor most likely for grains or other agricultural crops to feed the growing population or to trade. The Narmer Palette remembers king Narmer as the ruler to successfully unify the regions Upper and Lower Egypt.

The Narmer Palette is an Egyptian ceremonial engraving, a little over two feet (64 cm) tall and shaped like a chevron shield, depicting the First Dynasty king Narmer conquering his enemies and uniting Upper and Lower Egypt. It features some of the earliest hieroglyphics found in Egypt and dates to c. 3200-3000 BCE. On one side, Narmer is depicted wearing the war crown of Upper Egypt and the red wicker crown of Lower Egypt which signifies that Lower Egypt fell to him in conquest. Beneath this

scene is the largest engraving on the palette of two men entwining the serpentine necks of unknown beasts. These creatures have been interpreted as representing Upper and Lower Egypt but there is nothing in this section to justify that interpretation. The other side of the palette (considered the back side) is a single, cohesive image of Narmer with his war club about to strike down an enemy he holds by the hair. Beneath his feet are two other men either dead or attempting to escape his wrath. [28]

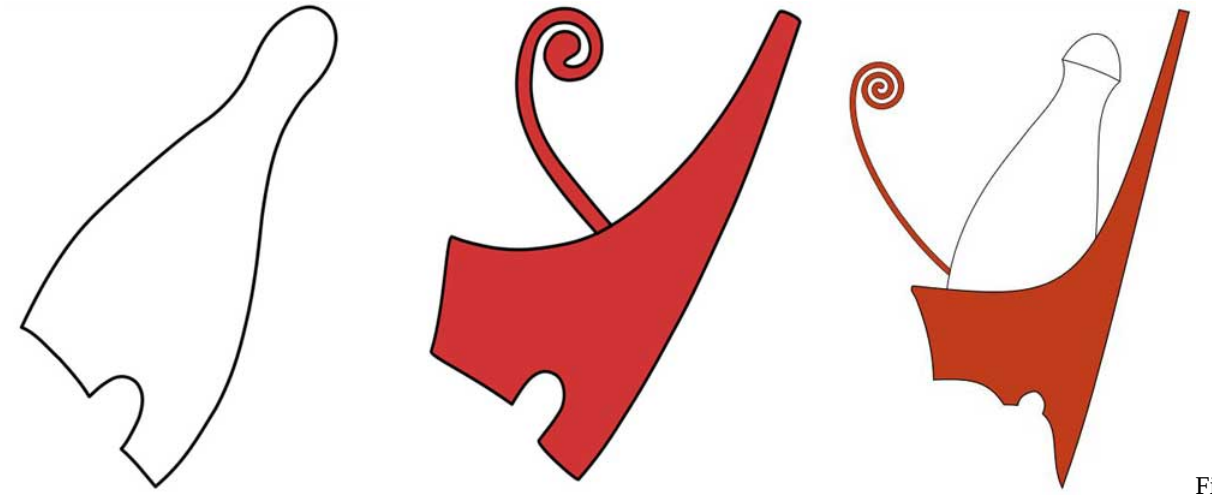


Figure 3-3: Hedjet by Käyttäjä:Kompak is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Figure 3-4: Deshret by Käyttäjä:Kompak is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Figure 3-5: Double crown by Jeff Dahl is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Old Kingdom

The Old Kingdom is the name commonly given to the period from the Third Dynasty through the Sixth Dynasty (2686-2181 BCE), when Egypt gained in complexity and achievement. The Old Kingdom is the first of three so-called “Kingdom” periods that mark the high points of civilization in the Nile Valley. During this time, a new type of pyramid (the step) was created, as well as many other massive building projects, including the Sphinx. Additionally, trade became more widespread, new religious ideas were born, and the strong centralized government was subtly weakened and finally collapsed.

The king (not yet called Pharaoh) of Egypt during this period resided in the new royal capital, Memphis. He was considered a living god, and was believed to ensure the annual flooding of the Nile. This flooding was necessary for crop growth. The Old Kingdom is perhaps best known for a large number of pyramids, which were constructed as royal burial places. Thus, the period of the Old Kingdom is often called “The Age of the Pyramids.”

Egypt’s Old Kingdom was also a dynamic period in the development of Egyptian art. Sculptors created early portraits, the first life-size statues, and perfected the art of carving intricate relief decoration. These had two principal functions: to ensure an ordered existence, and to defeat death by preserving life in the next world. [29]

Death and Burial in the Old Kingdom

The first notable king of the Old Kingdom was Djoser (reigned from 2691â€“2625 BCE).

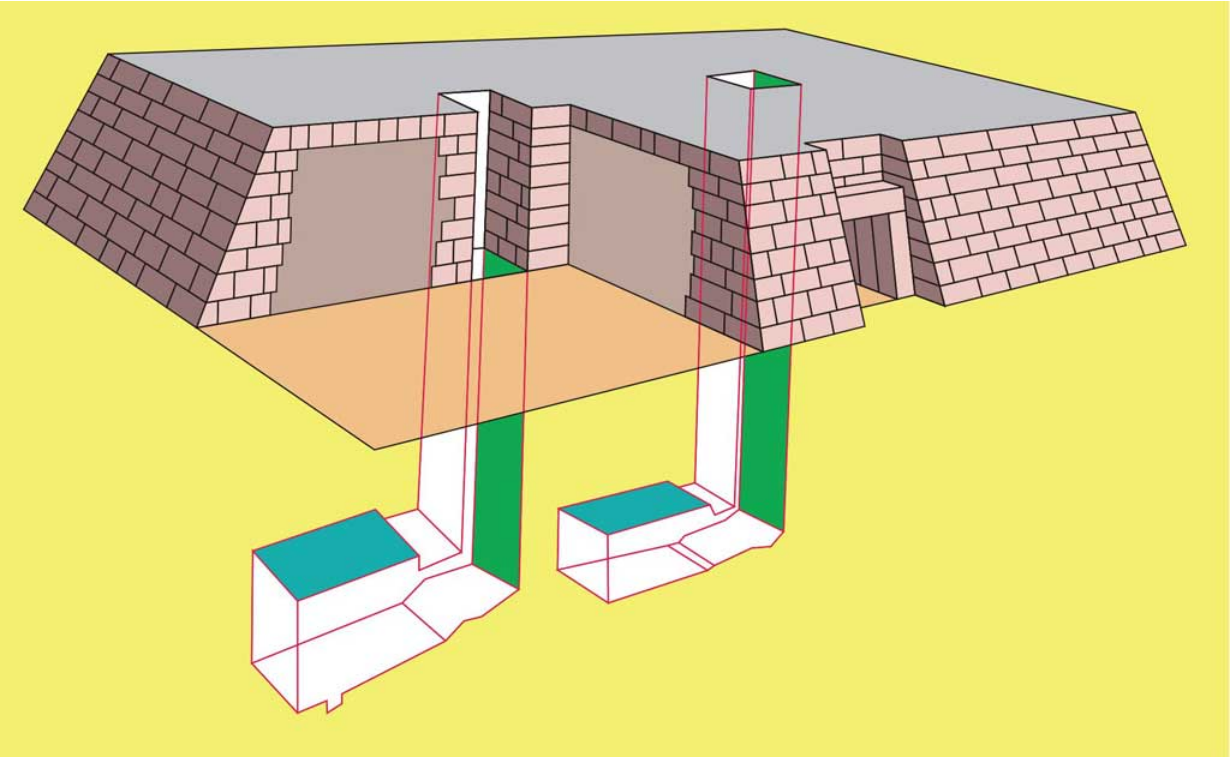


Figure 3-6: Schematic of an Egypt Mastaba from the Old Kingdom originally uploaded by Oesermaatra0069 is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 3-7: Example of a Mastaba by Jon Bodsworth is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

During the Old Kingdom, royal mastabas eventually developed into rock-cut “step pyramids” and then “true pyramids,” although non-royal use of mastabas continued to be used for more than a thousand years. As the pyramids were constructed for the kings, mastabas for lesser royals were constructed around them. The interior walls of the tombs were decorated with scenes of daily life and funerary rituals. Because of the riches included in graves, tombs were a tempting site for grave-robbers. The increasing size of the pyramids is in part credited to protecting the valuables within, and many other tombs were built into rock cliffs in an attempt to thwart grave robbers. (30)



Figure 3-8: Djoser's stepped pyramid in Egypt by Charlesjsharp is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The first king to launch a major pyramid building project was King Djoser, who ruled in the 3 rd Dynasty. By 2611, the famed Egyptian architect Imhotep had constructed the famous "Step Pyramid" for the king at Saqqara, not far from the capital city of Memphis (near modern-day Cairo). In the following dynasties, the pyramid design changed from the "step" pyramid to a true pyramid shape as kings continued to build tombs for their kings. Among these, the Pyramids of Giza are considered the greatest architectural achievement of the time (30)

Pyramid Construction

The Old Kingdom and its royal power reached a zenith under the Fourth Dynasty, which began with Sneferu (2613â€"2589 BCE). Using a greater mass of stones than any other king, he built three pyramids: Meidum, the Bent Pyramid, and the Red Pyramid. He also sent his military into Sinai, Nubia and Libya, and began to trade with Lebanon for cedar. (29)



Figure 3-9: pyramid of Meidum by Jon Bodsworth is licensed under Public Domain

The pyramid of Medium is the first true pyramid constructed in Egypt but did not last. This is because modifications were made to Imhotep's original pyramid design which resulted in the outer casing resting on a sand foundation rather than rock, causing it to collapse. (31)



Figure 3-10: Bent Pyramid. Original image by Chanel Wheeler. Uploaded by Ibolya Horvath is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Bent Pyramid is so called because it rises at a 55-dgree angle and then shifts to 43 degrees of smaller stones giving it the appearance of bending in toward the top. The workers had completed the foundation and the sides before realizing that a 55-degree angle was too steep and modified their plan to finish the project as best they could. Sneferu seems to have understood the problem and moved on to build his third pyramid. (31)



Figure 3-11: Red Pyramid. Original image by Arian Zwegers. Uploaded by Ibolya Horvath is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Red Pyramid (so called because of the use of reddish limestone in construction) was built on a solid base for greater stability, rising at a 43-degree angle. 344 feet (105 meters) high, the Red Pyramid was the first successful true pyramid built in Egypt. Originally it was encased in white limestone, as the other later pyramids were also, which fell away over the centuries and were harvested by locals for other building projects. (31)



Figure 3-12: the six Pyramids of Giza by Ricardo Liberato is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

The Pyramids of Giza, also known as the Giza Necropolis, are one of the oldest remaining wonders of the world. The Necropolis includes three pyramid complexes: the Great Pyramid (built by King Khufu of the 4 th Dynasty); the somewhat smaller Pyramid of Khafre (buit by Khufu's son); and the relatively modest-sized Pyramid of Menkaure. The Necropolis also includes several cemeteries, a workers' village, an industrial complex, and a massive sculpture known as the Great Sphinx. The Great Sphinx is a limestone statue of a reclining sphinx—a mythical creature with a lion's body and a human head. It is commonly believed that the head is that of King Khafra, who ruled during the 4 th dynasty. It is the largest monolith statue in the world, standing 241 ft long, 63 ft wide, and 66.34 ft high. (30)

Considering the technology of the day, some have argued, a monument such as the Great Pyramid of Giza should not exist. Others claim, however, that the existence of such buildings and tombs suggest superior technology which has been lost to time. Most modern scholars today reject the claim that the pyramids and other monuments were built by slave labor, and recent archaeological excavations in and around Giza support this view. Such monuments were considered public works created for the state and used both skilled and unskilled Egyptian workers in construction who were paid for their labor (23)



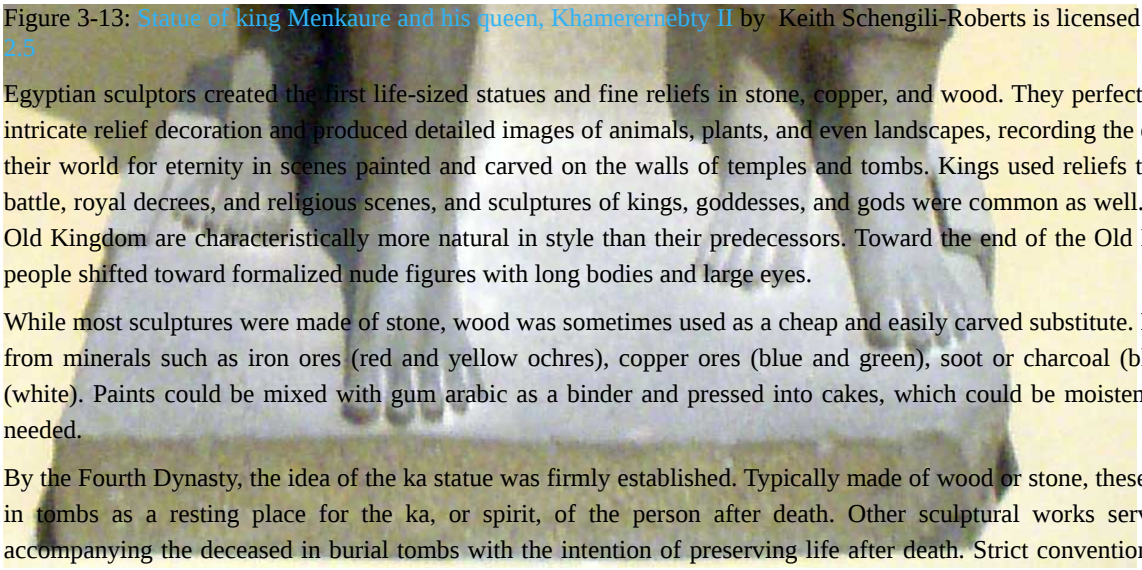


Figure 3-13: Statue of king Menkaure and his queen, Khamerernebty II by Keith Schengili-Roberts is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5

Egyptian sculptors created the first life-sized statues and fine reliefs in stone, copper, and wood. They perfected the art of carving intricate relief decoration and produced detailed images of animals, plants, and even landscapes, recording the essential elements of their world for eternity in scenes painted and carved on the walls of temples and tombs. Kings used reliefs to record victories in battle, royal decrees, and religious scenes, and sculptures of kings, goddesses, and gods were common as well. Sculptures from the Old Kingdom are characteristically more natural in style than their predecessors. Toward the end of the Old Kingdom, images of people shifted toward formalized nude figures with long bodies and large eyes.

While most sculptures were made of stone, wood was sometimes used as a cheap and easily carved substitute. Paints were obtained from minerals such as iron ores (red and yellow ochres), copper ores (blue and green), soot or charcoal (black), and limestone (white). Paints could be mixed with gum arabic as a binder and pressed into cakes, which could be moistened with water when needed.

By the Fourth Dynasty, the idea of the ka statue was firmly established. Typically made of wood or stone, these statues were placed in tombs as a resting place for the ka, or spirit, of the person after death. Other sculptural works served as funerary art, accompanying the deceased in burial tombs with the intention of preserving life after death. Strict conventions that changed very little over the course of Egyptian history were intended to convey the timeless and non-aging quality of the figure's ka. (32)

Close of the Old Kingdom

The enormous resources required for these projects ran out as the Old Kingdom went on. It was not just a problem of what it cost to build the pyramid complexes but also a matter of maintaining them. The maintenance was left to the priests of the complexes and the local official, the *nomarch* , of the region, who received money from the royal treasury. As more money went to the districts from the capital at Memphis, those districts naturally increased in wealth, and with the rise in popularity of the Cult of the Sun God Ra, the priests gained more wealth and power. This situation, combined with others of the time, brought about the end of the Old Kingdom. (33)

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3.5: The First and Second Intermediate Period

The First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom of Egypt



Figure 3-14: Statue of Mentuhotep II by Keith Schengili-Robertson is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5

Toward the end of the First Intermediate Period, Mentuhotep II and his successors unified Egypt under a single rule, and commanded such faraway locations as Nubia and the Sinai. He reigned for 51 years and restored the cult of the ruler, considering himself a god and wearing the headdresses of Amun and Min. His descendants ruled Egypt, until a vizier, Amenemhet I, came to power and initiated the Twelfth Dynasty.

From the Twelfth dynasty onward, pharaohs often kept well-trained standing armies, which formed the basis of larger forces raised for defense against invasion, or for expeditions up the Nile or across the Sinai. However, the Middle Kingdom remained defensive in its military strategy, with fortifications built at the First Cataract of the Nile, in the Delta and across the Sinai Isthmus.

Amenemhet I never held the absolute power commanded, in theory, by the Old Kingdom pharaohs. During the First Intermediate Period, the governors of the nomes of Egypt — nomarchs — gained considerable power. To strengthen his position, Amenemhet required registration of land, modified nome borders, and appointed nomarchs directly when offices became vacant. Generally, however, he acquiesced to the nomarch system, creating a strongly feudal organization.

In his 20 th regnal year, Amenemhat established his son, Senusret I, as his co-regent. This instituted a practice that would be used throughout the Middle and New Kingdoms. The reign of Amenemhat II, successor to Senusret I, has been characterized as largely peaceful. It appears Amenemhet allowed nomarchs to become hereditary again. In his 33 rd regnal year, he appointed his son, Senusret II, co-regent.

There is no evidence of military activity during the reign of Senusret II. Senusret instead appears to have focused on domestic issues, particularly the irrigation of the Faiyum. He reigned only fifteen years, and was succeeded by his son, Senusret III. [34]



Figure 3-15: Statues of the pharaoh Sesotris III by Captmondo is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Senusret III was a warrior-king, and launched a series of brutal campaigns in Nubia. After his victories, Senusret built a series of massive forts throughout the country as boundary markers; the locals were closely watched.

Domestically, Senusret has been given credit for an administrative reform that put more power in the hands of appointees of the central government. Egypt was divided into three warets, or administrative divisions: North, South, and Head of the South (perhaps Lower Egypt, most of Upper Egypt, and the nomes of the original Theban kingdom during the war with Herakleopolis, respectively). The power of the nomarchs seems to drop off permanently during Sensuret's reign, which has been taken to indicate that the central government had finally suppressed them, though there is no record that Senusret took direct action against them.

The reign of Amenemhat III was the height of Middle Kingdom economic prosperity, and is remarkable for the degree to which Egypt exploited its resources. Mining camps in the Sinai, that had previously been used only by intermittent expeditions, were operated on a semi-permanent basis. After a reign of 45 years, Amenemhet III was succeeded by Amenemhet IV, under whom dynastic power began to weaken. Contemporary records of the Nile flood levels indicate that the end of the reign of Amenemhet III was dry, and crop failures may have helped to destabilize the dynasty. Furthermore, Amenemhet III had an inordinately long reign, which led to succession problems. Amenemhet IV was succeeded by Sobekneferu, the first historically attested female king of Egypt, who ruled for no more than four years. She apparently had no heirs, and when she died the Twelfth Dynasty came to a sudden end. (34)

Decline into the Second Intermediate Period

After the death of Sobeknefru, Egypt was ruled by a series of ephemeral kings for about 10-15 years. Ancient Egyptian sources regard these as the first kings of the Thirteenth Dynasty.

After the initial dynastic chaos, a series of longer reigning, better attested kings ruled for about 50-80 years. The strongest king of this period, Neferhotep I, ruled for 11 years, maintained effective control of Upper Egypt, Nubia, and the Delta, and was even recognized as the suzerain of the ruler of Byblos. At some point during the Thirteenth Dynasty, the provinces of Xois and Avaris began governing themselves. Thus began the final portion of the Thirteenth Dynasty, when southern kings continued to reign over Upper Egypt; when the unity of Egypt fully disintegrated, however, the Middle Kingdom gave way to the Second Intermediate Period. (34)

The Second Intermediate Period in Egypt



Figure 3-16: Ibscha Relief Chnumhotep II by NebMaatRa is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Hyksos are a mysterious people, most likely from the area of Syria/Palestine, who first appeared in Egypt c. 1800 and settled in the town of Avaris. While the names of the Hyksos kings are Semitic in origin, no definite ethnicity has been established for them. The Hyksos grew in power until they were able to take control of the whole of Lower Egypt by c. 1720 BCE, rendering the Theban Dynasty of Upper Egypt a vassal state and the pharaoh no more than a figure head. This era is known as The Second Intermediate Period (c. 1782â€“c.1570 BCE). While the Hyksos (whose name simply means `foreign rulers') were hated by the Egyptians, they introduced a great many improvements to the culture such as the composite bow, the horse, and the chariot along with crop rotation and developments in bronze and ceramic works.

By 1700 BCE the Kingdom of Kush had risen to the south of Thebes in Nubia and allied themselves with the Hyksos rulers against the Kingdom of Thebes. The Egyptians mounted a number of campaigns to drive the Hyksos out and subdue the Nubians but all failed until Ahmose I, who had been a soldier in the Theban army, finally succeeded c. 1555/50 BCE. (23)
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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Greek Culture

4.1: About This Module- Greek Culture

4.2: Cycladic, Minoan, and Mycenaean Civilization

4.3: The Greek Dark Ages, Classical Greece, and the Rise of Athens

4.4: Greek Religion, Philosophical Tradition, and Sculpture

4.5: The Hellenistic Age

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4.1: About This Module- Greek Culture

Topics Covered:

- Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic Greek Civilization to Include
  - Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic Architecture A
  - rchaic, Classical, and Hellenistic Art such as the Parthenon
  - Archaic, Classical, and Philosophy such as the Pre-Socratics and Socratics
  - The Greek City States
  - The Persian and Peloponnesian Wars

This module introduces students to artistic, religious, and political expressions within Greek culture that developed between the Archaic Greek era to the end of the Hellenistic age. Students will determine what cultural artifacts such as the Parthenon and the Boxer tell us about their historical contexts. Students will demonstrate understanding of cultural expressions by drawing distinctions between the different eras of Greek art as well as the different Greek philosophical schools. Students will recognize the contribution of the Greeks on the democratic style of governance. Finally, students will also demonstrate proficiency in critical thought by assessing whether writing or metallurgy was a greater factor in the development of Mesopotamian civilization. (1)

Learning Outcomes Related to this Module

1. Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
2. Recognize the relationships between cultural expressions and their contexts
3. Understand cultural expressions
4. Interpret and evaluate cultural artifacts and/or their contexts for significance
5. Recognize the important contributions of the classical world; understand and analyze specific primary texts from the classical world

Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Sort events in historical order from Greek civilization.
- Identify geographic regions impacted by Greek culture and civilization.
- Identify features of pre-Archaic and Archaic Greek civilization and culture.
- Draw distinctions between the various Pre -Socratics, Sophists, and Socratic schools of thought.
- Identify characteristics of the Athenian democratic system.
- Identify historical moments that resulted in the rise and fall of Athenian influence in Greece.
- Draw distinctions between Classical Greek and Hellenistic Greek sculpture.
- Identify major Greek figures and their achievements. (1)

Assigned Readings

- Learning Unit – Greek Culture

Assignments | Learning Activities

- Review Learning Unit
- Participate in Discussion 4
- Complete Timeline Assignment 4
- Complete Assessment Module 4
- Submit Capstone Project | Draft Paper

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4.2: Cycladic, Minoan, and Mycenaean Civilization

Geography of Greece

Greece is a country in southeastern Europe, known in Greek as Hellas or Ellada, and consisting of a mainland and an archipelago of islands. Greece is the birthplace of Western philosophy (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle), literature (Homer and Hesiod), mathematics (Pythagoras and Euclid), history (Herodotus), drama (Sophocles, Euripedes, and Aristophanes), the Olympic Games, and democracy. The concept of an atomic universe was first posited in Greece through the work of Democritus and Leucippus.

The process of today's scientific method was first introduced through the work of Thales of Miletus and those who followed him. The Latin alphabet also comes from Greece, having been introduced to the region by the Phoenicians in the 8 th century BCE, and early work in physics and engineering was pioneered by Archimedes, of the Greek colony of Syracuse, among others.

Mainland Greece is a large peninsula surrounded on three sides by the Mediterranean Sea (branching into the Ionian Sea in the west and the Aegean Sea in the east) which also comprises the islands known as the Cyclades and the Dodecanese (including Rhodes), the Ionian islands (including Corcyra), the isle of Crete, and the southern peninsula known as the Peloponnese.

The geography of Greece greatly influenced the culture in that, with few natural resources and surrounded by water, the people eventually took to the sea for their livelihood. Mountains cover eighty percent of Greece and only small rivers run through a rocky landscape which, for the most part, provides little encouragement for agriculture. Consequently, the early Greeks colonized neighboring islands and founded settlements along the coast of Anatolia (also known as Asia Minor, modern day Turkey). The Greeks became skilled seafaring people and traders who, possessing an abundance of raw materials for construction in stone, and great skill, built some of the most impressive structures in antiquity. (41)

Cycladic Greek Civilization

Greek history is most easily understood by dividing it into time periods. The region was already settled, and agriculture initiated, during the Paleolithic era as evidenced by finds at Petralona and Franchthi caves (two of the oldest human habitations in the world). The Neolithic Age (c. 6000 – c. 2900 BCE) is characterized by permanent settlements (primarily in northern Greece), domestication of animals, and the further development of agriculture.

Archaeological finds in northern Greece (Thessaly, Macedonia, and Sesklo, among others) suggest a migration from Anatolia in that the ceramic cups and bowls and figures found there share qualities distinctive to Neolithic finds in Anatolia. These inland settlers were primarily farmers, as northern Greece was more conducive to agriculture than elsewhere in the region, and lived in one-room stone houses with a roof of timber and clay daubing.

The Cycladic Civilization (c. 3200-1100 BCE) flourished in the islands of the Aegean Sea (including Delos, Naxosand Paros) and provides the earliest evidence of continual human habitation in that region. During the Cycladic Period, houses and temples were built of finished stone and the people made their living through fishing and trade. This period is usually divided into three phases: Early Cycladic, Middle Cycladic, and Late Cycladic with a steady development in art and architecture. The latter two phases overlap and finally merge with the Minoan Civilization, and differences between the periods become indistinguishable. (41)

Minoan Civilization

The Minoan Civilization (2700-1500 BCE) developed on the island of Crete, and rapidly became the dominant sea power in the region. Under Minos' rule, Knossos flourished through maritime trade as well as overland commerce with the other great cities of Crete, Kato Sakro (Phaestos) and Mallia. The Minoans developed a writing system known as Linear A (which has not yet been deciphered) and made advances in ship building, construction, ceramics, the arts and sciences, and warfare. King Minos was credited by ancient historians (Thucydides among them) as being the first person to establish a navy with which he colonized, or conquered, the Cyclades. (41)

The Palace at Knossos



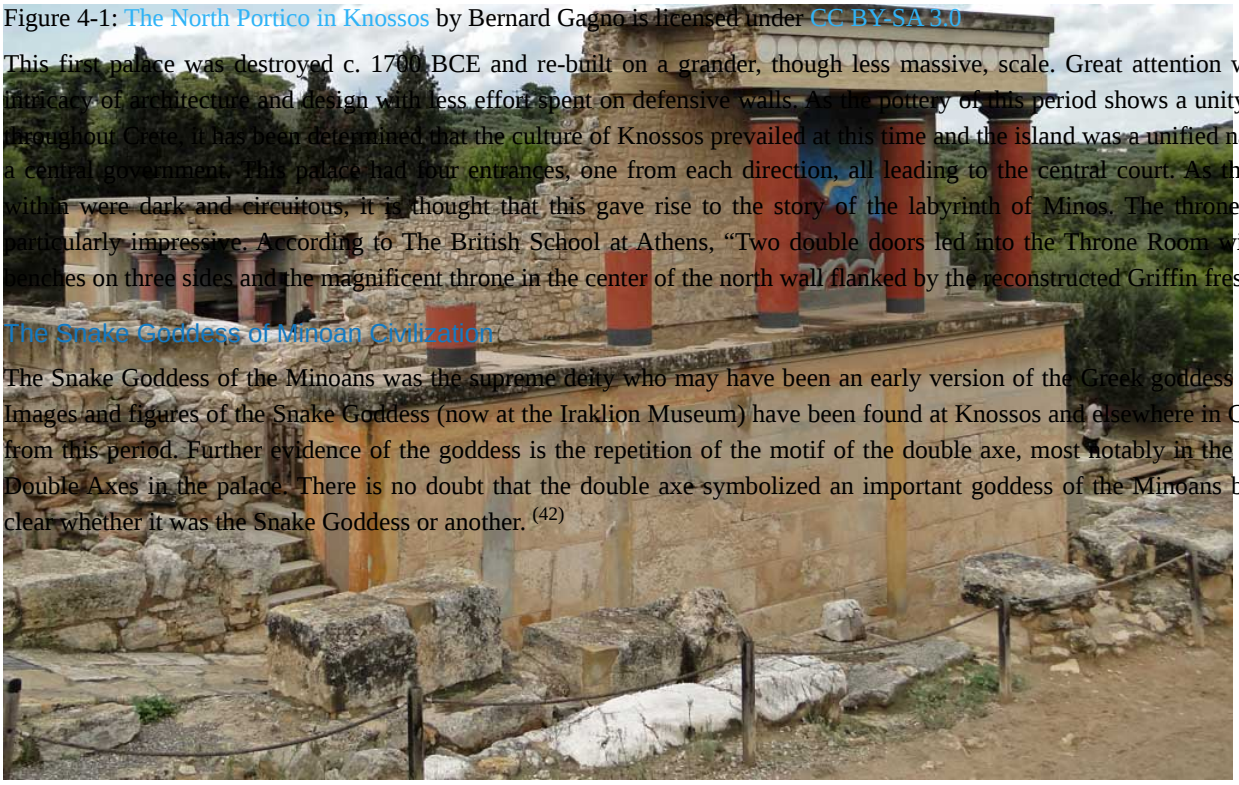


Figure 4-1: The North Portico in Knossos by Bernard Gagno is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

This first palace was destroyed c. 1700 BCE and re-built on a grander, though less massive, scale. Great attention was paid to intricacy of architecture and design with less effort spent on defensive walls. As the pottery of this period shows a unity of culture throughout Crete, it has been determined that the culture of Knossos prevailed at this time and the island was a unified nation under a central government. This palace had four entrances, one from each direction, all leading to the central court. As the corridors within were dark and circuitous, it is thought that this gave rise to the story of the labyrinth of Minos. The throne room was particularly impressive. According to The British School at Athens, "Two double doors led into the Throne Room with gypsum benches on three sides and the magnificent throne in the center of the north wall flanked by the reconstructed Griffin fresco." (42)

The Snake Goddess of Minoan Civilization

The Snake Goddess of the Minoans was the supreme deity who may have been an early version of the Greek goddess Eurynome. Images and figures of the Snake Goddess (now at the Iraklion Museum) have been found at Knossos and elsewhere in Crete dating from this period. Further evidence of the goddess is the repetition of the motif of the double axe, most notably in the Hall of the Double Axes in the palace. There is no doubt that the double axe symbolized an important goddess of the Minoans but it is not clear whether it was the Snake Goddess or another. (42)



Figure 4-2: Minoan Snake Goddess, Knossos by Mark Cartwright is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

Bull Mythology and the Knossos Civilization

For centuries, Knossos was considered only a city of myth and legend until, in 1900 CE, it was uncovered by the English archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans and excavations were begun. Through frescoes on the walls, the excavated site revealed more about the Minoan sport of bull jumping and the ancient story of Theseus and the Minotaur (half-man-half-bull) seemed more probable than fanciful. The possibility that there existed a Minotaur became more acceptable once it was understood that, in the Minoan sport of bull-jumping, the male athlete became one with the bull as he vaulted over the bull's horns.

This sport, then, it is now supposed, gave rise in ancient consciousness to the 'myth' of the Minotaur through the impression that these athletes were half men and half bulls. The story of the labyrinth also was given more credence once the intricate interior of the palace was uncovered. It was Evans who first called the ancient inhabitants of Crete 'Minoan' after King Minos of Knossos, and his efforts in excavation and re-construction, however controversial, paved the way for all future work in both physical and cultural anthropology concerning the Minoan civilization. (42)



Figure 4-3: Minoan Bull Leaping by Mark Cartwright is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

The Collapse of Minoan Civilization

Archaeological and geological evidence on Crete suggests this civilization fell due to an overuse of the land causing deforestation though, traditionally, it is accepted that they were conquered by the Mycenaeans. The eruption of the volcano on the nearby island of Thera (modern day Santorini) between 1650 and 1550 BCE, and the resulting tsunami, is acknowledged as the final cause for the fall of the Minoans. The isle of Crete was deluged and the cities and villages destroyed. This event has been frequently cited as Plato's inspiration in creating his myth of Atlantis in his dialogues of the Critias and Timaeus. (41)

Mycenaean Civilization

The Mycenaean Civilization (approximately 1900-1100 BCE) is commonly acknowledged as the beginning of Greek culture, even though we know almost nothing about the Mycenaeans save what can be determined through archaeological finds and through Homer's account of their war with Troy as recorded in The Iliad. They are credited with establishing the culture owing primarily to

their architectural advances, their development of a writing system (known as Linear B, an early form of Greek descended from the Minoan Linear A), and the establishment, or enhancement of, religious rites. The Mycenaeans appear to have been greatly influenced by the Minoans of Crete in their worship of earth goddesses and sky gods, which, in time, become the classical pantheon of ancient Greece. (41)

The City of Mycenae

Mycenae was a fortified late Bronze Age city located between two hills on the Argolid plain of the Peloponnese, Greece. The acropolis today dates from between the 14 th and 13 th century BCE when the Mycenaean civilization was at its peak of power, influence and artistic expression.

Situated on a rocky hill (40-50 m high) commanding the surrounding plain as far as the sea 15 km away, the site of Mycenae covered 30,000 square meters and has always been known throughout history, although the surprising lack of literary references to the site suggest it may have been at least partially covered. First excavations were begun by the Archaeological Society of Athens in 1841 CE and then famously continued by Heinrich Schliemann in 1876 CE who discovered the magnificent treasures of Grave Circle A. The archaeological excavations have shown that the city has a much older history than the Greek literary tradition described.

The large palace structure built around a central hall or Megaron is typical of Mycenaean palaces. Other features included a secondary hall, many private rooms and a workshop complex. Decorated stonework and frescoes and a monumental entrance, the Lion Gate (a 3 m x 3 m square doorway with an 18-ton lintel topped by two 3 m high heraldic lions and a column altar), added to the overall splendor of the complex. The relationship between the palace and the surrounding settlement and between Mycenae and other towns in the Peloponnese is much discussed by scholars. Concrete archaeological evidence is lacking but it seems likely that the palace was a center of political, religious and commercial power. Certainly, high value grave goods, administrative tablets, pottery imports and the presence of precious materials deposits such as bronze, gold and ivory would suggest that the palace was, at the very least, the hub of a thriving trade network. (43)



Figure 4-4: The Lion Gate at Mycenae by Andreas Trepte is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5

Mycenaean Artifacts

The Mycenaean grave site was excavated by Heinrich Schleimann in 1876. Schleimann had excavated ancient sites such as Mycenae and Troy based on the writings of Homer and was determined to find archaeological remains that aligned with observations discussed in the Iliad and the Odyssey. Upon excavating the Mycenaean tombs, Schleimann declared that he found the remains of Agamemnon and many of his followers.

Schleimann's dig uncovered RepoussÃ© death masks were in many of the tombs. The death masks were created from thin sheets of gold, through a careful method of metalworking to create a low relief. These objects are fragile, were carefully crafted, and were laid over the face of the dead. Schleimann called the most famous of the death mask the *Mask of Agamemnon* , under the assumption that this was the burial site of the Homeric king. The mask depicts a man with a triangular face, bushy eyebrows, a narrow nose, pursed lips, a mustache, and stylized ears. This mask is an impressive and beautiful specimen but looks quite different from other death masks found at the site. The faces on other death masks are rounder; the eyes are more bulbous; and at least one bears a hint of a smile. None of the other figures have a mustache or even the hint of beard. In fact, the mustache looks distinctly nineteenth century and is comparable to the mustache that Schleimann himself had. The artistic quality between the*Mask of Agamemnon* and the others seems dramatically different. Despite these differences, the *Mask of Agamemnon* has inserted itself into the story of Mycenaean art.



Figure 4-5: Death Mask of Agamemnon by Xuan Che is licensed under CC BY 3.0

Decorative bronze daggers found in the grave shafts suggest multicultural influences on Mycenaean artists. These ceremonial daggers were made of bronze and inlaid in silver, gold, and niello with scenes clearly influenced from foreign cultures. Two daggers excavated depict scenes of hunts, which suggest an Ancient Near East influence. One of these scenes depicts lions hunting prey, while the other scene depicts a lion hunt. (44)

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4.3: The Greek Dark Ages, Classical Greece, and the Rise of Athens

The Greek Dark Ages

The Late Bronze Age collapse, or Age of Calamities, was a transition in the Aegean Region, Eastern Mediterranean, and Southwestern Asia that took place from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age. Historians believe this period was violent, sudden, and culturally disruptive. The palace economy of the Aegean Region that had characterized the Late Bronze Age, was replaced, after a hiatus, by the isolated village cultures of the Greek Dark Ages — a period that lasted for more than 400 years. Cities like Athens continued to be occupied, but with a more local sphere of influence, limited evidence of trade, and an impoverished culture, which took centuries to recover.

Many historians attribute the fall of the Mycenaeans, and overall Bronze Age collapse, to climatic or environmental catastrophe, combined with an invasion by the Dorians or Sea Peoples — a group of people who possibly originated from different parts of the Mediterranean like the Black Sea, though their origins remain obscure. Historians also point to the widespread availability of edged iron weapons as an exasperating factor. Despite this, no single explanation fits all available archaeological evidence in explaining the fall of the Mycenaean culture.

Many large-scale revolts took place in several parts of the eastern Mediterranean during this time, and attempts to overthrow existing kingdoms were made as a result of economic and political instability by peoples already plagued with famine and hardship. Some regions in Greece, such as Attica, Euboea, and central Crete, recovered economically quicker from these events than other regions, but life for the poorest Greeks would have remained relatively unchanged. Farming, weaving, metalworking, and potting continued at lower levels of output and for local use. Some technical innovations were introduced around 1050 BCE with the start of the Proto-geometric style. However, the overall trend was toward simpler, less intricate pieces with fewer resources being devoted to the creation of art.

None of the Mycenaean palaces of the Late Bronze Age survived, with the possible exception of the Cyclopean fortifications on the Acropolis of Athens. The archaeological record shows that destruction was heaviest at palaces and fortified sites. Up to 90% of small sites in the Peloponnese were abandoned, suggesting major depopulation. The Linear B writing of the Greek language used by Mycenaean bureaucrats ceased, and decorations on Greek pottery after about 1100 BCE lacks the figurative decoration of the Mycenaeans, and was restricted to simpler geometric styles. (45)

The Archaic Period

The Archaic period of Greek history lasted from the 8 th century BCE to the second Persian invasion of Greece in 480 BCE. The period began with a massive increase in the Greek population and a structural revolution that established the Greek city-states, or *polis* . The Archaic period saw developments in Greek politics, economics, international relations, warfare, and culture. It also laid the groundwork for the classical period, both politically and culturally. During this time, the Greek alphabet developed, and the earliest surviving Greek literature was composed. Monumental sculpture and red-figure pottery also developed in Greece, and in Athens, the earliest institutions of democracy were implemented.

Some written accounts of life exist from this time period in the form of poetry, law codes, inscriptions on votive offerings, and epigrams inscribed on tombs. However, thorough written histories, such as those that exist from the Greek classical period, are lacking. Historians do have access to rich archaeological evidence from this period, however, that informs our understanding of Greek life during the Archaic period. (46)

Development of the Polis

The Archaic period saw significant urbanization and the development of the concept of the *polis* as it was used in classical Greece. However, the *polis* did not become the dominant form of sociopolitical organization throughout Greece during the Archaic period, and in the north and west of the country it did not become dominant until later in the classical period. The process of urbanization known as “synoecism” (or the amalgamation of several small settlements into a single urban center), took place in much of Greece during the 8 th century. Both Athens and Argos, for example, coalesced into single settlements near the end of that century. In some settlements, physical unification was marked by the construction of defensive city walls. The increase in population, and evolution of the*polis* as a sociopolitical structure, necessitated a new form of political organization. (46)

Age of Tyranny

Archaic Greece from the mid-7 th century onward has been referred to as an “age of tyrants.” Various explanations have been provided for the rise of tyranny in the 7 th century. The most popular explanation dates back to Aristotle , who argued that tyrants were set up by the people in response to the nobility becoming less tolerable. Because there is no evidence from this time period demonstrating this to be the case, historians have looked for alternate explanations. Some argue that tyrannies were set up by individuals who controlled private armies, and that early tyrants did not need the support of the people at all. Others suggest that tyrannies were established as a consequence of in-fighting between rival oligarchs, rather than as a result of fighting between oligarchs and the people.

Other historians question the existence of a 7 th century “age of tyrants” altogether. In the Archaic period, the Greek word *tyrannos* did not have the negative connotations it had later in the classical period. Often the word could be used as synonymous with “king.” As a result, many historians argue that Greek tyrants were not considered illegitimate rulers, and cannot be distinguished from any other rulers during the same period. (46)

The Homeric Question



Figure 4-6: manuscript of Homer’s Iliad by an unknown author from Wikimedia is licensed under Public Domain

The Homeric Question concerns the doubts and consequent debate over the identity of Homer, the author of the*Iliad* and the *Odyssey* ; it also questions the historicity of the two books. Many scholars agree that regardless of who authored Homer’s works, it is highly likely that the poems attributed to him were part of a generations-old oral tradition, with many scholars believing the works to be transcribed sometime in the 6 th century BCE or earlier. Many estimates place the events of Homer’s Trojan War as preceding the Greek Dark Ages, of approximately 1250 to 750 BCE. The *Iliad* , however, has been placed immediately following the Greek Dark Age period. (46)

Archaic Greek Sculpture

The earliest large stone figures (kouroi — nude male youths and kore — clothed female figures) were rigid as in Egyptian monumental statues with the arms held straight at the sides, the feet are almost together and the eyes stare blankly ahead without any particular facial expression. These rather static figures slowly evolved though and with ever greater details added to hair and muscles, the figures began to come to life. Slowly, arms become slightly bent giving them muscular tension and one leg (usually the right) is placed slightly more forward, giving a sense of dynamic movement to the statue. Excellent examples of this style of figure are the kouroi of Argos, dedicated at Delphi (c. 580 BCE).

Around 480 BCE, the last kouroi become ever more life-like, the weight is carried on the left leg, the right hip is lower, the buttocks and shoulders more relaxed, the head is not quite so rigid, and there is a hint of a smile. Female kore followed a similar evolution, particularly in the sculpting of their clothes that were rendered in an ever-more realistic and complex way. A more natural proportion of the figure was also established where the head became 1:7 with the body, irrespective of the actual size of the statue. (47)



Figure 4-7: Kouroi of Argos by Mark Cartwright is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

Classical Greece

Classical Greece was a 200-year period in Greek culture lasting from the 5 th to the 4 th centuries BCE. This period saw the annexation of much of modern-day Greece by the Persian Empire, as well as its subsequent independence. Classical Greece also had a powerful influence on the Roman Empire, and greatly influenced the foundations of Western civilization. Much of modern Western politics, artistic and scientific thought, literature, and philosophy derives from this period of Greek history. The classical period was preceded by the Archaic period, and was succeeded by the Hellenistic period. (48)

Rise of the City-States

The term "city-state," which is English in origin, does not fully translate the Greek term for these same entities, polis. Poleis were different from ancient city-states in that they were ruled by bodies of the citizens who lived there. Many were initially established, as in Sparta, via a network of villages, with a governance center being established in a central urban center. As notions of citizenship rose to prominence among landowners, polis came to embody an entire body of citizens and the term could be used to describe the populace of a place, rather than the physical location itself.

Basic elements of a polis often included the following:

- Self-governance, autonomy, and independence
- A social hub and financial marketplace, called an agora
- Urban planning and architecture
- Temples, altars, and other sacred precincts, many of which would be dedicated to the patron deity of the city
- Public spaces, such as gymnasia and theaters
- Defensive walls to protect against invasion
- Coinage minted by the city

Polis were established and expanded by synoecism, or the absorption of nearby villages and tribes. Most cities were composed of several tribes that were in turn composed of groups sharing common ancestry, and their extended families. Territory was a less helpful means of thinking about the shape of a polis than regions of shared religious and political associations.

Dwellers of a polis were typically divided into four separate social classes, with an individual's status usually being determined at birth. Free adult men born of legitimate citizens were considered citizens with full legal and political rights, including the right to vote, be elected into office, and bear arms, with the obligation to serve in the army during wartime. The female relatives and underage children of full citizens were also considered citizens, but they had no formal political rights. They were typically represented within society by their adult male relatives. Citizens of other poleis who chose to reside in a different polis possessed full rights in their place of origin, but had no political rights in their new place of residence. Otherwise, such citizens had full personal and property rights subject to taxation. Finally, slaves were considered possessions of their owner and had no rights or privileges other than those granted by their owner. (48)

Greco-Persian Wars

The Greco-Persian Wars, also referred to as the Persian Wars, were a series of conflicts that began in 499 BCE and lasted until 449 BCE, between the Achaemenid Empire of Persia (modern-day Iran) and Greek city-states. The conflict began when Cyrus the Great conquered the Greek-inhabited region of Ionia in 547 BCE. After struggling to control the cities of Ionia, the Persians appointed tyrants to rule each of them. When the tyrant of Miletus embarked on an unsuccessful expedition to conquer the island of Naxos with Persian support, however, a rebellion was incited throughout Hellenic Asia Minor against the Persians. This rebellion, known as the Ionian Revolt, lasted until 493 BCE, and drew increasingly more regions throughout Asia Minor into the conflict.

Eventually the Ionians suffered a decisive defeat and the rebellion collapsed. Subsequently, Darius the Great, the Persian ruler, sought to secure his empire from further revolts and interference from the mainland Greeks, and embarked upon a scheme to conquer all of Greece. The first Persian invasion of Greece began in 492 BCE, and was successful in conquering Macedon and re-subjugating Thrace. In 490 BCE, a second force was sent to Greece across the Aegean Sea, successfully subjugating the Cyclades. However, the Persians were defeated by the Athenians at the Battle of Marathon, putting a halt to Darius's plan until his death in 486 BCE.

In 480 BCE, Darius's son, Xerxes, personally led the second Persian invasion of Greece with one of the largest ancient armies ever assembled. His invasion was successful and Athens was burned. However, the following year, the Allied Greek states went on the offensive, defeating the Persian army at the Battle of Plataea and ending the invasion of Greece. The Greeks continued to expel Persian forces from Greece and surrounding areas, but the actions of Spartan General Pausanias at the siege of Byzantium alienated many of the Greek states from the Spartans, causing the anti-Persian alliance to be reconstituted around Athenian leadership in what became known as the Delian League. The Delian League continued the campaign against the Persians for the next three decades. Some historical sources suggest the end of hostilities between the Greeks and the Persians was marked by a peace treaty between Athens and Persia, called the Peace of Callias. (48)

Athenian Democracy

Athenian democracy developed around the 5 th century BCE, in the Greek city-state of Athens. It is the first known democracy in the world. Other Greek cities set up democracies, most following the Athenian model, but none are as well documented as Athens. Athenian democracy was a system of direct democracy, in which participating citizens voted directly on legislation and executive bills. Participation was open to adult, land-owning men, which historians estimate numbered between 30,000 and 50,000 individuals, out of a total population of approximately 250,000 to 300,000.

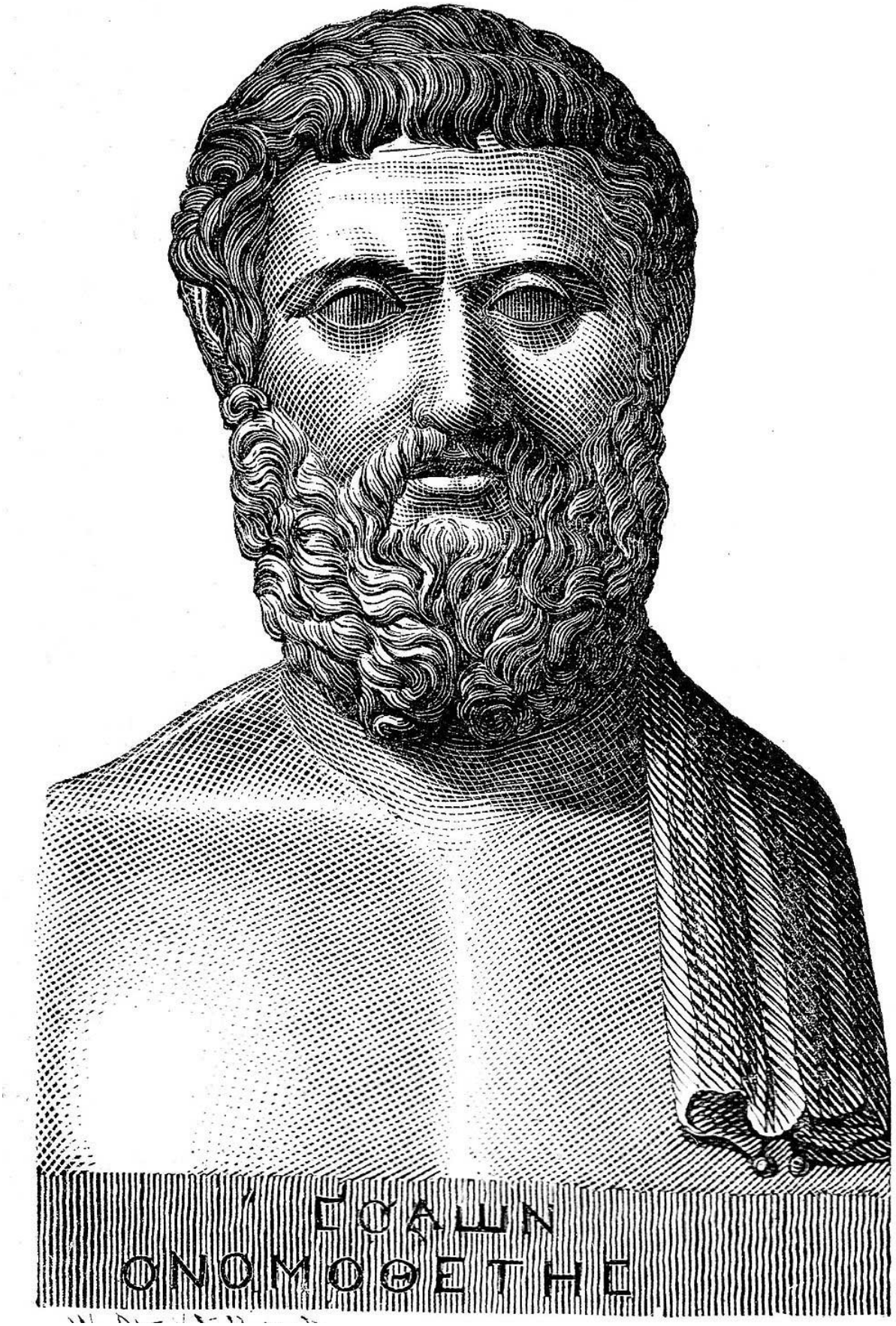

ΕΩΑΩΝ
ΘΝΟΜΟΘΕΤΗΣ

Figure 4-8: Illustration of Solon by Ernst Wallis et al is licensed under Public Domain

Before the first attempt at democratic government, Athens was ruled by a series of archons, or chief magistrates, and the Areopagus, which was made up of ex-archons. Archons were typically aristocrats who ruled to their own advantage. Additionally, a series of laws codified by Draco in 621 BCE reinforced the power of the aristocracy over all other citizens. A mediator called Solon reshaped the city-state by restructuring the way citizenship was defined in order to absorb the traditional aristocracy within it, and established the right of every Athenian to participate in meetings of governing assemblies. The Areopagus, however, retained ultimate lawmaking authorities.(48)

Cleisthenes

In 510 BCE, Spartan troops helped the Athenians overthrow their king, the tyrant Hippias, son of Peisistratos. Cleomenes I, king of Sparta, put in place a pro-Spartan oligarchy headed by Isagoras. But his rival, Cleisthenes, with the support of the middle class and aided by democrats, managed to take over. Cleomenes intervened in 508 and 506 BCE, but could not stop Cleisthenes, who was then supported by the Athenians. Through his reforms, the people endowed their city with institutions furnished with equal rights (i.e., isonomic institutions), and established ostracism, a procedure by which any citizen could be expelled from the city-state of Athens for ten years. (48)

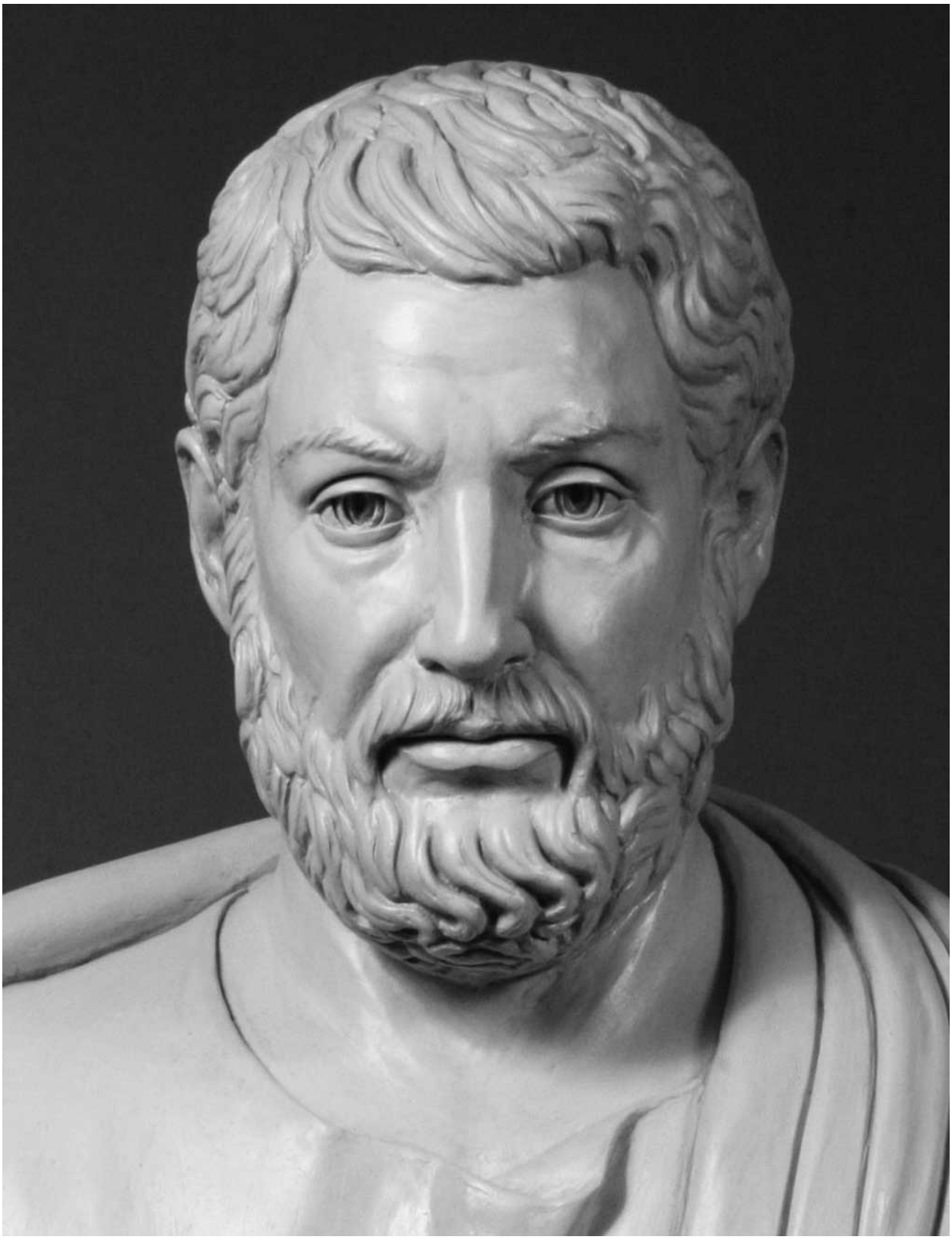


Figure 4-9: Cleisthenes with permission by The Ohio Channel is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The isonomic and isegoric democracy was first organized into about 130 demes — political subdivisions created throughout Attica. Ten thousand citizens exercised their power via an assembly (the ekklesia, in Greek), of which they all were a part, that was headed by a council of 500 citizens chosen at random. The city's administrative geography was reworked, the goal being to have mixed

political groups — not federated by local interests linked to the sea, the city, or farming — whose decisions (declaration of war, etc.) would depend on their geographical situations. The territory of the city was subsequently divided into 30 trittyes. It was this corpus of reforms that would allow the emergence of a wider democracy in the 460s and 450s BCE. [48]

The Rise of Athens (508-448 BCE)



Figure 4-10: Greek-Persian duel by National Museums Scotland is licensed under Public Domain

In 514 BCE, the dictator Hippias established stability and prosperity with his rule of Athens, but remained very unpopular as a ruler. With the help of an army from Sparta in 511/510 BCE, he was overthrown by Cleisthenes, a radical politician of aristocratic background who established democracy in Athens.

Prior to the rise of Athens, Sparta, a city-state with a militaristic culture, considered itself the leader of the Greeks, and enforced a hegemony. In 499 BCE, Athens sent troops to aid the Ionian Greeks of Asia Minor, who were rebelling against the Persian Empire during the Ionian Revolt. This provoked two Persian invasions of Greece, both of which were repelled under the leadership of the soldier-statesmen Miltiades and Themistocles, during the Persian Wars. In the decades that followed, the Athenians, with the help of the Spartans and other allied Greek city-states, managed to rout the Persians. These victories enabled Athens to bring most of the Aegean, and many other parts of Greece, together in the Delian League, creating an Athenian-dominated alliance from which Sparta and its allies withdrew. [49]

Pericles

The 5 th century BCE was a period of Athenian political hegemony, economic growth, and cultural flourishing that is sometimes referred to as the Golden Age of Athens. The latter part of this time period is often called The Age of Pericles. After peace was made with Persia in the 5 th century BCE, what started as an alliance of independent city-states became an Athenian empire. Athens

moved to abandon the pretense of parity among its allies, and relocated the Delian League treasury from Delos to Athens, where it funded the building of the Athenian Acropolis, put half its population on the public payroll, and maintained the dominant naval power in the Greek world.

With the empire's funds, military dominance, and its political fortunes as guided by statesman and orator Pericles, Athens produced some of the most influential and enduring cultural artifacts of Western tradition, during what became known as the Golden Age of Athenian democracy, or the Age of Pericles. The playwrights Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides all lived and worked in Athens during this time, as did historians Herodotus and Thucydides, the physician Hippocrates, and the philosopher Socrates.

Pericles was arguably the most prominent and influential Greek statesman, orator, and general of Athens during its Golden Age. One of his most popular reforms while in power was to allow thetes (Athenians without wealth) to occupy public office. Another success of his administration was the creation of the misthophoria, a special salary for the citizens that attended the courts as jurors. As Athens' ruler, he helped the city to prosper with a resplendent culture and democratic institutions. [49]

The Parthenon

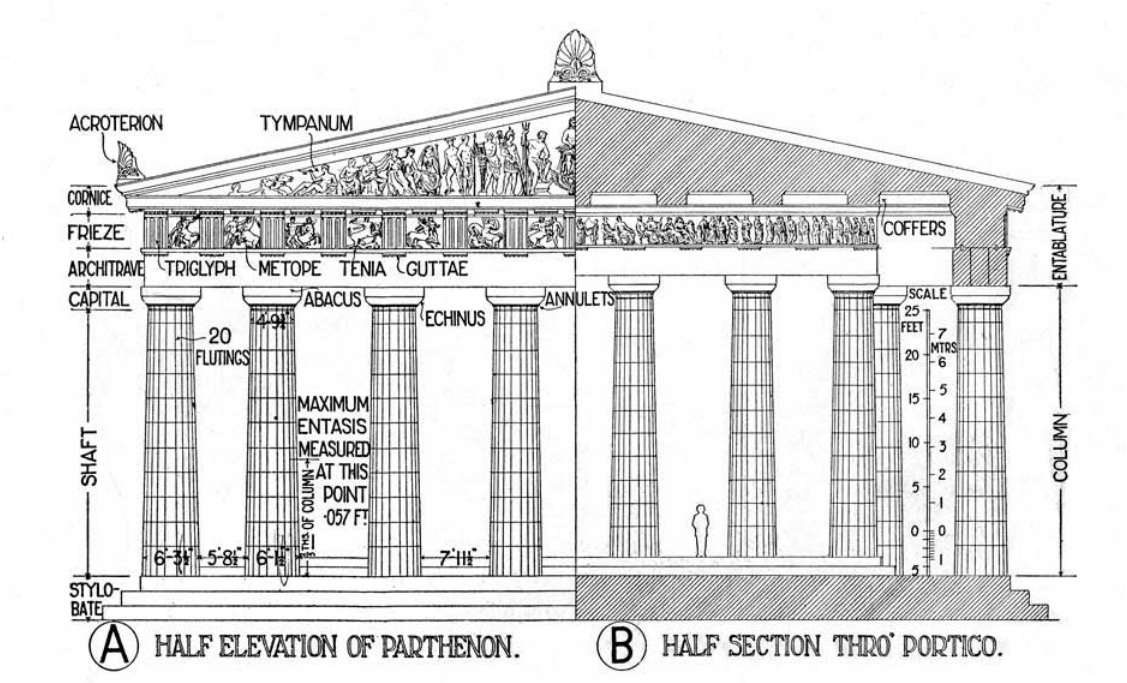


Figure 4-11: Architectural Elements of the Parthenon by F. Banister is licensed under Public Domain

The temple was unprecedented in both the quantity and quality of architectural sculpture used to decorate it. No previous Greek temple was so richly decorated. The Parthenon had 92 metopes carved in high relief (each was on average 1.2 m x 1.25 m square with relief of 25 cm in depth), a frieze running around all four sides of the building, and both pediments filled with monumental sculpture.

The subjects of the sculpture reflected the turbulent times that Athens had and still faced. Defeating the Persians at Marathon in 490 BCE, at Salamis in 480 BCE, and at Plataea in 479 BCE, the Parthenon was symbolic of the superiority of Greek culture against â€˜barbarian' foreign forces. This conflict between order and chaos was symbolized in particular by the sculptures on the metopes running around the exterior of the temple, 32 along the long sides and 14 on each of the short. These depicted the Olympian gods fighting the giants (East metopes – the most important, as this was the side where the principal temple entrance was), Greeks, probably including Theseus, fighting Amazons (West metopes), the Fall of Troy (North metopes), and Greeks fighting Centaurs, possibly at the wedding of the king of the Lapiths Perithous (South metopes).

The most important sculpture of the Parthenon though was not outside but inside. There is evidence that the temple was built to measure in order to accommodate the chryselephantine statue of Athena by Pheidias. This was a gigantic statue over 12 m high and made of carved ivory for flesh parts and gold (1140 kilos or 44 talents of it) for everything else, all wrapped around a wooden core. The gold parts could also be easily removed if necessary in times of financial necessity. The statue stood on a pedestal measuring

4.09 by 8.04 metres. The statue has been lost (it may have been removed in the 5 th century CE and taken to Constantinople), but smaller Roman copies survive, and they show Athena standing majestic, fully armed, wearing an aegis with the head of Medusa prominent, holding Nike in her right hand and with a shield in her left hand depicting scenes from the Battles of the Amazons and the Giants. A large coiled snake resided behind the shield. On her helmet stood a sphinx and two griffins. In front of the statue was a large shallow basin of water, which not only added the humidity necessary for the preservation of the ivory, but also acted as a reflector of light coming through the doorway. The statue must have been nothing less than awe-inspiring and the richness of it — both artistically and literally — must have sent a very clear message of the wealth and power of the city that could produce such a tribute to their patron god. (50)



Figure 4-12: Athena Parthenon by Mary Harrsch is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

5th Century Athenian Political Institutions

The administration of the Athenian state was managed by a group of people referred to as magistrates, who were submitted to rigorous public control and chosen by lot. Only two magistrates were directly elected by the Popular Assembly: strategos (or generals), and magistrates of finance. All magistrates served for a year or less, with the exception of Pericles, who was elected year after year to public office. At the end of their service, magistrates were required to give an account of their administration and use of public finances.

The most elite posts in the Athenian political system belonged to archons. In ages past, they served as heads of the Athenian state, but in the Age of Pericles they lost much of their influence and power, though they still presided over tribunals. The Assembly of the People was the first organ of democracy in Athens. In theory, it was composed of all the citizens of Athens. However, it is estimated that the maximum number of participants it witnessed was 6,000. The Assembly met in front of the Acropolis and decided on laws and decrees. Once the Assembly gave its decision in a certain matter, the issue was raised to the Council, or Boule, to provide definitive approval.

The Council consisted of 500 members, 50 from each tribe, and functioned as an extension of the Assembly. Council members were chosen by lot in a similar manner to magistrates and supervised the work of the magistrates in addition to other legal projects and administrative details. They also oversaw the city-state's external affairs. (49)

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4.4: Greek Religion, Philosophical Tradition, and Sculpture

Greek Religion

In the ancient Greek world, religion was personal, direct, and present in all areas of life. With formal rituals which included animal sacrifices and libations, myths to explain the origins of mankind and give the gods a human face, temples which dominated the urban landscape, city festivals and national sporting and artistic competitions, religion was never far from the mind of an ancient Greek. Whilst the individual may have made up their own mind on the degree of their religious belief and some may have been completely skeptical, certain fundamentals must have been sufficiently widespread in order for Greek government and society to function: the gods existed, they could influence human affairs, and they welcomed and responded to acts of piety and worship. (51)

The Greek Gods

Polytheistic Greek religion encompassed a myriad of gods, each representing a certain facet of the human condition, and even abstract ideas such as justice and wisdom could have their own personification. The most important gods, though, were the Olympian gods led by Zeus. These were Athena, Apollo, Poseidon, Hermes, Hera, Aphrodite, Demeter, Ares, Artemis, Hades, Hephaistos, and Dionysos. These gods were believed to reside on Mt. Olympos and would have been recognized across Greece, albeit, with some local variations and perhaps particular attributes and associations.

In the Greek imagination, literature, and art, the gods were given human bodies and characters — both good and bad — and just as ordinary men and women, they married, had children (often through illicit affairs), fought, and in the stories of Greek mythology they directly intervened in human affairs. These traditions were first recounted only orally as there was no sacred text in Greek religion and later, attempts were made to put in writing this oral tradition, notably by Hesiod in his Theogony and more indirectly in the works of Homer.

Gods became patrons of cities, for example, Aphrodite for Corinth and Helios for Rhodes, and were called upon for help in particular situations, for example, Ares during war and Hera for weddings. Some gods were imported from abroad, for example, Adonis, and incorporated into the Greek pantheon whilst rivers and springs could take on a very localized personified form such as the nymphs. (51)

The Greek Philosophical Tradition

The Pre-Socratic Philosophical Tradition

The Pre-Socratic philosophers, following Thales' lead, initiated what would become the scientific method in exploring natural phenomena. The first group of Greek philosophers is a triad of Milesian thinkers: Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes. Their main concern was to come up with a cosmological theory purely based on natural phenomena. Their approach required the rejection of all traditional explanations based on religious authority, dogma, myth and superstition. They all agreed on the notion that all things come from a single "primal substance": Thales believed it was water; Anaximander said it was a substance different from all other known substances, "infinite, eternal and ageless"; and Anaximenes claimed it was air.

Observation was also important among the Milesian school. Thales predicted an eclipse which took place in 585 BCE and it seems he had been able to calculate the distance of a ship at sea from observations taken at two points. Anaximander, based on the fact that human infants are helpless at birth, argued that if the first human had somehow appeared on earth as an infant, it would not have survived: therefore, humans have evolved from other animals whose offspring are fitter. (52)

The Sophist Philosophical Tradition

The Sophists were intellectuals who taught courses in various topics, including rhetoric, a useful skill in Athens. Because they taught in return for a fee, the Sophists' schools were only attended by those who could afford it, usually members of the aristocracy and wealthy families. This was a time of profound political and social change in Athens: democracy had replaced the old way of doing politics and many aristocrats whose interests were affected were trying to destroy the democracy; the rapid increase of wealth and culture, mainly due to foreign commerce, undermined traditional beliefs and morals. In a way, the Sophists represented the new political era in Athenian life, especially because they were linked with the new educational needs. (52)

Socrates

Socrates, born in Athens in the 5 th century BCE, marks a watershed in ancient Greek philosophy. Athens was a center of learning, with sophists and philosophers traveling from across Greece to teach rhetoric, astronomy, cosmology, geometry, and the like. The great statesman Pericles was closely associated with these new teachings, however, and his political opponents struck at him by taking advantage of a conservative reaction against the philosophers. It became a crime to investigate issues above the heavens or below the earth because they were considered impious. While other philosophers, such as Anaxagoras, were forced to flee Athens, Socrates was the only documented individual charged under this law, convicted, and sentenced to death in 399 BCE. In the version of his defense speech presented by Plato, he claims that the envy others experience on account of his being a philosopher is what will lead to his conviction.



Figure 4-13: The Death of Socrates from Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, Wolfe Fund, 1931 is licensed under Public Domain

Many conversations involving Socrates (as recounted by Plato and Xenophon) end without having reached a firm conclusion, a style known as *aporia* . Socrates is said to have pursued this probing question-and-answer style of examination on a number of topics, usually attempting to arrive at a defensible and attractive definition of a virtue. While Socrates' recorded conversations rarely provide a definitive answer to the question under examination, several maxims or paradoxes for which he has become known recur. Socrates taught that no one desires what is bad, and so if anyone does something that truly is bad, it must be unwillingly or out of ignorance; consequently, all virtue is knowledge. He frequently remarks on his own ignorance (claiming that he does not know what courage is, for example). Plato presents Socrates as distinguishing himself from the common run of mankind by the fact that, while they know nothing noble and good, they do not know that they do not know, whereas Socrates knows and acknowledges that he knows nothing noble and good.

Socrates was morally, intellectually, and politically at odds with many of his fellow Athenians. When he was on trial, he used his method of *elenchos* , a dialectic method of inquiry that resembles the scientific method , to demonstrate to the jurors that their moral values are wrong-headed. He tells them they are concerned with their families, careers, and political responsibilities when they ought to be worried about the "welfare of their souls." Socrates' assertion that the gods had singled him out as a divine emissary seemed to provoke irritation, if not outright ridicule. Socrates also questioned the Sophistic doctrine that *arete* (virtue) can be taught. He liked to observe that successful fathers (such as the prominent military general Pericles) did not produce sons of their own quality. Socrates argued that moral excellence was more a matter of divine bequest than parental nurture. (53)

Plato

Plato was an Athenian of the generation after Socrates. Ancient tradition ascribes 36 dialogues and 13 letters to him, although of these only 24 of the dialogues are now universally recognized as authentic. Most modern scholars believe that at least 28 dialogues, and two of the letters, were in fact written by Plato, although all of the 36 dialogues have some defenders. Plato's dialogues feature Socrates, although not always as the leader of the conversation. Along with Xenophon, Plato is the primary source of information about Socrates' life and beliefs, and it is not always easy to distinguish between the two.

Much of what is known about Plato's doctrines is derived from what Aristotle reports about them, and many of Plato's political doctrines are derived from Aristotle's works, *The Republic* , the *Laws* , and the *Statesman* . *The Republic* contains the suggestion that there will not be justice in cities unless they are ruled by philosopher kings; those responsible for enforcing the laws are compelled to hold their women, children, and property in common; and the individual is taught to pursue the common good through noble lies. *The Republic* determines that such a city is likely impossible, however, and generally assumes that philosophers would refuse to rule if the citizenry asked them to, and moreover, the citizenry would refuse to compel philosophers to rule in the first place.

"Platonism" is a term coined by scholars to refer to the intellectual consequences of denying, as Plato's Socrates often does, the reality of the material world. In several dialogues, most notably *The Republic* , Socrates inverts the common man's intuition about what is knowable and what is real. While most people take the objects of their senses to be real if anything is, Socrates is contemptuous of people who think that something has to be graspable in the hands to be real. Socrates's idea that reality is unavailable to those who use their senses is what puts him at odds with the common man and with common sense.

Socrates says that he who sees with his eyes is blind, and this idea is most famously captured in his allegory of the cave, a paradoxical analogy wherein Socrates argues that the invisible world is the most intelligible and that the visible world is the least knowable and most obscure. In the allegory, Socrates describes a gathering of people who have lived chained to the wall of a cave facing a blank wall. The people watch shadows projected on the wall from the fire burning behind them, and the people begin to name and describe the shadows, which are the closest images they have to reality. Socrates then explains that a philosopher is like a prisoner released from that cave who comes to understand the shadows on the wall are not reality. (53)

Classical Greek Sculpture

In the Classical period, Greek sculptors would break off the shackles of convention from the Archaic era and achieve what no-one else had ever before attempted. They created life-size and life-like sculpture which glorified the human and especially nude male form. Greater attention is paid to the facial countenance, though a stoic expression still typifies the sculpture from this era. Clothes too become more subtle in their rendering and cling to the contours of the body in what has been described as "wind-blown' or the "wet-look'. Quite simply, the sculptures no longer seemed to be sculptures but were figures instilled with life and verve. The material of choice for early Greek sculpture was marble with the other favored material being bronze. Unfortunately, because bronze was always in demand for re-use in later periods, marble sculpture has better survived for posterity. (47)

Discobolus Lancellotti

The most famous example of the Discobolus Lancellotti that we have today, for example, is actually a marble replica of a Greek bronze produced by Myron c. 450 BCE. One of the most copied statues from antiquity and it suggests powerful muscular motion caught for a split second, as in a photo. The piece is also interesting because it is carved in such a way (in a single plain) as to be seen from one viewpoint (like a relief carving with its background removed). (47)

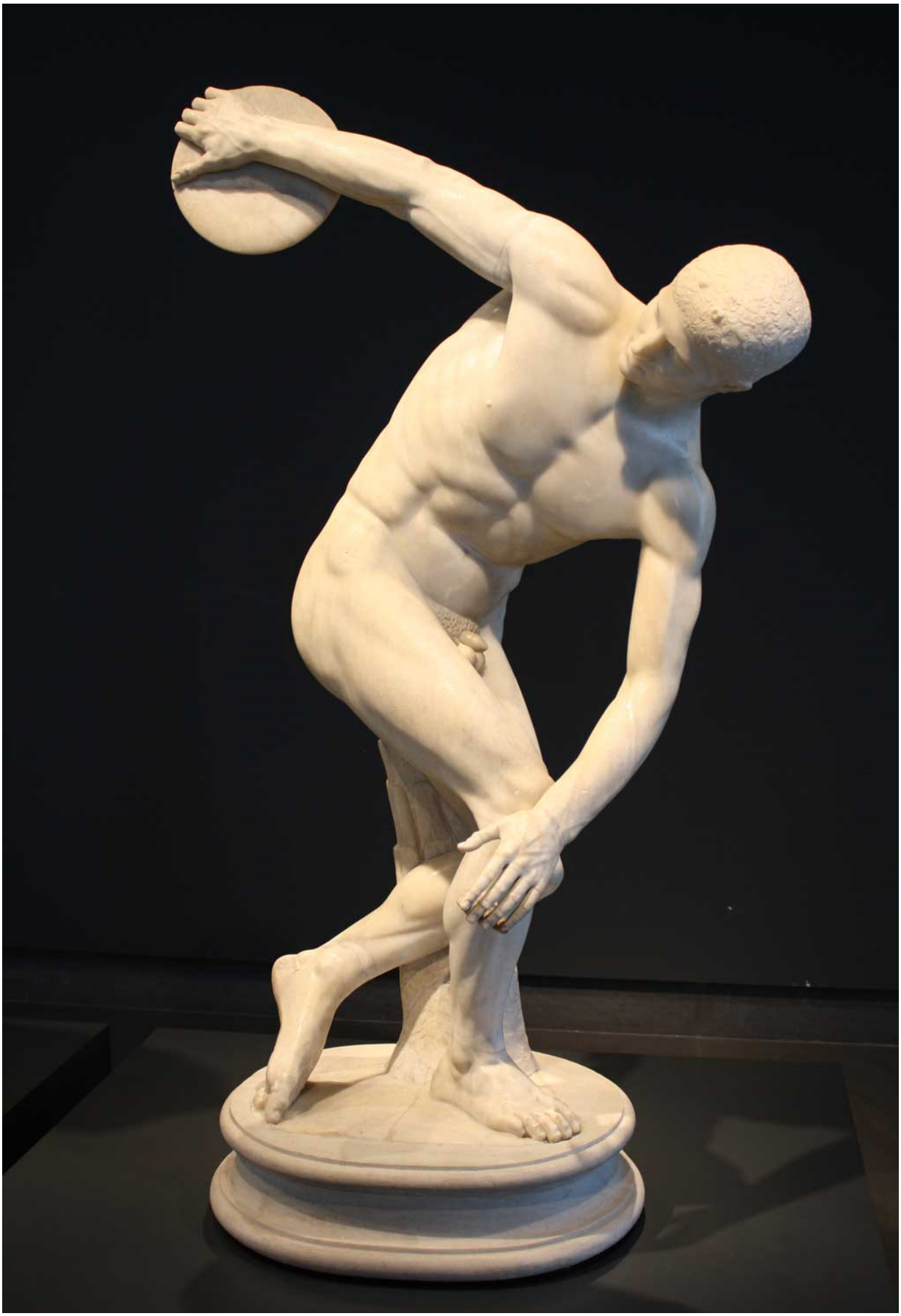


Figure 4-14: Discus Thrower by Mark Cartwright is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

Poseidon of Artemesium

In bronze, the Poseidon of Artemesium is a transitional piece between Archaic and Classical art as the figure is extremely life-like, but in fact the proportions are not exact (e.g. the limbs are extended). However, as Boardman eloquently describes, "(it) manages to be both vigorously threatening and static in its perfect balance"; the onlooker is left in no doubt at all that this is a great god. (47)



Figure 4-15: NAMA Poséidon by Marsyas is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Close of the Classical Age

The Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE) was fought between Athens and its empire, known as the Delian League, and the Peloponnesian League, led by Sparta. During this conflict, Greek warfare evolved from an originally limited and formalized form of conflict, to all-out struggles between city-states, complete with large-scale atrocities. The Peloponnesian War provided a dramatic end to the 5 th century BCE, shattering religious and cultural taboos, devastating vast swathes of countryside, and destroying whole cities.

In the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War, Sparta rose as a hegemonic power in classical Greece. Sparta's dominance was challenged by many Greek city-states who had traditionally been independent during the Corinthian War of 395-387 BCE. Sparta prevailed in the conflict, but only because Persia intervened on their behalf, demonstrating the fragility with which Sparta held its power over the other Greek city-states. Following the decline of the Greek city-states, the Greek kingdom of Macedon rose to power under Philip II. Alexander III, commonly known as Alexander the Great, was born to Philip II in Pella in 356 BCE, and succeeded his father to the throne at the age of 20. [54][55][56]

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4.5: The Hellenistic Age

The Hellenistic Age



Figure 4-16: Mosaic of the Battle of Isus by Berthold Werner is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE) carried on his father's plans for a full-scale invasion of Persia in retaliation for their invasion of Greece in 480 BCE. As he had almost the whole of Greece under his command, a standing army of considerable size and strength, and a full treasury, Alexander did not need to bother with allies nor with consulting anyone regarding his plan for invasion and so led his army into Egypt, across Asia Minor, through Persia, and finally to India. Tutored in his youth by Plato's great student Aristotle, Alexander would spread the ideals of Greek civilization through his conquests and, in so doing, transmitted Greek philosophy, culture, language, and art to every region he came in contact.

The result was a remarkable interweaving of Greek culture with that of non-Greek cultures, such as the world had never witnessed. (41)



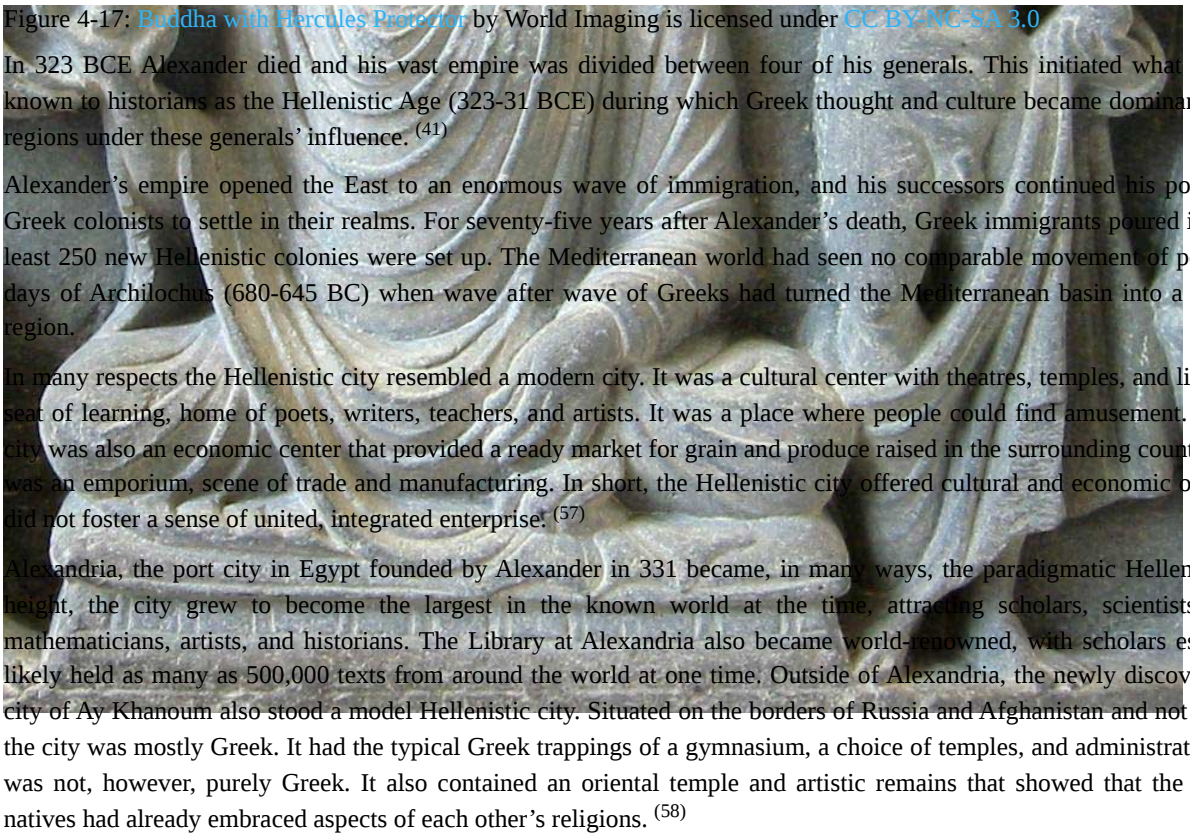


Figure 4-17: Buddha with Hercules Protector by World Imaging is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

In 323 BCE Alexander died and his vast empire was divided between four of his generals. This initiated what has come to be known to historians as the Hellenistic Age (323-31 BCE) during which Greek thought and culture became dominant in the various regions under these generals' influence. (41)

Alexander's empire opened the East to an enormous wave of immigration, and his successors continued his policy by inviting Greek colonists to settle in their realms. For seventy-five years after Alexander's death, Greek immigrants poured into the East. At least 250 new Hellenistic colonies were set up. The Mediterranean world had seen no comparable movement of peoples since the days of Archilochus (680-645 BC) when wave after wave of Greeks had turned the Mediterranean basin into a Greek-speaking region.

In many respects the Hellenistic city resembled a modern city. It was a cultural center with theatres, temples, and libraries. It was a seat of learning, home of poets, writers, teachers, and artists. It was a place where people could find amusement. The Hellenistic city was also an economic center that provided a ready market for grain and produce raised in the surrounding countryside. The city was an emporium, scene of trade and manufacturing. In short, the Hellenistic city offered cultural and economic opportunities but did not foster a sense of united, integrated enterprise. (57)

Alexandria, the port city in Egypt founded by Alexander in 331 became, in many ways, the paradigmatic Hellenistic city. At its height, the city grew to become the largest in the known world at the time, attracting scholars, scientists, philosophers, mathematicians, artists, and historians. The Library at Alexandria also became world-renowned, with scholars estimating that it likely held as many as 500,000 texts from around the world at one time. Outside of Alexandria, the newly discovered Hellenistic city of Ay Khanoum also stood a model Hellenistic city. Situated on the borders of Russia and Afghanistan and not far from China, the city was mostly Greek. It had the typical Greek trappings of a gymnasium, a choice of temples, and administration buildings. It was not, however, purely Greek. It also contained an oriental temple and artistic remains that showed that the Greeks and the natives had already embraced aspects of each other's religions. (58)

Aristotilean Philosophy

Aristotle moved to Athens from his native Stageira in 367 BCE, and began to study philosophy, and perhaps even rhetoric, under Isocrates. He eventually enrolled at Plato's Academy. He left Athens approximately twenty years later to study botany and zoology, became a tutor of Alexander the Great, and ultimately returned to Athens a decade later to establish his own school, the Lyceum. He is the founder of the Peripatetic School of philosophy, which aims to glean facts from experiences and explore the "why" in all things. In other words, he advocates learning by induction.

At least 29 of Aristotle's treatises have survived, known as the *corpus Aristotelicum* , and address a variety of subjects including logic, physics, optics, metaphysics, ethics, rhetoric, politics, poetry, botany, and zoology. Aristotle is often portrayed as disagreeing with his teacher, Plato. He criticizes the regimes described in Plato's*Republic* and *Laws* , and refers to the theory of forms as "empty words and poetic metaphors." He preferred utilizing empirical observation and practical concerns in his works. Aristotle did not consider virtue to be simple knowledge as Plato did, but founded in one's nature, habit, and reason. Virtue was gained by acting in accordance with nature and moderation. (53)

Hellenistic Greek Sculpture

Just as the quest to represent the ideal physical form by Classical Age sculptors mirrored the philosophical quest for apprehending the Ideal heavenly Forms, so also does the art of the Hellenistic age reflect the Aristotelian concern for that which one can see with the naked eye. As such, a transition from Idealism to Realism takes place in the Hellenistic era, as artists strive to represent their subjects as they actually appear. Greek artists in this era added a new level of naturalism to their figures by adding an elasticity to their form and expressions, both facial and physical, to their figures. These figures interact with their audience in a new theatrical manner by eliciting an emotional reaction from their view. This is known as pathos. (59)

The Dying Gaul



Figure 4-18: Dying gaul by Antmoose and antmoose is licensed under CC BY 2.0

The Dying Gaul — also called The Dying Galatian (in Italian: Galata Morente) or The Dying Gladiator — is an ancient Roman marble copy of a lost Hellenistic sculpture thought to have been unknown.

The statue serves both as a reminder of the Celts' defeat, thus demonstrating the might of the people who defeated them, and a memorial to their bravery as worthy adversaries.

The white marble statue which may have originally been painted depicts a wounded, slumping Celt with remarkable realism and emotion, particularly as regards the face. A bleeding sword puncture is visible in his lower right chest. The figure is represented as a Celtic warrior with characteristic hairstyle and moustache and has a torc around his neck. He lies on his fallen shield while his sword, belt, and a curved trumpet lie beside him. (60)



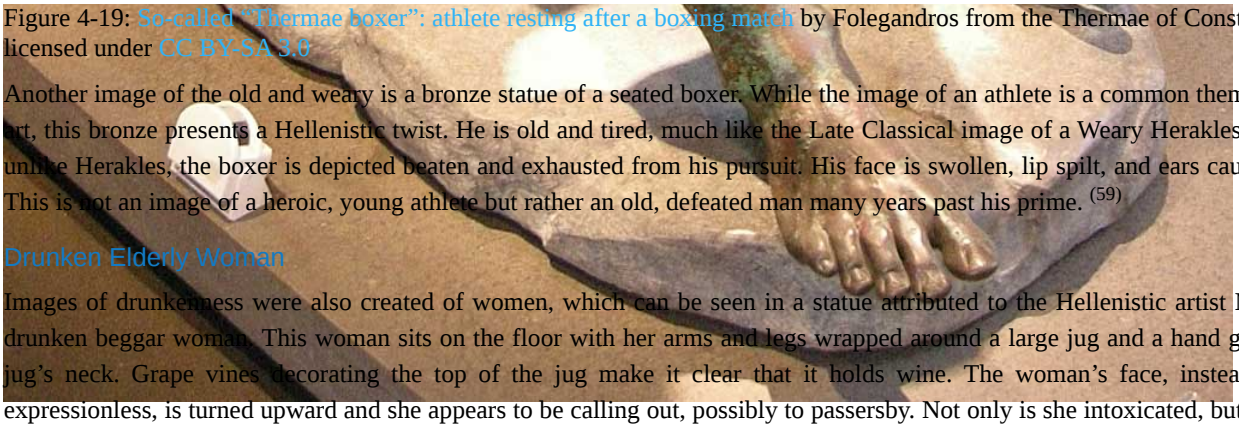


Figure 4-19: So-called "Thermae boxer": athlete resting after a boxing match by Folegandros from the Thermae of Constantine is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Another image of the old and weary is a bronze statue of a seated boxer. While the image of an athlete is a common theme in Greek art, this bronze presents a Hellenistic twist. He is old and tired, much like the Late Classical image of a Weary Herakles. However, unlike Herakles, the boxer is depicted beaten and exhausted from his pursuit. His face is swollen, lip spilt, and ears cauliflowered. This is not an image of a heroic, young athlete but rather an old, defeated man many years past his prime. (59)

Drunken Elderly Woman

Images of drunkenness were also created of women, which can be seen in a statue attributed to the Hellenistic artist Myron of a drunken beggar woman. This woman sits on the floor with her arms and legs wrapped around a large jug and a hand gripping the jug's neck. Grape vines decorating the top of the jug make it clear that it holds wine. The woman's face, instead of being expressionless, is turned upward and she appears to be calling out, possibly to passersby. Not only is she intoxicated, but she is old: deep wrinkles line her face, her eyes are sunken, and her bones stick out through her skin. (59)



Figure 4-20: Drunken old woman clutching a big lagynos (Hellenistic wine jug) decorated with reliefsby Tetraktys is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Closing of the Greek Era

The Roman Republic became increasingly involved in the affairs of Greece during this time and, in 168 BCE, defeated Macedon at the Battle of Pydna. After this date, Greece steadily came under the influence of Rome. In 146 BCE the region was designated a Protectorate of Rome and Romans began to emulate Greek fashion, philosophy and, to a certain extent, sensibilities. In 31 BCE Octavian Caesar annexed the country as a province of Rome following his victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium. Octavian became Augustus Caesar and Greece a part of the Roman Empire. (41)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Roman Culture

5.1: About This Module- Roman Culture
5.2: Early Rome
5.3: The Roman Republic
5.4: Transition to Empire and Rome Under Augustus
5.5: The Flavian, Nervan-Antonin, and Severan Dynasties
5.6: Rome’s Imperial Crisis and the Rise of Constantine

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5.1: About This Module- Roman Culture

Topics Covered:

- Roman Civilization to Include
  - Age of Augustus
  - Etruscan Civilization
  - Roman Art such as Imperial busts
  - Roman Architecture such as the Pantheon
  - Roman Philosophy

This module introduces students to Roman artistic and political expressions that developed between the Etruscan era and the fall of the Roman Empire. Students will determine what cultural artifacts such as the Colosseum and the Baths of Caracalla tell us about their historical contexts. Students will demonstrate understanding of cultural expressions by noting the similarities and differences between Roman culture and Etruscan and Greek culture. Students will recognize the contribution that Romans made in architecture, particularly with their use of the arch and concrete. Finally, students will also demonstrate proficiency in critical thought by assessing whether the Romans were more maintainers or inventors of culture. (1)

Learning Outcomes Related to this Module

1. Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
2. Recognize the relationships between cultural expressions and their contexts
3. Understand cultural expressions
4. Interpret and evaluate cultural artifacts and/or their contexts for significance
5. Recognize the important contributions of the classical world; understand and analyze specific primary texts from the classical world

Objectives:

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Sort events in historical order from Roman civilization.
- Identify the cultural influence of Etruscans and Greeks on Roman civilization.
- Identify the historical developments that led to the rise of the Roman Empire.
- Identify pivotal moments during the course of the Roman Empire.
- Identify artistic and architectural developments during the Roman Empire.
- Identify the function of visual propaganda in the Roman Empire.
- Identify factors that led to the fall of the Roman Empire.
- Identify major Roman figures and their achievements. (1)

Assigned Readings

- Learning Unit – Ancient Rome

Assignments | Learning Activities

- Review Learning Unit
- Participate in Discussion 5
- Complete Timeline Assignment 5
- Complete Assessment Module 5

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5.2: Early Rome

Early Rome

Originally a small town on the banks of the Tiber River, Rome grew in size and strength, early on, through trade. The location of the city provided merchants with an easily navigable waterway on which to traffic their goods. Greek culture and civilization, which came to Rome via Greek colonies to the south, provided the early Romans with a model on which to build their own culture.

From the Greeks, they borrowed literacy and religion as well as the fundamentals of architecture. The Etruscans, to the north, provided a model for trade and urban luxury. Etruria was also well situated for trade and the early Romans either learned the skills of trade from Etruscan example or were taught directly by the Etruscans who made incursions into the area around Rome sometime between 650 and 600 BCE. [61]

Etruscan Civilization

The Etruscan civilization thrived in central Italy during the first millennium BCE. Occupying the approximate area of present-day Tuscany, the region derives its name from the word Etruscan.

During the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, the Etruscans became sea traders and actively participated in Mediterranean trade. The civilization also began to expand, and the Etruscans eventually settled as far north as the Po River and as far south as the Tiber River and the northern parts of Campania.

Aside from trade, a large part of Etruscan wealth came from the rich natural resources of the territories they lived in. The soil was fertile for agriculture and the land was rich with minerals and metals, which were mined. Etruscan cities and regions appear to have been ruled over by a king, and Etruscan kings are accounted for as the early rulers of Rome. While the Romans proudly remember overthrowing their Etruscan rulers, many aspects of Etruscan society were adopted by the Romans.

Very little is known about the Etruscans through written records. The Etruscans did not leave any written historical accounts, and what is known today about their culture and history is from written records by the Greeks and Romans that have survived.



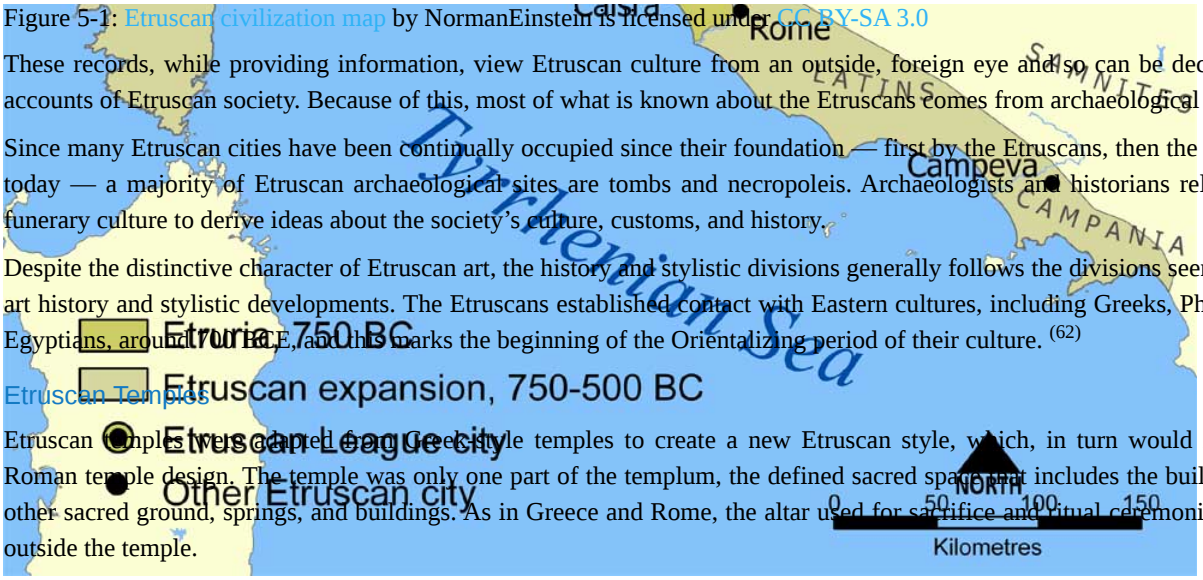


Figure 5-1: Etruscan civilization map by NormanEinstein is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

These records, while providing information, view Etruscan culture from an outside, foreign eye and so can be deceptive in their accounts of Etruscan society. Because of this, most of what is known about the Etruscans comes from archaeological records.

Since many Etruscan cities have been continually occupied since their foundation — first by the Etruscans, then the Romans, up to today — a majority of Etruscan archaeological sites are tombs and necropoleis. Archaeologists and historians rely on Etruscan funerary culture to derive ideas about the society's culture, customs, and history.

Despite the distinctive character of Etruscan art, the history and stylistic divisions generally follows the divisions seen within Greek art history and stylistic developments. The Etruscans established contact with Eastern cultures, including Greeks, Phoenicians, and Egyptians, around 750 BCE, and this marks the beginning of the Orientalizing period of their culture. (62)

Etruscan Temples

Etruscan temples were adapted from Greek-style temples to create a new Etruscan style, which, in turn would later influence Roman temple design. The temple was only one part of the templum, the defined sacred space that includes the building, altar and other sacred ground, springs, and buildings. As in Greece and Rome, the altar used for sacrifice and ritual ceremonies was located outside the temple.



Figure 5-2: Etruscan temple at Orvieto by Nixdorf is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Today only the foundations and terra cotta decorations of Etruscan temples remain, since the temples themselves were primarily built of wood and mud brick that eroded and degraded over time. The Etruscans used stone or tufa as the foundation of their temples.

Tufa is a local volcanic stone that is soft, easy to carve, and hardens when exposed to air. The superstructure of the temple was built from wood and mud brick. Stucco or plaster covered the walls and was either burnished to a shine or painted. Terra cotta roof tiles protected the organic material and increased the longevity and integrity of the building. (63)

The Basic Temple Structure

Archaeology and a written account by the Roman architect Vitruvius during the late first century BCE allow us to reconstruct a basic model of a typical Etruscan temple. Etruscan temples were usually frontal, axial, and built on a high podium with a single central staircase that allowed access to the cella (or cellas).

Two rows of prostyle columns stood on the front of the temple's portico. The columns were of the Tuscan order, a derivative of the Doric order consisting of a simple shaft on a base with a simple capital. A scale model of the Portonaccio Sanctuary of Minerva

suggests that the bases and capitals of its columns were painted with alternating dark- and light-valued hues.

While most portico columns were made of wood, there is evidence that some were made of stone, as at Veii. They were tall and widely spaced across a deep porch, aligning with the walls of the cellas.

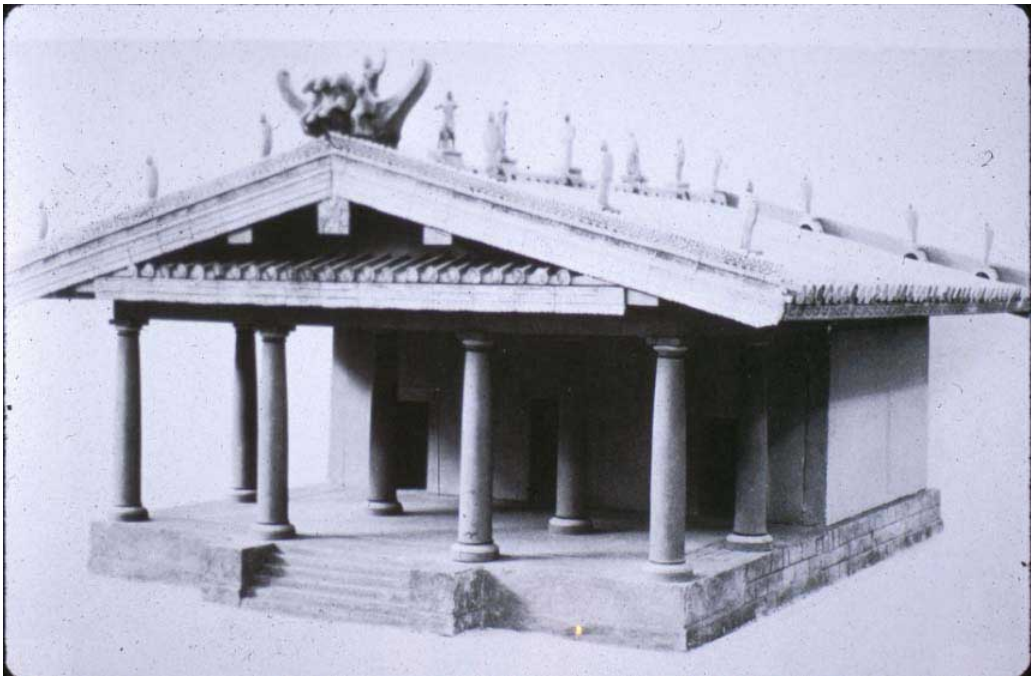


Figure 5-3: Etruscan temple model by Jennifer Mei in Flickr is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Etruscans often, although not always, worshiped multiple gods in a single temple. In such cases, each god received its own cella that housed its cult statue. Often the three-cella temple would be dedicated to the principal gods of the Etruscan pantheon — Tinia, Uni, and Menrva (comparable to the Roman gods Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva). The wooden roof had a low pitch and was covered by a protective layer of terra cotta tiles. Eaves with wide overhangs helped to protect the organic material from rain.

Many aspects of Vitruvius' description fit what archaeologists can demonstrate. However deviations did exist. It is clear that Etruscan temples could take a number of forms and also varied over the 400-year period during which they were being made. Nevertheless, Vitruvius remains the inevitable starting point for a description and a contrast of Etruscan temples with their Greek and Roman equivalents. (63)

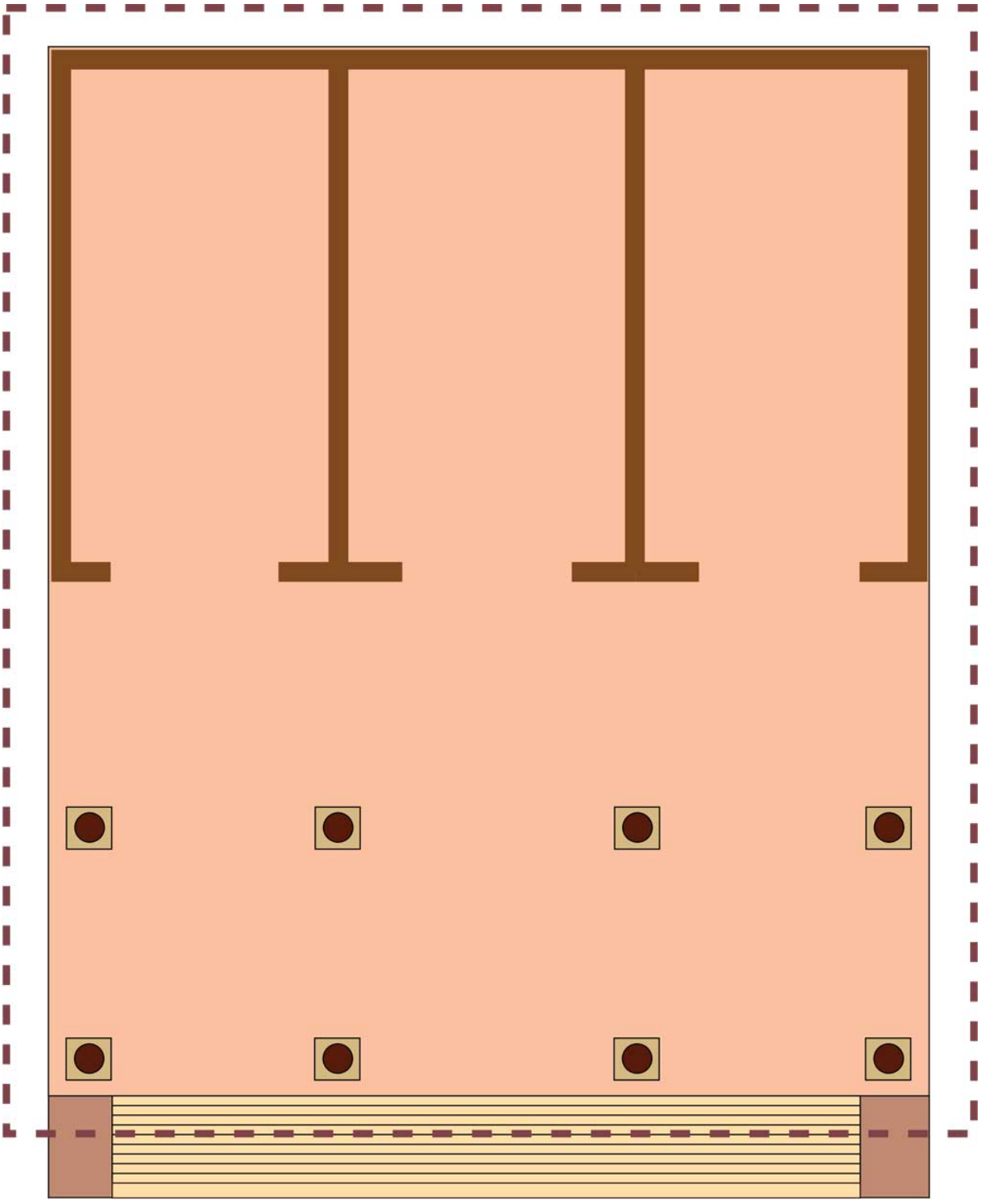


Figure 5-4: Etruskisk tempel by unknown from Wikimedia is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Etruscan Sculpture

During the Archaic period (600&–480 BCE), the Etruscan culture flourished. The Etruscans began building stone and wood temples and creating subterranean tombs. Etruscan trade flourished, and the civilization expanded to its furthest boundaries.

The period and style of art is named for its Greek counterpart. Although there are similarities between Etruscan and Greek Archaic art, significant differences mark specific sculptures as uniquely Etruscan. (64)

Apulu of Veii

The Apulu of Veii is a prime example of Etruscan sculpture during the Archaic period. Apulu, the Etruscan equivalent of Apollo, is a slightly larger than life-size terra cotta akroteria figure in the Portonaccio Temple at Veii, an Etruscan city just north of Rome.

The figure was part of a group of akroteria that stood on the ridgepole of the temple and depicted the myth of Heracles and the Ceryneaian hind. The figure of Apulu confronts the hero, Heracles, who is attempting to capture a deer sacred to Apulu's sister, Artumes (Artemis). Apulu is the most intact surviving statue of the akroteria figures from this temple.

The figure of Apulu has several Greek characteristics. The face is similar to the faces of Archaic Greek kouroi figures. The face is simply carved and an archaic smile provides a notion of emotion and realism. The hair of Apulu is stylized and falls across his shoulders and down his neck and back in stylized, geometric twists that seem to represent braids. The figure, like Greek figures, was painted in bright colors, and the edge of his toga appears to be lined in blue. (64)

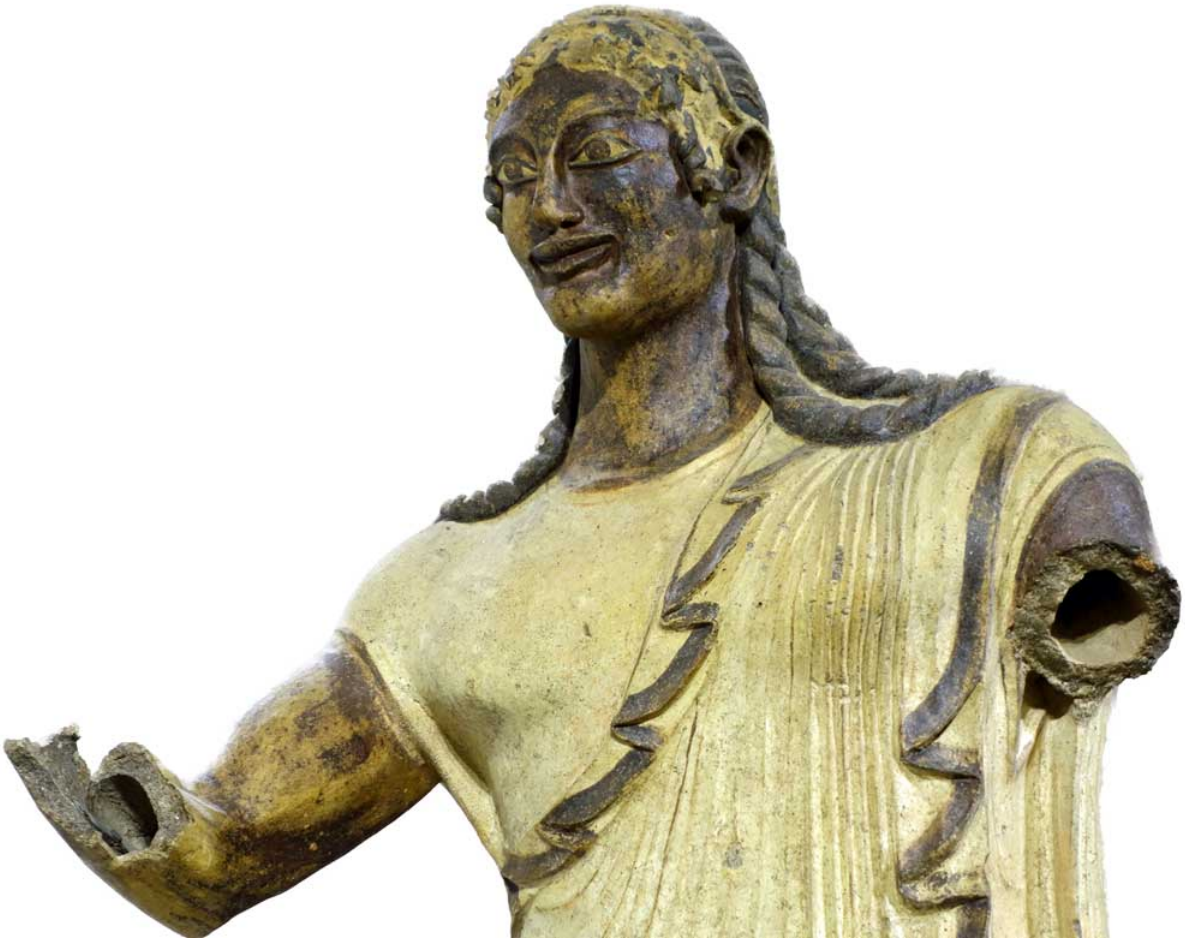


Figure 5-5: The statue of Apulu by Ptyx is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Unlike Archaic Greek statues and kouroi, the figure of Apulu is full of movement and presents the viewer with an entirely different aesthetic from the Greek style. The figure of Apulu is dynamic and flexible. He strides forward with an arm stretched out. He leans on his front foot, and his back foot is slightly raised.

The body is more faithfully modeled (comparable to later Greek kouroi), and instead of being nude, he wears a toga that is draped over one shoulder. The garment's folds are patterned and stylized but cling to the body, allowing the viewer to clearly distinguish the god's chest and thigh muscles. While the Etruscan artist applied an Archaic smile to Apulu, the figure's lips are full and his head is more egg-shaped than round—both characteristics of Etruscan art and sculpture. (64)

The Sarcophagus of the Spouses

A late sixth century sarcophagus excavated from a tomb in Cerveteri is a terra cotta sarcophagus that depicts a couple reclining together on a dining couch. The sarcophagus displays not only the Etruscan Archaic style but also Etruscan skill in working with terra cotta.

The figures' torsos are modeled, and their heads are in a typical Etruscan egg-shape with almond shaped eyes, long noses, and full lips. Their hair is stylized, and their gestures are animated. The use of gesture is seen throughout Etruscan art, both in sculpture and painting. The woman might have originally held a small vessel, and the couple appears to be intimate and loving due to the fact that man has his arm around the woman. (64)



Figure 5-6: Etruscan sarcophagus by Frank Axelsson is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

A close look at the figures reveals some peculiarities. First, their faces are the same and in fact were most likely created from the same mold, a technique common in Etruscan terra cotta sculpture. The identical faces are differentiated by the addition of female and male hairstyles, including the man's beard. Furthermore, despite the modeling of their upper bodies, the legs of the figures are flat and rather lifeless, an odd comparison to the liveliness of the figures' upper halves. (64)

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5.3: The Roman Republic

The Roman Republic

Early on, the Romans showed a talent for borrowing and improving upon the skills and concepts of other cultures. The Kingdom of Rome grew rapidly from a trading town to a prosperous city between the 8 th and 6 th centuries BCE. When the last of the seven kings of Rome, Tarquin the Proud, was deposed in 509 BCE, his rival for power, Lucius Junius Brutus, reformed the system of government and established the Roman Republic. (61)

Organization of the Roman Republic

Initially, after the fall of the monarchy, the Republic fell under the control of the great families – the patricians, coming from the word patres or fathers. Only these great families could hold political or religious offices. The remaining citizens or plebians had no political authority although many of them were as wealthy as the patricians. However, much to the dismay of the patricians, this arrangement could not and would not last.

Tensions between the two classes continued to grow, especially since the poorer residents of the city provided the bulk of the army. They asked themselves why they should fight in a war if all of the profits go to the wealthy. Finally, in 494 BCE the plebians went on strike, gathering outside Rome and refusing to move until they were granted representation; this was the famed Conflict of Orders or the First Succession of the Plebs. The strike worked, and the plebians would be rewarded with an assembly of their own – the Concilium Plebis or Council of the Plebs.

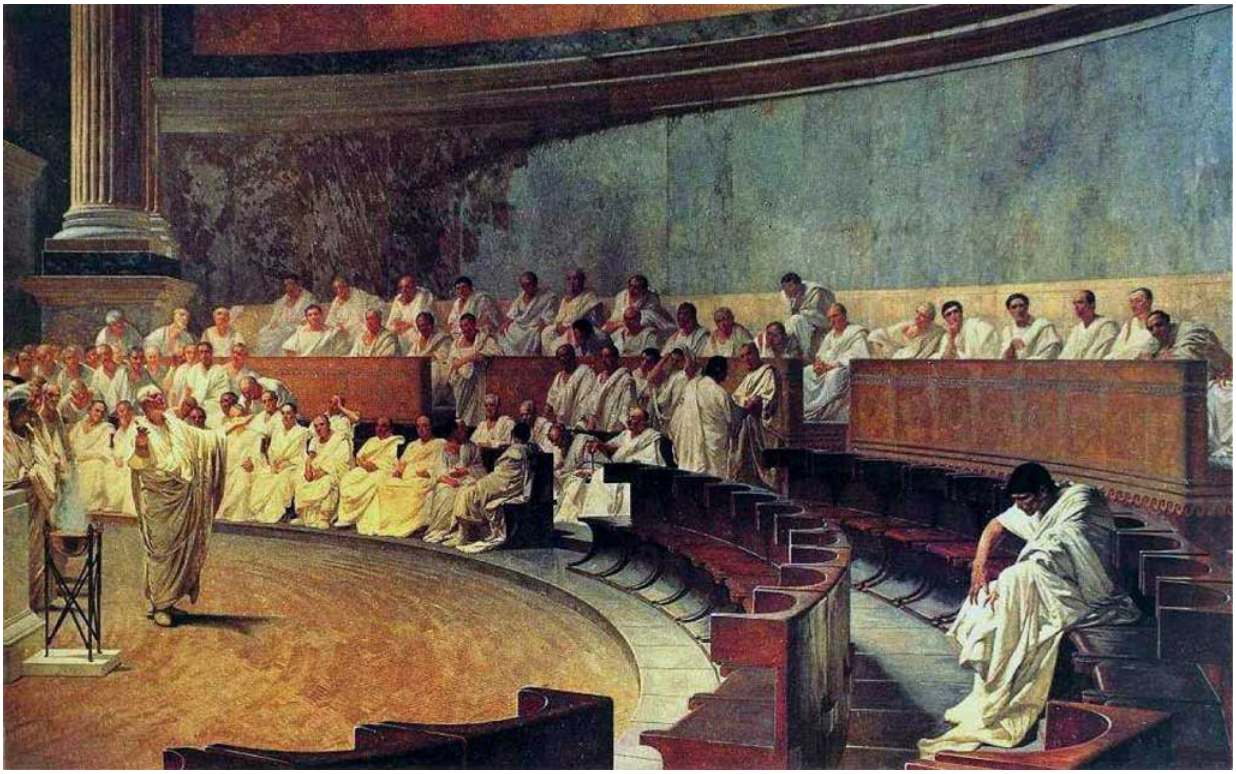


Figure 5-7: Cicero Denounces Catiline by Cesare Macari is licensed under Public Domain

Although the government of Rome could never be considered a true democracy, it did provide many of its citizens (women excluded) with a say in how their city was ruled. Through their rebellion, the plebians had entered into a system where power lay in a number of magistrates (the cursus honorum) and various assemblies. This executive power or imperium resided in two consuls. Elected by the Comitia Centuriata, a consul ruled for only one year, presiding over the Senate, proposing laws, and commanding the armies. Uniquely, each consul could veto the decision of the other. After his term was completed, he could become a pro-consul, governing one of the republic's many territories, which was an appointment that could make him quite wealthy.

In 450 BCE the Twelve Tables were enacted in order to appease a number of plebian concerns. It became the first recorded Roman law code. The Tables tackled domestic problems with an emphasis on both family life and private property. For instance, plebians were not only prohibited from imprisonment for debt but also granted the right to appeal a magistrate's decision. Later, plebians were even allowed to marry patricians and become consuls. Over time the rights of the plebians continued to increase. In 287 BCE the Lex Hortensia declared that all laws passed by the Concilium Plebis were binding to both plebians and patricians. (65)

Roman Art During the Republic

Early Roman art was influenced by the art of Greece and that of the neighboring Etruscans, themselves greatly influenced by their Greek trading partners. As the expanding Roman Republic began to conquer Greek territory, its official sculpture became largely an extension of the Hellenistic style, with its departure from the idealized body and flair for the dramatic. This is partly due to the large number of Greek sculptors working within Roman territory.

However, Roman sculpture during the Republic departed from the Greek traditions in several ways:

- It was the first to feature a new technique called continuous narration.
- Commoners, including freedmen, could commission public art and use it to cast their professions in a positive light.
- Portraiture throughout the Republic celebrated old age with its verism.
- In the closing decades of the Republic, Julius Caesar counteracted traditional propriety by becoming the first living person to place his own portrait on a coin.

In the examples that follow, the patrons use these techniques to promote their status in society. (66)

The Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus

Despite its most common title, the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus (late second century BCE) was more likely a base intended to support cult statues in the cella of a Temple of Neptune (Poseidon) located in Rome on the Field of Mars. The frieze is the second oldest Roman bas-relief currently known.

Domitius Ahenobarbus, a naval general, likely commissioned the altar and the temple in gratitude of a naval victory between 129 and 128 BCE. The reliefs combine mythology and contemporary civic life.



Figure 5-8: A panel from the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarb by an unknown artist, credit Fesch Collection; purchase, 1824, from Wikimedia is licensed under Public Domain

One panel of the altar depicts the census, a uniquely Roman event of contemporary civic life. It is one of the earliest reliefs sculpted in continuous narration, in which the viewer reads from left to right the recording of the census, the purification of the army before the altar of Mars, and the levy of the soldiers.



Figure 5-9: "Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus" or "Statue Base of Marcus Antonius" by User:Bibi Saint-Pol is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The other three panels depict the mythological wedding of Neptune and Amphitrite. At the center of his scene, Neptune and Amphitrite are seated in a chariot drawn by two Tritons (messengers of the sea) who dance to music. They are accompanied by a multitude of fantastic creatures, Tritons, and Nereides (sea nymphs) who form a retinue for the wedding couple, which, like the census scene, can be read from left to right.

At the left, a Nereid riding on a sea-bull carries a present. Next, Amphitrite's mother Doris advances towards the couple, mounted on a hippocampus (literally, a sea horse) and holding wedding torches in each hand to light the procession's way. Eros hovers behind her. Behind the wedding couple, a Nereid riding a hippocampus carries another present. (66)

Portraiture

Roman portraiture during the Republic is identified by its considerable realism, known as veristic portraiture. Verism refers to a hyper-realistic portrayal of the subject's facial characteristics. The style originated from Hellenistic Greece; however, its use in the Roman Republic is due to Roman values, customs, and political life.

As with other forms of Roman art, portraiture borrowed certain details from Greek art but adapted these to their own needs. Veristic images often show their male subjects with receding hairlines, deep winkles, and even with warts. While the faces of the portraits often display incredible detail and likeness, the subjects' bodies are idealized and do not correspond to the age shown in the face. (66)

The popularity and usefulness of verism appears to derive from the need to have a recognizable image. Veristic portrait busts provided a means of reminding people of distinguished ancestors or of displaying one's power, wisdom, experience, and authority. Statues were often erected of generals and elected officials in public forums — and a veristic image ensured that a passerby would recognize the person when they actually saw them.





Portrait of a Roman General [illegible]hanidon is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

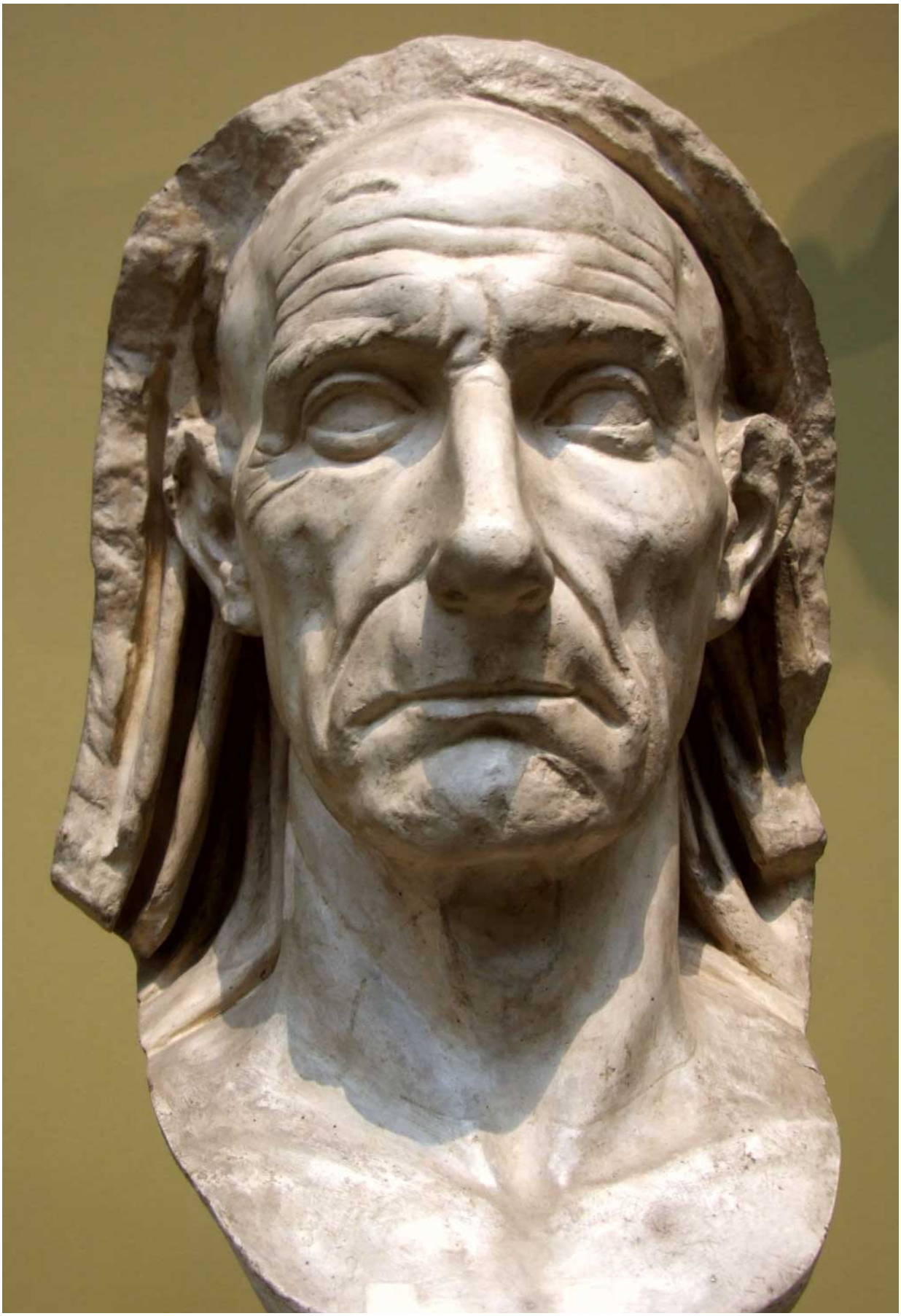


Figure 5-11: Head of old man in a coverlet by shakko is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The use of veristic portraiture began to diminish in the first century BCE. During this time, civil wars threatened the empire, and individual men began to gain more power. The portraits of Pompey the Great and Julius Caesar, two political rivals who were also the most powerful generals in the Republic, began to change the style of the portraits and their use.

The portraits of Pompey are not fully idealized, nor were they created in the same veristic style of Republican senators. Pompey borrowed a specific parting and curl of his hair from Alexander the Great. This similarity served to link Pompey visually with the likeness of Alexander and to remind people that he possessed similar characteristics and qualities. (66)



Figure 5-12: A marble bust of Pompey the Great by Gunnar Bach Pedersen is licensed under Public Domain

The portraits of Julius Caesar are more veristic than those of Pompey. Despite staying closer to stylistic convention, Caesar was the first man to mint coins with his own likeness printed on them. In the decades prior to this, it had become increasingly common to place an illustrious ancestor on a coin, but putting a living person—especially oneself—on a coin departed from Roman propriety. By circulating coins issued with his image, Caesar directly showed the people that they were indebted to him for their own prosperity and therefore should support his political pursuits.



Figure 5-13: A portrait of Julius Caesar on a denarius by Classical Numismatic Group is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5

Roman aqueducts are another iconic use of the arch. The arches that make up an aqueduct provided support without requiring the amount of building material necessary for arches supported by solid walls. The Aqua Marcia (144–140 BCE) was the longest of the eleven aqueducts that served the city of Rome during the Republic. It supplied water to the Viminal Hill in the north of Rome, and from there to the Caelian, Aventine, Palatine, and Capitoline Hills. Where the Aqua Marcia had contact with water, it was coated with a waterproof mortar. (67)

Roman Architecture During the Republic

Roman architecture began as an imitation of Classical Greek architecture but eventually evolved into a new style. Unfortunately, almost no early Republican buildings remain intact. The earliest substantial remains date to approximately 100 BCE.

Innovations such as improvements to the round arch and barrel vault, as well as the inventions of concrete and the true hemispherical dome, allowed Roman architecture to become more versatile than its Greek predecessors. While the Romans were reluctant to abandon classical motifs, they modified their temple designs by abandoning pedimental sculptures, altering the traditional Greek peripteral colonnades, and opting for central exterior stairways.

Likewise, although Roman architects did not abandon traditional column orders, they did modify them with the Tuscan, Roman Ionic, and Composite orders. This diagram shows the Greek orders on the left and their Roman modifications on the right. (67)

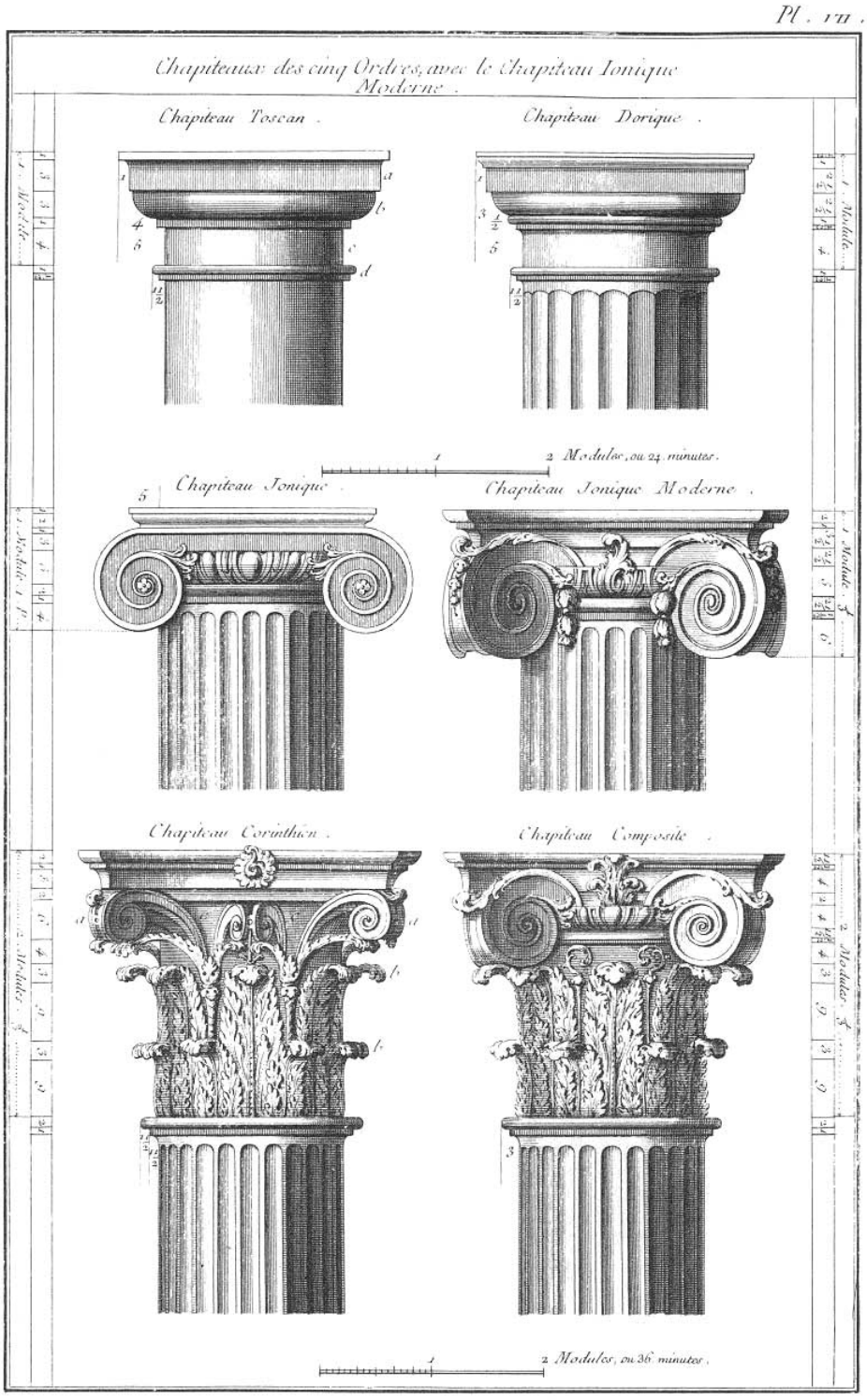


Figure 5-14: Classical orders from the Encyclopedie converted to PNG and optimised by w:User:stw is licensed under Public Domain



Figure 5-15: Temple of Portunus, Piazza Bocca della Veritò, Roma, Italy by sonofgroucho is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Most Roman temples derived from Etruscan prototypes. Like Etruscan temples, Roman temples are frontal with stairs that lead up to a podium, and a deep portico filled with columns. They are also usually rectilinear, and the interiors consist of at least one cella that contained a cult statue.

If multiple gods were worshiped in one temple, each god would have its own cella and cult image. For example, Capitolia — the temples dedicated to the Capitoline Triad — would always be built with three cellae, one for each god of the triad: Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva.

Roman temples were typically made of brick and concrete and then faced in either marble or stucco. Engaged columns (columns that protrude from walls like reliefs) adorn the exteriors of the temples. This creates an effect of columns completely surrounding a cella, an effect known as psuedoperipteral. The altar, used for sacrifices and offerings, always stood outside in front of the temple [67]

While most Roman temples followed this typical plan, some were dramatically different. At times, the Romans erected round temples that imitated the Greek tholos. Examples can be found in the Temple of Hercules Victor (late second century BCE), in the Forum Boarium in Rome. The temple consists a circular cella within a concentric ring of 20 Corinthian columns. Like its Etruscan predecessors, the temple rests on a tufa foundation. Its original roof and architrave are now lost. [67]



Figure 5-16: Temple of Hercules Victor by Livioandronico2013 is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Concrete

The Romans perfected the recipe for concrete during the third century BCE by mixing together water, lime, and pozzolana, volcanic ash mined from the countryside surrounding Mt. Vesuvius. Concrete became the primary building material for the Romans, and it is largely the reason that they were such successful builders.

Most Roman buildings were built with concrete and brick that was then covered in facade of stucco, expensive stone, or marble. Concrete was a cheaper and lighter material than most other stones used for construction. This helped the Romans build structures that were taller, more complicated, and quicker to build than any previous ones.

Once dried, concrete was also extremely strong, yet flexible enough to remain standing during moderate seismic activity. The Romans were even able to use concrete underwater, allowing them build harbors and breakers for their ports. The ruins of a tomb on the Via Appia (the most famous thoroughfare through ancient Rome) expose the stones and aggregate that the Romans used to mix concrete. [67]



Figure 5-17: A wall of a tomb on the Via Appia, Rome by MM assumed is licensed under Public Domain

Arches, Vaults, and Domes

The Romans effectively combined concrete and the structural shape of the arch. These two elements became the foundations for most Roman structures. Arches can bear immense weight, as they are designed to redistribute weight from the top, to its sides, and down into the ground. While the Romans did not invent the arch, they were the first culture to manipulate it and rely on its shape.

An arch is a pure compression form. It can span a large area by resolving forces into compressive stresses (pushing downward) that, in turn, eliminate tensile stresses (pushing outward). As the forces in the arch are carried to the ground, the arch will push outward at the base (called thrust). As the height of the arch decreases, the outward thrust increases. In order to maintain arch action and prevent the arch from collapsing, the thrust needs to be restrained, either with internal ties or external bracing, such as abutments (labeled 8 on the diagram below). [(67)]

The arch is a shape that can be manipulated into a variety of forms that create unique architectural spaces. Multiple arches can be used together to create a vault. The simplest type is known as a barrel vault.

Barrel vaults consist of a line of arches in a row that create the shape of a tunnel. When two barrel vaults intersect at right angles, they create a groin vault. These are easily identified by the x-shape they create in the ceiling of the vault. Furthermore, because of the direction, the thrust is concentrated along this x-shape, so only the corners of a groin vault need to be grounded. This allows an architect or engineer to manipulate the space below the groin vault in a variety of ways.

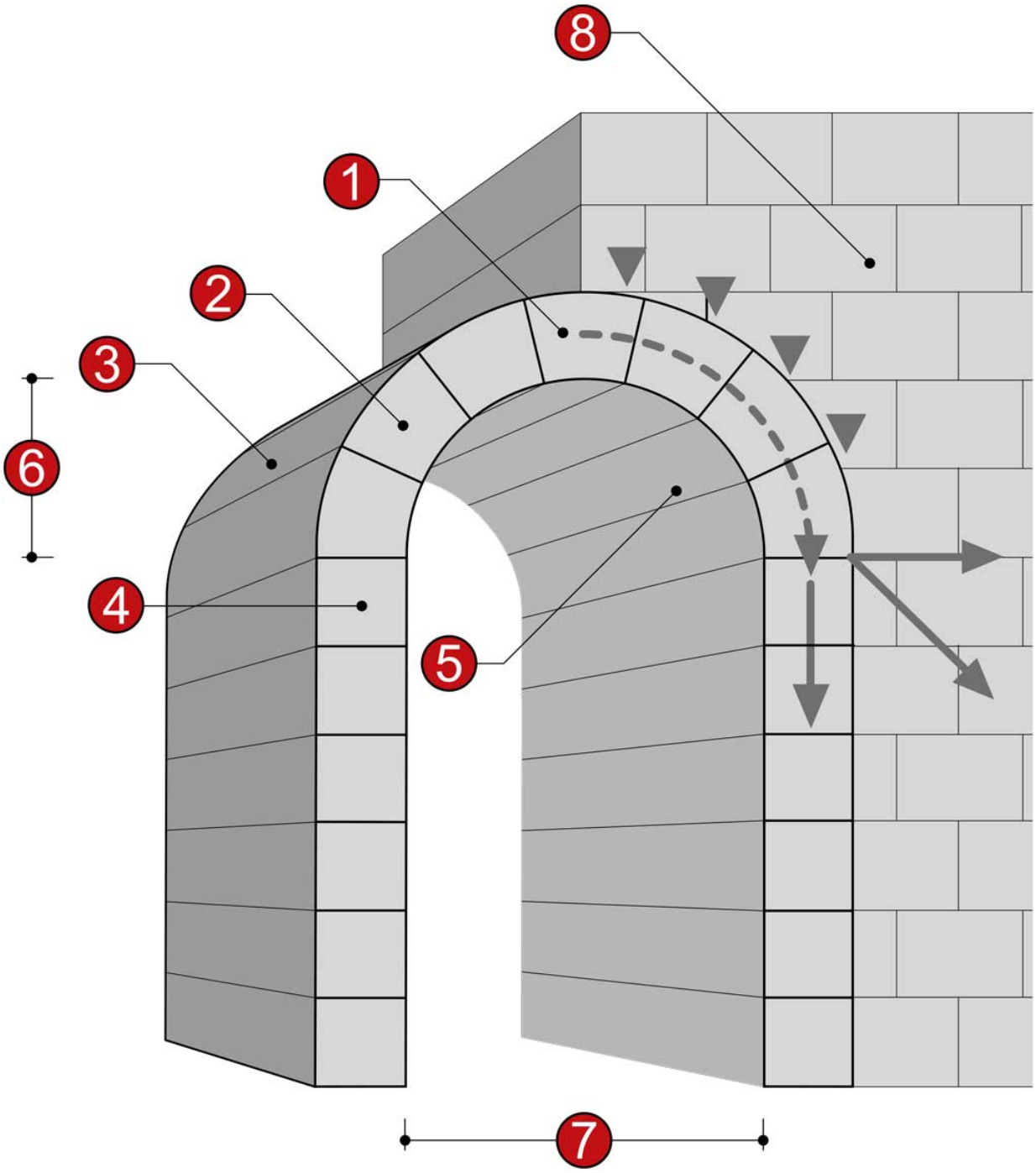


Figure 5-18: Schematic illustration of an arch by MesserWoland is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Arches and vaults can be stacked and intersected with each other in a multitude of ways. One of the most important forms that they can create is the dome. This is essentially an arch that is rotated around a single point to create a large hemispherical vault. The largest dome constructed during the Republic was on the Temple of Echo at Baiae, named for its remarkable acoustic properties. (67)

The Roman Aqueduct

Roman aqueducts are another iconic use of the arch. The arches that make up an aqueduct provided support without requiring the amount of building material necessary for arches supported by solid walls. The Aqua Marcia (144–140 BCE) was the longest of the eleven aqueducts that served the city of Rome during the Republic. It supplied water to the Viminal Hill in the north of Rome, and

from there to the Caelian, Aventine, Palatine, and Capitoline Hills. Where the Aqua Marcia had contact with water, it was coated with a waterproof mortar.(67)



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5.4: Transition to Empire and Rome Under Augustus

Transition to Empire

Though Rome owed its prosperity to trade in the early years, it was war which would make the city a powerful force in the ancient world. The wars with the North African city of Carthage (known as the Punic Wars, 264–146 BCE) consolidated Rome's power and helped the city grow in wealth and prestige. Rome and Carthage were rivals in trade in the Western Mediterranean and, with Carthage defeated, Rome held almost absolute dominance over the region (there were still incursions by pirates which prevented complete Roman control of the sea). As the Republic of Rome grew in power and prestige, the city of Rome began to suffer from the effects of corruption, greed and the over-reliance on foreign slave labor.

Gangs of unemployed Romans, put out of work by the influx of slaves brought in through territorial conquests, hired themselves out as thugs to do the bidding of whatever wealthy Senator would pay them. The wealthy elite of the city, the Patricians, became ever richer at the expense of the working lower class, the Plebeians. In the 2 ndcentury BCE, the Gracchi brothers, Tiberius and Gaius, two Roman tribunes, lead a movement for land reform and political reform in general. Though the brothers were both killed in this cause, their efforts did spur legislative reforms and the rampant corruption of the Senate was curtailed (or, at least, the Senators became more discreet in their corrupt activities). By the time of the First Triumvirate, both the city and the Republic of Rome were in full flourish.

The demand of the Roman allies proved another source of unrest. For years, the Roman allies had paid tribute and provided soldiers for war but were not considered citizens. Like their plebian kindred years earlier, they wanted representation. It took a rebellion for things to change. Although the Senate had warned the Roman citizens that awarding these people citizenship would be dangerous, full citizenship was finally granted to all people (slaves excluded) in the entire Italian peninsula. Later, Julius Caesar would extend citizenship beyond Italy and grant it to the people of Spain and Gaul.

About this time the city witnessed a serious threat to its very survival when Marcus Tillius Cicero, the Roman statesman and poet, uncovered a conspiracy led by the Roman senator Lucius Sergius Catiline to overthrow the Roman government. Cicero also believed that the Republic was declining due to moral decay. Problems such as this together with fear and unrest came to the attention of three men in 60 BCE: Julius Caesar, Gnaeus Pompey and Marcus Licinius Crassus. Crassus had gained fame by his defeat of Spartacus and his followers in 71 BCE. Pompey had distinguished himself in Spain as well as in the East. Caesar had proven himself as an able commander. Together, the three men formed what historians have named the First Triumvirate or Gang of Three.

Tensions ultimately mounted between Pompey and Caesar. Pompey was jealous of Caesar's success and fame while Caesar wanted a return to politics. Eventually these differences brought them to battle, and in 48 BCE they met at Pharsalus. Pompey was defeated, escaping to Egypt where he was killed by Ptolemy XIII. Caesar fulfilled his destiny by securing both the eastern provinces and northern Africa, returning to Rome a hero only to be declared dictator for life. Many of his enemies, as well as several allies, saw his new position as a serious threat to the foundation of the Republic, and despite a number of popular reforms, his assassination on the Ides of March in 44 BCE brought the Republic to its knees. His heir and step-son Octavian subdued Mark Antony, eventually becoming the first emperor of Rome as Augustus. The Republic was gone and in its ashes rose the Roman Empire. (61)(65)

The Roman Empire Under Augustus

Augustus ruled the empire from 31 BCE until 14 CE when he died. In that time, as he said himself, he "found Rome a city of clay but left it a city of marble." Augustus reformed the laws of the city and, by extension, the empire's, secured Rome's borders, initiated vast building projects (carried out largely by his faithful general Agrippa, who built the first Pantheon), and secured the empire a lasting name as one of the greatest, if not the greatest, political and cultural powers in history. The Pax Romana (Roman Peace), also known as the Pax Augusta, which he initiated, was a time of peace and prosperity hitherto unknown and would last over 200 years. (68)

Art During the Age of Augustus

During his reign, Augustus enacted an effective propaganda campaign to promote the legitimacy of his rule as well as to encourage moral and civic ideals among the Roman populace.

Augustan sculpture contains the rich iconography of Augustus's reign with its strong themes of legitimacy, stability, fertility, prosperity, and religious piety. The visual motifs employed within this iconography became the standards for imperial art. (69)

Ara Pacis Augustae

The Ara Pacis Augustae, or Altar of Augustan Peace, is one of the best examples of Augustan artistic propaganda. Not only does it demonstrate a new moral code promoted by Augustus, it also established imperial iconography. It was commissioned by the Senate in 13 BCE to honor the peace and bounty established by Augustus following his return from Hispania (Spain) and Gaul; it was consecrated on January 30, 9 BCE.

The marble altar was erected just outside the boundary of the pomerium to the north of the city along the Via Flaminia on the Campus Martius. The actual u-shaped altar sits atop a podium inside a square wall that demarcates the precinct's sacred space. (69)



Figure 5-20: Ara Pacis Augustae by Manfred Heyde is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 5-21: The processional scene on the south wall of the Ara Pacis Augustae by MM from Wikimedia website is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The north and south walls depict a procession of life-sized figures on the upper register. These figures include men, women, children, priests, lictors, and identifiable members of the political elite during the Augustan age. The elite include Augustus, his wife Livia, his son-in-law Marcus Agrippa (who died in 12 BCE), and Tiberius, Augustus's adopted son and successor who would marry the emperor's widowed daughter in 11 BCE. While the altar as a whole celebrates the Augustus as a peacemaker, this scene promotes him as a pious family man. (69)

Imperial Portraiture

Augustus very carefully controlled his imperial portrait. Abandoning the veristic style of the Republican period, his portraits always showed him as an idealized young man. These portraits linked him to divinities and heroes, both mythical and historical.

He is often shown with an identifiable cowlick that was originally shown on the portraits of Alexander the Great. His lack of shoes signifies his supposed humbleness despite the great power he possessed. Two portraits of him, one as Pontifex Maximus and the other as Imperator, depict two different personae of the emperor.

Augustus's portrait as Pontifex Maximus shows him attired with a toga over his ever-youthful head, an attribute that serves to remind viewers of his own extreme piety to the gods. (69)



Figure 5-22: Augustus as Pontifex Maximus From the Via Labicana, Rome is licensed under Public Domain





Figure 5-23: Augustus of Prima Porta by unknown from Wikimedia website is licensed under Public Domain

The Augustus of Primaporta shows the influence of both Roman and Classical Greek works, including the Spear Bearer by Polykleitos and the Etruscan bronze Aule Metele. Assuming the role of imperator, Augustus wears military grab in a pose known as adlucotio, addressing his troops. Despite his poor health, which left him with a frail body, he appears healthy and muscular.

Cupid rides a dolphin at Augustus' feet, a symbol of his divine ancestry. Cupid is the son of Venus, as was Aeneas, the legendary ancestor of the Roman people. The Julian family traced their ancestry back to Aeneas and, therefore, consider themselves descendants of Venus

As Caesar's nephew and adopted son, this use of iconography allows Augustus to remind viewers of his divine lineage. In addition to adopting the body language and attire of a general, the relief on the cuirass shows one of Augustus' greatest victories — the return of the Parthian standards.

During the civil wars, a legion's standards were lost when the legion was defeated by the Parthians. In a great feat of diplomacy, and curiously not military action, Augustus was able to negotiate the return of the standards to the legion and to Rome. Additional figures on the cuirass personify Roman gods and the arrival of Augustan peace. (69)

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5.5: The Flavian, Nervan-Antonin, and Severan Dynasties

The Flavian Dynasty

Following Augustus' death, power passed to his heir, Tiberius, who continued many of the emperor's policies but lacked the strength of character and vision which so defined Augustus. This trend would continue, more or less steadily, with the emperors who followed: Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. Nero's suicide ended the Julio-Claudian Dynasty and initiated the period of social unrest but ultimately found stability under the emperor Vespasian. Vespasian founded the Flavian Dynasty which was characterized by massive building projects, economic prosperity, and expansion of the empire. Vespasian ruled from 69–79 CE, and in that time, initiated the building of the Flavian Amphitheatre (the famous Colosseum of Rome) which his son Titus (ruled 79–81 CE) would complete.

Titus' early reign saw the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE which buried the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Ancient sources are universal in their praise for his handling of this disaster as well as the great fire of Rome in 80 CE. Titus died of a fever in 81 CE and was succeeded by his brother Domitian who ruled from 81–96 CE. Domitian expanded and secured the boundaries of Rome, repaired the damage to the city caused by the great fire, continued the building projects initiated by his brother, and improved the economy of the empire. Even so, his autocratic methods and policies made him unpopular with the Roman Senate, and he was assassinated in 96 CE. (68)

Art During the Flavian Dynasty

Flavian Amphitheatre

Upon his succession, Vespasian began a vast building program in Rome that was continued by Titus and Domitian. It was a cunning political scheme to garner support from the people of Rome.

Vespasian transformed land from Nero's Domus Aurea into public buildings for leisure and entertainment, such as the Baths of Titus and the Flavian Amphitheatre. Nero's private lake was drained and became the foundations for the amphitheater, the first permanent amphitheater built in the city of Rome. Before this time, gladiatorial contests in the city were held in temporary wooden arenas.

The amphitheater became known as the Colosseum for its size, but in also in reference to a colossal golden statue of Nero that stood nearby. Vespasian had the colossus reworked into an image of the sun god, Sol. (70)

The building of the amphitheater began under Vespasian in 72 CE, and was completed under Titus in 80 CE. Titus inaugurated the amphitheater with a series of gladiatorial games and events that lasted for 100 days.

During his reign, Domitian remodeled parts of the amphitheater to enlarge the seating capacity to hold 50,000 spectators and added a hypogeum beneath the arena, for storage and to transport animals and people to the arena floor. The Colosseum was home not just to gladiatorial events — because it was built over Nero's private lake, it was flooded to stage mock naval battles.



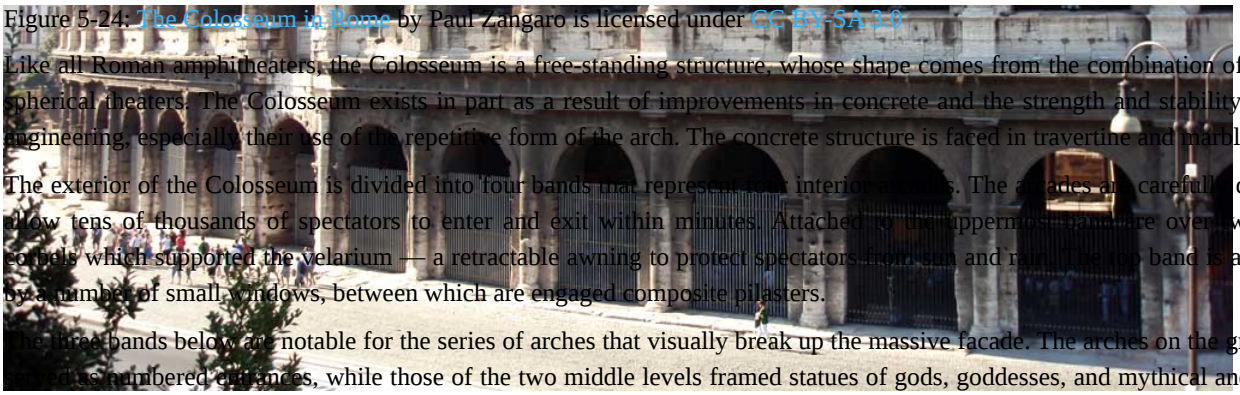


Figure 5-24: The Colosseum in Rome by Paul Zangaro is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Like all Roman amphitheaters, the Colosseum is a free-standing structure, whose shape comes from the combination of two semi-spherical theaters. The Colosseum exists in part as a result of improvements in concrete and the strength and stability of Roman engineering, especially their use of the repetitive form of the arch. The concrete structure is faced in travertine and marble.

The exterior of the Colosseum is divided into four bands that represent the interior divisions. The arcades are carefully designed to allow tens of thousands of spectators to enter and exit within minutes. Attached to the uppermost band are over two hundred corbels which supported the velarium — a retractable awning to protect spectators from sun and rain. The top band is also pierced by a number of small windows, between which are engaged composite pilasters.

The three bands below are notable for the series of arches that visually break up the massive facade. The arches on the ground level served as numbered entrances, while those of the two middle levels framed statues of gods, goddesses, and mythical and historical heroes. Columns in each of the three Greek orders stand between the arches. The Doric order is located on the ground level, Ionic on the second level, and Corinthian on the third. The order follows a standard sequence where the sturdiest and strongest order is shown on bottom level, since it appears to support the weight of the structure, and the lightest order at the top. However, despite this illusion the engaged columns and pilasters were merely decorative. (70)

Arch of Titus



Figure 5-25: Arch of Titus by Jebulon is licensed under Commons CC0 1.0 Universal

Following his brother's death, Domitian erected a triumphal arch over the Via Sacra, on a rise as the road enters the Republican Forum. The Arch of Titus honors the deified Titus and celebrates his victory over Judea in 70 CE. The arch follows the standard forms for a triumphal arch, with an honorific inscription in the attic, winged Victories in the spandrels, engaged columns, and more sculpture which is now lost.

Inside the archway at the center of the ceiling is a relief panel of the apotheosis of Titus. Two remarkable relief panels decorate the interior sides of the archway and commemorate Titus's victory in Judea. (10)

The southern panel inside the arch depicts the sacking of Jerusalem. The scene shows Roman soldiers carrying the menorah (the sacred candelabrum) and other spoils from the Temple of Jerusalem.

The opposite northern panel depicts Titus's triumphal procession in Rome, awarded in 71 CE. In this panel, Titus rides through Rome on a chariot pulled by four horses. Behind him a winged Victory figure crowns Titus with a laurel wreath. He is accompanied by personifications of Honor and Valor.

This is one of the first examples in Roman art of humans and divinities mingling together in one scene; indeed, Titus was deified upon his death. These panels were originally painted and decorated with metal attachments and gilding. The panels are depicted in high relief and show a change in technical style from the lower relief seen on the Ara Pacis Augustae. (70)



Figure 5-26: Detail from Arch of Titus by A. Hunter Wright is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Nervan-Antonin and Severan Dynasties

Domitian's successor was his advisor Nerva who founded the Nervan-Antonin Dynasty which ruled Rome 96-192 CE. This period is marked by increased prosperity owing to the rulers known as The Five Good Emperors of Rome. Between 96 and 180 CE, five exceptional men ruled in sequence and brought the Roman Empire to its height: Nerva (96–98), Trajan (98–117), Hadrian (117–138), Antoninus Pius (138–161), and Marcus Aurelius (161–180). Under their leadership, the Roman Empire grew stronger, more stable, and expanded in size and scope.

Lucius Verus and Commodus are the last two of the Nervan-Antonin Dynasty. Verus was co-emperor with Marcus Aurelius until his death in 169 CE and seems to have been fairly ineffective. Commodus, Aurelius' son and successor, was one of the most disgraceful emperors Rome ever saw and is universally depicted as indulging himself and his whims at the expense of the empire. He was strangled by his wrestling partner in his bath in 192 CE, ending the Nervan-Antonin Dynasty and raising the prefect Pertinax (who most likely engineered Commodus' assassination) to power.

Pertinax governed for only three months before he was assassinated. He was followed, in rapid succession, by four others in the period known as The Year of the Five Emperors, which culminated in the rise of Septimus Severus to power. The Severan Dynasty continued, largely under the guidance and manipulation of Julia Maesa (referred to as `empress'), until the assassination of Alexander Severus in 235 CE which plunged the empire into the chaos known as The Crisis of the Third Century (lasting from 235–284 CE). [68]

Art During the Nervan-Antonin and Severan Dynasties





Figure 5-27: Portrait of Nerva, Roman emperor from Wikimedia is licensed under Public Domain

Nerva's portraiture followed the style of imperial portraiture during the Flavian era. The few portraits that remain from the two years of his rule depict a man with a receding hairline and small mouth. The portraiture of Nerva and later of Trajan display an increasing militaristic look.

Hadrian, Trajan's adopted son and heir, peacefully became emperor in 117 CE. He was a great lover of Greek culture and wore a closely trimmed beard in the style of Classical Greek statesmen, such as the Athenian Pericles. Hadrian set a fashion for beards among Romans, and most emperors after him also wore a beard. Prior to Hadrian nearly all Roman men were clean shaven.



Figure 5-28: Bust of Hadrian, emperor by unknown artist is licensed under Public Domain

Commodus also believed he was the reincarnation of Hercules and claimed power from Hercules's father, Jupiter. He even commissioned portraits of himself as Hercules. These portraits show him with the now-traditional imperial style of thick, curly hair and a curly beard. Hercules's lion skin is draped over his head and around his shoulders and he often carries a club and sometimes the apples of the Hesperides. (71)



Bust of Commodus as Hercules by Marie-Lan Nguyen is licensed under Public Domain

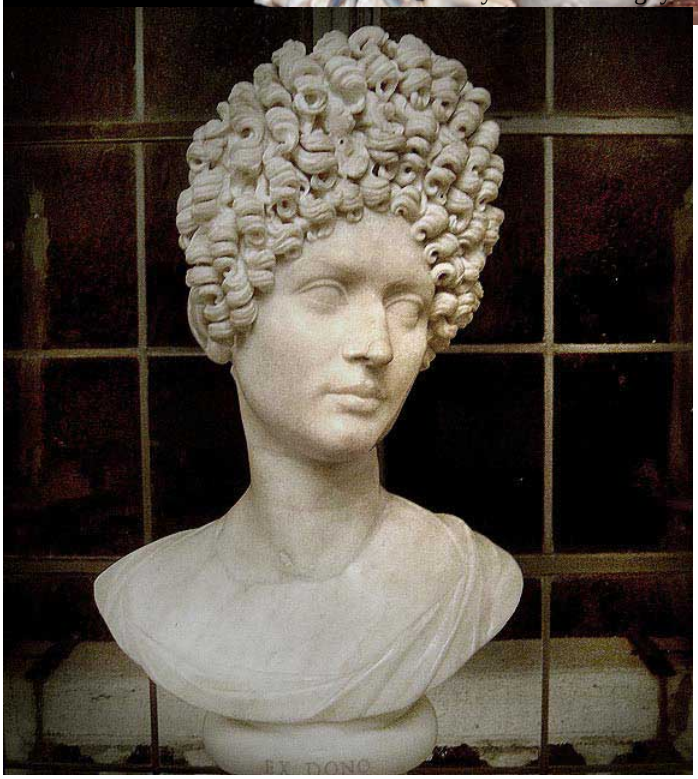


Figure 5-30: A bust of a Flavian woman by unknown artist from Wikimedia is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0



Figure 5-31: Bust of Salonina Matidia by unknown artist from Wikimedia is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The women of imperial families set the standards of fashion and beauty during the reigns of their husbands or other male family members. These women also established the hairstyles of the period, which are so distinctive that busts and statues are easily dated to specific decades in accordance with the hairstyle of the woman depicted.

During the Nervan-Antonine period, the portraits of imperial women and their hairstyles kept some Flavian flavor but were simpler than they had been. The fashionable style among women during the reign of the Flavians involved hairpieces and wigs to create a stack of curls on the crown of the head. (71)

Architecture During the Nervan-Antonin Dynasties

Public Building Programs

Public building programs were prevalent under the emperors of the Nervan-Antonine dynasty. During this period of peace, stability, and an expansion of the empire's borders, many of the emperors sought to cast themselves in the image of the first imperial builder, Augustus. The projects these emperors conducted around the empire included the building and restoration of roads, bridges, and aqueducts. In Rome, these imperial building projects strengthened the image of the emperor and directly addressed the needs of the citizens of the city. (72)

Trajan's Forum

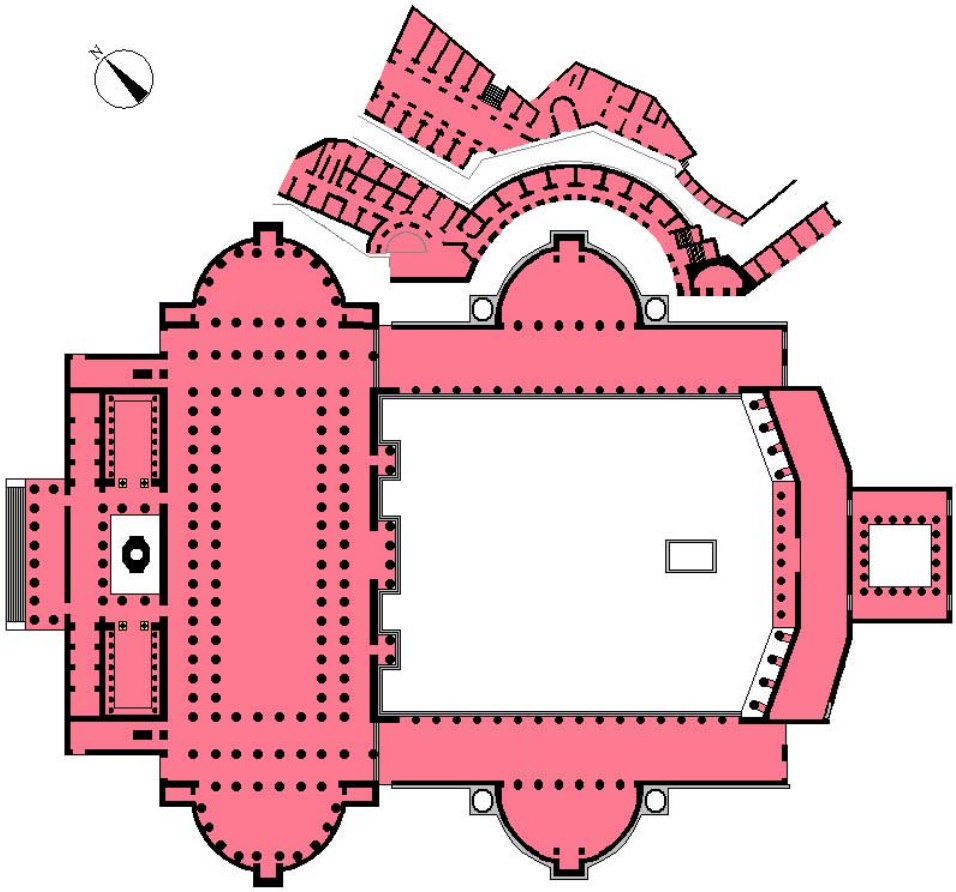


Figure 5-32: Map of Imperial Trajan's forum in ancient Rome by 3coma14 & Cristiano64 is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Trajan's Forum was the last of the imperial fora to be built in the city. The forum's main entrance was accessed from the south, near to the Forum of Augustus as well as the Forum of Caesar (which Trajan also renovated). The Forum of Augustus might have been the model for the Forum of Trajan, even though the latter was much larger. Both fora were rectangular in shape with a temple at one end. Both appear to have a set of exedra on either side.(72)

Trajan built his forum with the spoils from his conquest of Dacia. The visual elements within the forum speak of his military prowess and Rome's victory. A triumphal arch mounted with an image of the emperor in a six-horse chariot greeted patrons at the

southern entrance.

In the center of the large courtyard stood an equestrian statue of Trajan, and additional bronze statues of him in a quadriga lined the roof of the Basilica Ulpia, which transected the forum in the northern end. This large civic building served as a meeting place for the commerce and law courts. It was lavishly furnished with marble floors, facades, and the hall was filled with tall marble columns.

The Basilica Ulpia also separated the arcaded courtyard from two libraries (one for Greek texts, the other for Latin), the Column of Trajan, and a temple dedicated to the Divine Trajan. (72)

Trajan's Markets

Trajan's markets were an additional public building that the emperor built at the same time as his forum. The markets were built on top of and into the Quirinal Hill. They consisted of a series of multi-leveled halls lined with rooms for either shops, administrative offices, or apartments. The markets follow the shape of the Trajan's forum.

A portion of them are shaped into a large exedra, framing one of the exedra of the forum. Like Trajan's forum, the markets were elaborately decorated with marble floors and revetment, as well as decorative columns to frame the doorways. (72)



Figure 5-33: Trajan's Market panorama from Wikimedia Commons is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Architecture During the Severan Dynasty

Baths of Caracalla

Caracalla was one of the last emperors of the century who had the time, resources, and power to build in the city of Rome.

His longest-lasting contribution is a large bath complex that stands to the southeast of Rome's center. It covered over 33 acres and could hold over 1,600 bathers at a time. Bathing was an important part of Roman daily life, and the baths were a place for leisure, business, socializing, exercising, learning, and illicit affairs.

These baths not only held the traditional bathing pools but also exercise courts, changing rooms, and Greek and Latin libraries. A mithraeum has also been found on the site.\ (73)

Architecturally, the Baths of Caracalla demonstrate the impressive mastery of Roman building and the importance of concrete and the vaulting systems developed by the Romans to create large and impressive buildings with ceilings that span great distances. The building was lavishly decorated with marble veneer, fanciful mosaics , andmonumental Greek marble statues. (73)



Figure 5-34: Baths of Caracalla, Rome by Ethan Doyle White is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

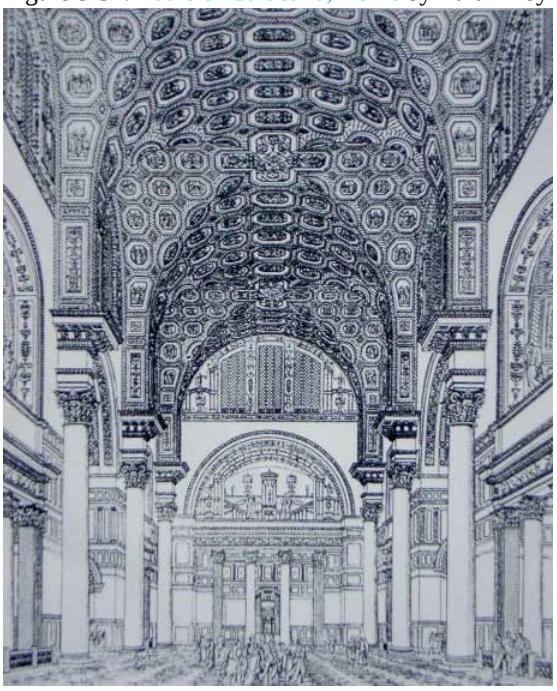


Figure 5-35: A drawing of the Baths of Caracalla. The original uploader was Dinah at German Wikipedia is licensed under Public Domain

Quirinal Hill Serapeum

In 212, Caracalla erected a temple (called a Serapeum) on Quirinal Hill dedicated to the Egyptian god Serapis, a human-headed deity who shared Greek and Egyptian attributes. This Serapeum was, by most surviving accounts, the most sumptuous and architectonically ambitious of those built on the hill.

The temple covered over three acres. It was composed by a long courtyard (surrounded by a colonnade) and by theritual area, where statues and obelisks were erected. Designed to impress its visitors, the temple boasted columns nearly 70 feet tall and over

six feet in diameter, sitting atop a marble stairway that connected the base of the hill to the sanctuary .

The ruins of the Serapeum show a mixture of brick and concrete with a regular use of the round arch. Symbolically, the temple signified the diversity that the Roman pantheon had reached by the third century. [73]



Figure 5-36: The ruins of the Serapeum by JoEhSJ (assumed) is licensed under Public Domain
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5.6: Rome’s Imperial Crisis and the Rise of Constantine

Rome’s Imperial Crisis and the Rise of Constantine

The period also known as the Imperial Crisis, was characterized by constant civil war, as various military leaders fought for control of the empire. The crisis has been further noted by historians for widespread social unrest, economic instability (fostered, in part, by the devaluation of Roman currency by the Severans), and, finally, the dissolution of the empire which broke into three separate regions. The empire was reunited by Diocletian (ruled 284–305 CE) who established the Tetrarchy (the rule of four) to maintain order throughout the empire. Even so, the empire was still so vast that Diocletian divided it in half in 285 CE to facilitate more efficient administration.

In so doing, he created the Western Roman Empire and the Eastern Roman Empire (also known as the Byzantine Empire). Since a leading cause of the Imperial Crisis was a lack of clarity in succession, Diocletian decreed that successors must be chosen and approved from the outset of an individual’s rule. Two of these successors were the generals Maxentius and Constantine. Diocletian voluntarily retired from rule in 305 CE, and the tetrarchy dissolved as rival regions of the empire vied with each other for dominance. Following Diocletian’s death in 311 CE, Maxentius and Constantine plunged the empire again into civil war

In 312 CE Constantine defeated Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge and became sole emperor of both the Western and Eastern Empires (ruling from 306-337 CE). Believing that Jesus Christ was responsible for his victory, Constantine initiated a series of laws such as the Edict of Milan (317 CE) which mandated religious tolerance throughout the empire and, specifically, for which Christians benefitted greatly. In the same way that earlier Roman emperors had claimed a special relationship with a deity to augment their authority and standing (Caracalla with Serapis, for example, or Diocletian with Jupiter), Constantine chose the figure of Jesus Christ. At the First Council of Nicea (325 CE), he presided over the gathering to codify the faith and decide on important issues such as the divinity of Jesus and which manuscripts would be collected to form the book known today as The Bible. He stabilized the empire, revalued the currency, and reformed the military, as well as founding the city he called New Rome on the site of the former city of Byzantium (modern day Istanbul) which came to be known as Constantinople.

He is known as Constantine the Great owing to later Christian writers who saw him as a mighty champion of their faith but, as has been noted by many historians, the honorific could as easily be attributed to his religious, cultural, and political reforms, as well as his skill in battle and his large-scale building projects. After his death, his sons inherited the empire and, fairly quickly, embarked on a series of conflicts with each other which threatened to undo all that Constantine had accomplished. (68)

Art During the Imperial Crisis

Portraits of the Tetrarchs

Imperial portraiture of the Tetrarchs depicts the four emperors together and looking nearly identical. The portraiture symbolizes the concept of co-rule and cohesiveness instead of the power of the individual. The idea of the Tetrarchy, which is apparent in their portraits, is based on the ideal of four men working together to establish peace and stability throughout the empire.

The medium of the famous porphyry sculpture of the Tetrarchs, originally from the city of Constantinople, represents the permanence of the emperors. Furthermore, the two pairs of rulers — a Caesar and an Augustus with arms around each other — form a solid, stable block that reinforces the stability the Tetrarchy brought to the Roman Empire. (74)

Stylistically, this portrait of the Tetrarchs is done in Late Antique style, which uses a distinct squat, formless bodies, square heads, and stylized clothing clearly seen in all four men. The Tetrarchs have almost no body.



Figure 5-37: The Portrait of the Tetrarchs by Nino Barbieri is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

As opposed to Classical sculptures, which acknowledge the body beneath the attire, the clothes of the Tetrarchs form their bodies into chunky rectangles. Details such as the cuirass (breastplate), skirt, armor, and cloak are highly stylized and based on simple shapes and the repetition of lines.

Despite the culmination of this artistic style, the rendering of the Tetrarchs in this manner seems to fit the connotations of Tetrarch rule and need for stability throughout the empire. (74)

Art During Constantine's Reign

Arch of Constantine

The Arch of Constantine demonstrates the continuance of the newly-adopted artistic style for imperial sculpture. This arch was erected between the Colosseum and Palatine Hill, the home of the imperial palace. It stands over the triumphal route before it enters the Republican Forum. This forms a dialog with the Arch of Titus at the top, overlooking the Forum, and the Arch of Septimius Severus, which, in turn, stands at the other end of the Forum before the Via Sacra heads uphill to the Capitolium. (75)

The Senate commissioned the triumphal arch in honor of Constantine's victory over Maxentius. It is a triple arch and its iconography represents Constantine's supreme power and the stability and peace his reign brought to Rome.

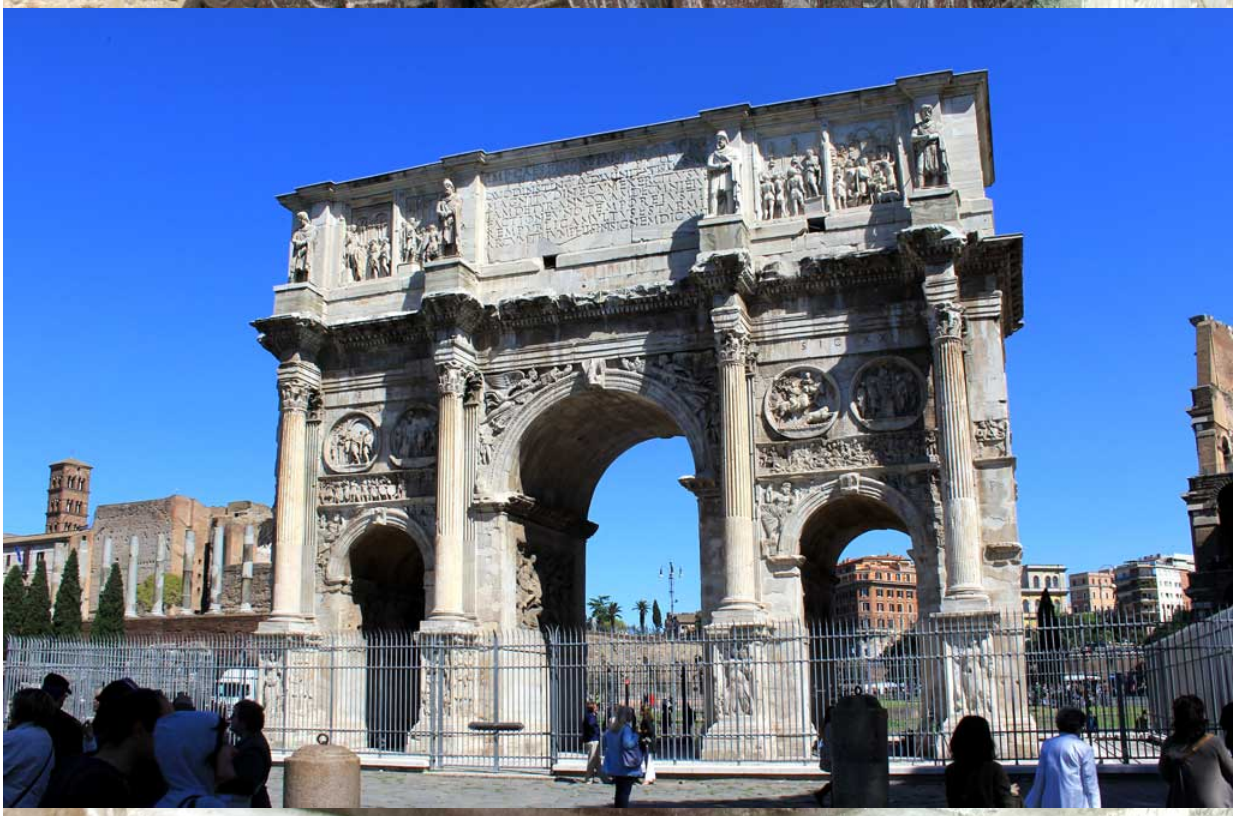


Figure 5-38: Arch of Constantine by Karelj is licensed under Public Domain

The Arch of Constantine is especially noted for its use of spolia: architectural and decorative elements removed from one monument for use on another. Those from the monuments of Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius — all considered good emperors of the Pax Romana — were reused as decoration.

Trajanic panels that depict the emperor on horseback defeating barbarian soldiers adorn the interior of the central arch. The original face was reworked to take the likeness of Constantine. Eight roundels, or relief discs, adorn thespace just above the two smaller side arches. These are Hadrianic and depict images of hunting and sacrifice .

The final set of spolia includes eight panel reliefs on the arch's attic, from the era of Marcus Aurelius, depicting the dual identities of the emperor, as both a military and a civic leader. The incorporation of these elements symbolize Constantine's legitimacy and his status as one of the good emperors.

The rest of the arch is decorated using Late Antique styles. The proximity of different artistic styles, under four different emperors, highlights the stylistic variations and artistic developments that occurred, both in the second century CE, as well as their differences to the Late Antique style.

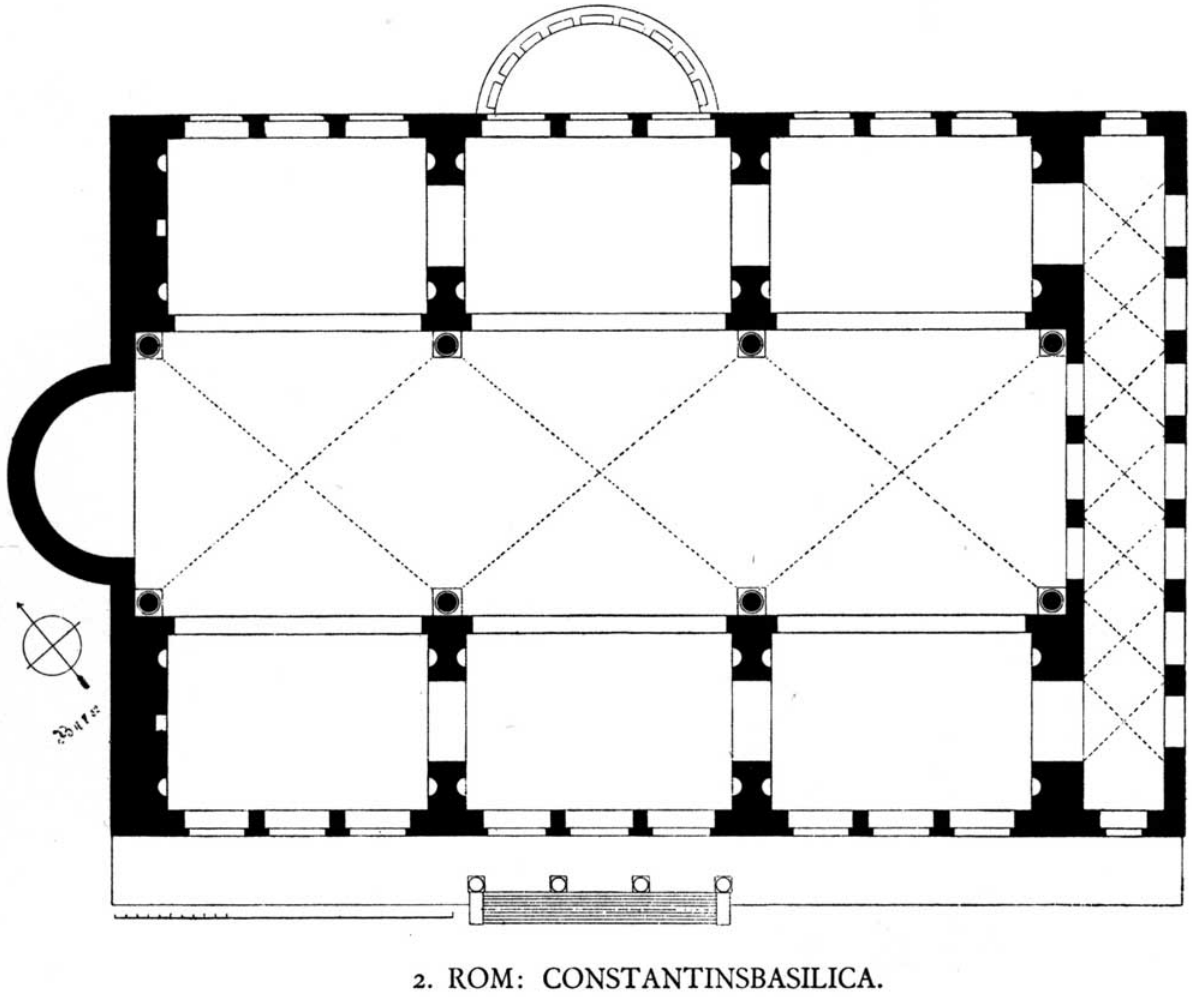
Besides the decorative elements in the spandrels, a Constantinian frieze runs around the arch, between the tops of the small arches and the bottoms of the roundels. This frieze highlights the artistic style of the period and chronologically depicts Constantine's rise to power. Unlike previous examples of Late Antique art, the bodies in this frieze are completely schematic and defined only by stiff, rigid clothes. In one scene, featuring Constantine distributing gifts, the emperor is centrally depicted and raised above his supporters on a throne. (75)



Figure 5-39: A detail of the northern frieze of the Arch of Constantine by William Storage is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Basilica Nova and the Colossus of Constantine

When Constantine and Maxentius clashed at the Milvian Bridge, Maxentius was in the middle of building a grand basilica. It was eventually renamed the Basilica Nova, and was located near the Roman Forum. The basilica consisted of one side aisle on either side of a central nave. (75)



2. ROM: CONSTANTINSBASILICA.

Figure 5-40: A diagram of the Basilica Nova by Georg Dehio/Gustav von Bezold is licensed underPublic Domain

When Constantine took over and completed the grand building, it was 300 feet long, 215 feet wide, and stood 115 feet tall down the nave. Concrete walls 15 feet thick supported the basilica's massive scale and expansive vaults. It was lavishly decorated with marble veneer and stucco. The southern end of the basilica was flanked by a porch, with an apse at the northern end. [75]



Figure 5-41: View of Maxentius Basilica by Ursus assumed is licensed under Public Domain

The apse of the Basilica Nova was the location of the Colossus of Constantine. This colossus was built from many parts. The head, arms, hands, legs, and feet were carved from marble, while the body was built with a brick core and wooden framework and then gilded.

Only parts of the Colossus remain, including the head that is over eight feet tall and 6.5 feet long. It shows a portrait of an individual with clearly defined features: a hooked nose, prominent jaw, and large eyes that look upwards. Like the porphyry bust of Galerius, Constantine's portrait combines naturalism in his nose, mouth, and chin with a growing sense of abstraction in his eyes and geometric hairstyle.

He also held an orb and, possibly, a scepter, and one hand points upwards towards the heavens. Both the immensity of the scale and his depiction as Jupiter (seated, heroic, and semi-nude) inspire a feeling of awe and overwhelming power and authority.



Figure 5-42: The head of the colossus of Constantine by Jean-Christophe BENOIST is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The basilica was a common Roman building and functioned as a multipurpose space for law courts, senate meetings, and business transactions. The form was appropriated for Christian worship and most churches, even today, still maintain this basic shape. (75)

Constantinople

Constantine laid out a new square at the center of old Byzantium, naming it the Augustaeum. The new senate-house was housed in a basilica on the east side. On the south side of the great square was erected the Great Palace of the Emperor with its imposing entrance and its ceremonial suite known as the Palace of Daphne.

Nearby was the vast Hippodrome for chariot races, seating over 80,000 spectators, and the famed Baths of Zeuxippus. At the western entrance to the Augustaeum was the Milion, a vaulted monument from which distances were measured across the Eastern Roman Empire. (75)

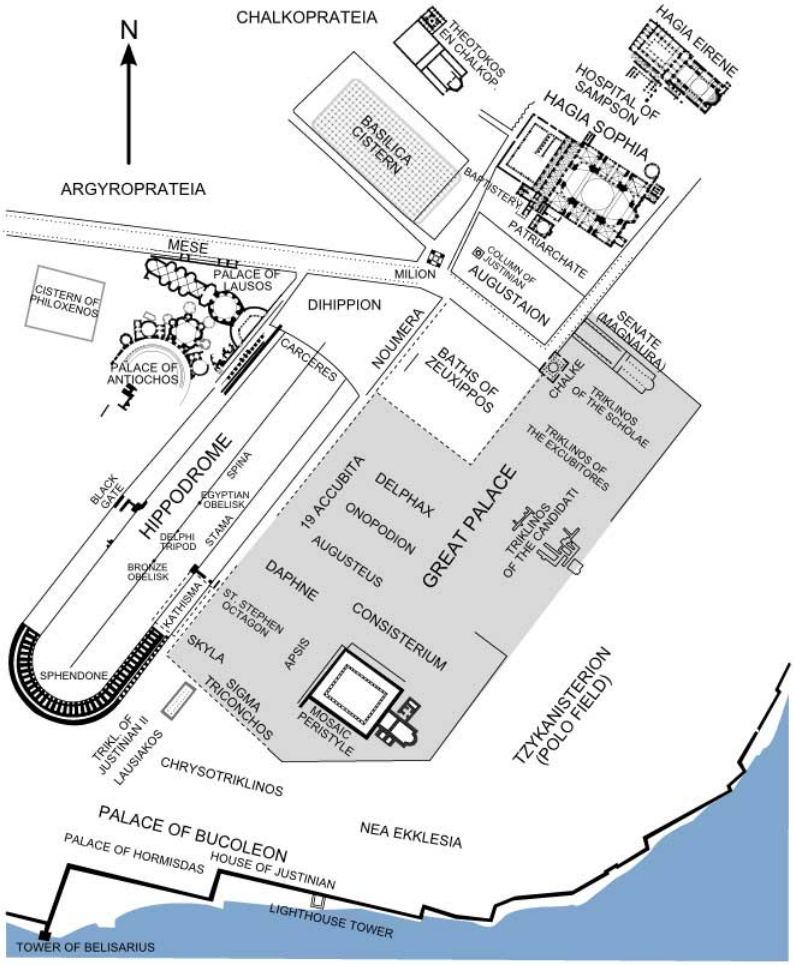


Figure 5-43: The Imperial district of Constantinople by Cplakidas is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Mese, a great street lined with colonnades, led from the Augustaeum. As it descended the First Hill of the city and climbed the Second Hill, it passed the Praetorium or law-court. Then it passed through the oval Forum of Constantine where there was a second Senate house and a high column with a statue of Constantine in the guise of Helios, crowned with a halo of seven rays and looking toward the rising sun. From there the Mese passed on and through the Forum Tauri and then the Forum Bovis, and finally up the Seventh Hill (or Xerolophus) and through to the Golden Gate in the Constantinian Wall (75)

The Aula Palatina, Trier, Germany

Constantine built the Aula Palatina (c. 310 CE) as a part of the palace complex. Originally it was attached to smaller buildings (such as an antehall, a vestibule, and service buildings) attached to it. The Aula Palatina has a simplified Roman basilica plan, consisting of a wide nave that ends in a north-facing apse.

Although round arches repeat throughout the interior and exterior, the building deviates from the traditional basilica with the flat ceiling that covers the nave and the flat roof that tops the apse. (75)



Figure 5-44: The exterior of the Aula Palatina by Pudelek (Marcin Szala) is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

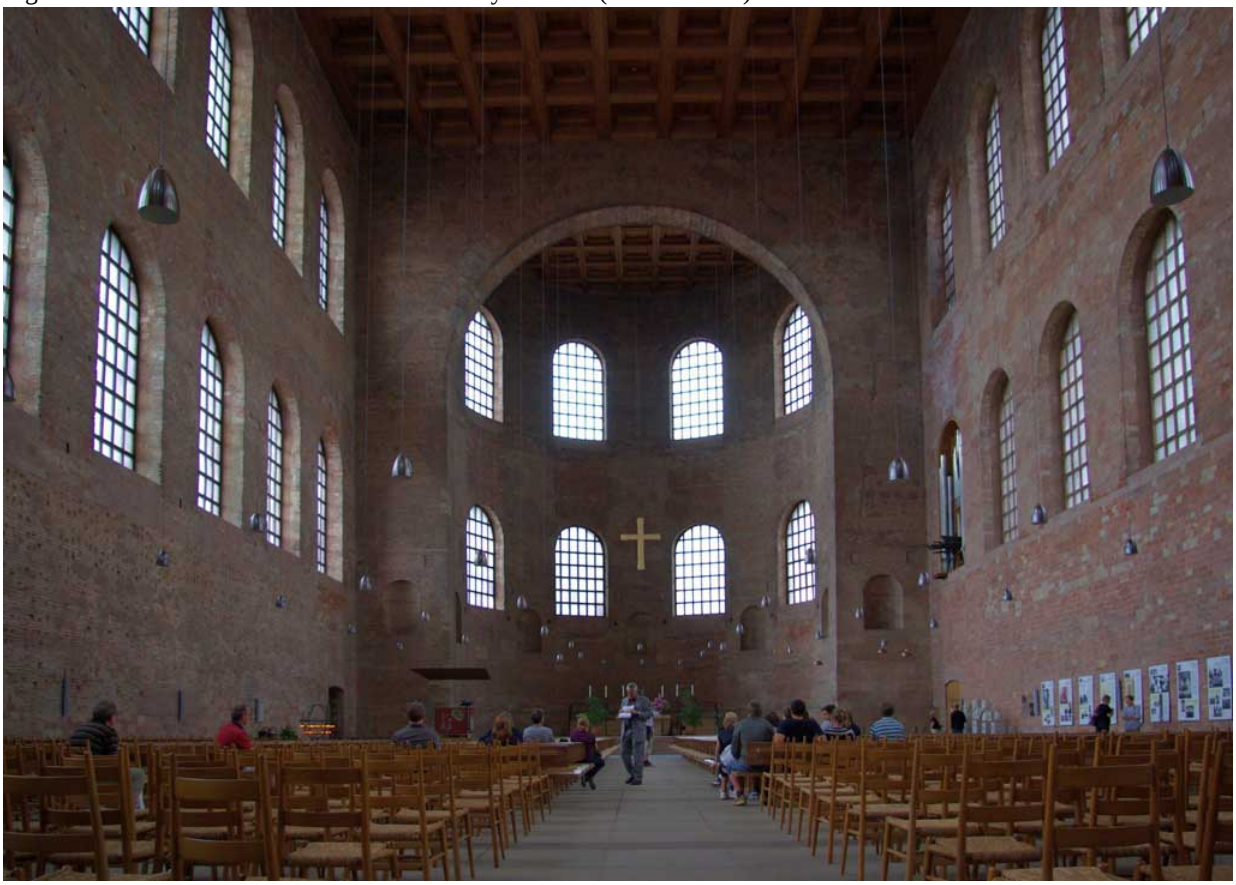


Figure 5-45: Inside the Aula Palatina by Berthold Werner is licensed under Public Domain

The Fall of the Roman Empire

From 376–382 CE, Rome fought a series of battles against invading Goths known today as the Gothic Wars. At the Battle of Adrianople, 9 August 378 CE, the Roman Emperor Valens was defeated, and historians mark this event as pivotal in the decline of the Western Roman Empire. Various theories have been suggested as to the cause of the empire's fall but, even today, there is no universal agreement on what those specific factors were. Edward Gibbon has famously argued in his The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire that Christianity played a pivotal role, in that the new religion undermined the social mores of the empire which paganism provided. The theory that Christianity was a root cause in the empire's fall was debated long before Gibbon, however, as Orosius argued Christianity's innocence in Rome's decline as early as 418 CE. Orosius claimed it was primarily paganism itself and pagan practices which brought about the fall of Rome.

Other influences which have been noted range from the corruption of the governing elite to the ungovernable vastness of the empire to the growing strength of the Germanic tribes and their constant incursions into Rome. The Roman military could no longer safeguard the borders as efficiently as they once had nor could the government as easily collect taxes in the provinces. The arrival of the Visigoths in the empire in the third century CE and their subsequent rebellions has also been cited a contributing factor in the decline.

The Western Roman Empire officially ended 4 September 476 CE, when Emperor Romulus Augustus was deposed by the Germanic King Odoacer (though some historians date the end as 480 CE with the death of Julius Nepos). The Eastern Roman Empire continued on as the Byzantine Empire until 1453 CE, and though known early on as simply `the Roman Empire', it did not much resemble that entity at all. The Western Roman Empire would become re-invented later as The Holy Roman Empire, but that construct, also, was far removed from the Roman Empire of antiquity and was an `empire' in name only. [(68)]

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: Roman and Christian Religious Culture

6.1: About This Module- Roman and Christian Religious Culture

6.2: Early Beliefs and the Roman Pantheon

6.3: Cults

6.4: Early Christian Religion and Culture

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6.1: About This Module- Roman and Christian Religious Culture

Topics Covered:

- Roman and Christian Culture to Include
  - Constantine
  - Early Christian Architecture such as the Church at Dura-Europas
  - Jesus and Early Christianity
  - Roman Imperial Cult
  - Roman Mystery Religions such as the Mithras

This module introduces students to Roman and Christian religious expressions that developed over the course of Roman civilization. Students will determine what cultural artifacts such as the Mithraic reliefs and early Christian paintings tell us about their historical contexts. Students will demonstrate understanding of cultural expressions by noting the similarities and differences between Roman religious culture and Christian culture. Students will recognize the contribution that Roman and Jewish religion had on the development of early Christian belief. Finally, students will also demonstrate proficiency in critical by assessing how far early Christian belief functioned much like a Roman Mystery Religion. (1)

Learning Outcomes Related to this Module

1. Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
2. Recognize the relationships between cultural expressions and their contexts
3. Understand cultural expressions
4. Interpret and evaluate cultural artifacts and/or their contexts for significance
5. Recognize the important contributions of the classical world; understand and analyze specific primary texts from the classical world

Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Sort events related to Roman and Christian religious culture in historical.
- Compare aspects of Roman and Greek Religion.
- Identify features that exemplify Roman Religion.
- Identify elements that identify the Roman Mystery religions.
- Discuss the historical development of Christian belief in antiquity.
- Distinguish between Christian belief and practice before and after Constantine. (1)

Assigned Readings

- Learning Unit – Roman and Christian Religious Culture

Assignments | Learning Activities

- Review Learning Unit
- Participate in Discussion 6
- Complete Timeline Assignment 6
- Complete Assessment Module 6

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6.2: Early Beliefs and the Roman Pantheon

In many societies, ancient and modern, religion has performed a major role in their development, and the Roman Empire was no different. From the beginning Roman religion was polytheistic. From an initial array of gods and spirits, Rome added to this collection to include both Greek gods as well as a number of foreign cults.As the empire expanded, the Romans refrained from imposing their own religious beliefs upon those they conquered; however, this inclusion must not be misinterpreted as tolerance — this can be seen with their early reaction to the Jewish and Christian population. Eventually, all of their gods would be washed away, gradually replaced by Christianity, and in the eyes of some, this change brought about the decline of the western empire. (76)

Early Beliefs & Influences

Early forms of the Roman religion were animistic in nature, believing that spirits inhabited everything around them, people included. The first citizens of Rome also believed they were watched over by the spirits of their ancestors. Initially, a Capitoline Triad (possibly derived from a Sabine influence) were added to these "spirits" — the new gods included Mars, the god of war and supposed father of Romulus and Remus (founders of Rome); Quirinus, the deified Romulus who watched over the people of Rome; and lastly, Jupiter, the supreme god.

They, along with the spirits, were worshipped at a temple on Capitoline Hill. Later, due to the Etruscans, the triad would change to include Jupiter who remained the supreme god; Juno, his wife and sister; and Minerva, Jupiter's daughter.

Due to the presence of Greek colonies on the Lower Peninsula, the Romans adopted many of the Greek gods as their own. Religion and myth became one. Under this Greek influence, the Roman gods became more anthropomorphic –with the human characteristics of jealousy, love, hate, etc. However, this transformation was not to the degree that existed in Greek mythology.

In Rome individual expression of belief was unimportant, strict adherence to a rigid set of rituals was far more significant, thereby avoiding the hazards of religious zeal. Cities adopted their own patron deities and performed their own rituals. Temples honoring the gods would be built throughout the empire; however, these temples were considered the "home" of the god; worship occurred outside the temple. While this fusion of Roman and Greek deities influenced Rome in many ways, their religion remained practical. (76)

The Roman Pantheon

While the study of Roman mythology tends to emphasize the major gods – Jupiter, Neptune (god of the sea), Pluto (god of the underworld) and Juno – there existed, of course, a number of "minor" gods and goddesses such as Nemesis, the god of revenge; Cupid, the god of love; Pax, the god of peace; and the Furies, goddesses of vengeance. However, when looking at the religion of Rome, one must examine the impact of the most important gods. Foremost among the gods were, of course, Jupiter, the Roman equivalent of Zeus (although not as playful), and his wife/sister Juno. He was the king of the gods; the sky god (the great protector) – controlling the weather and forces of nature, using thunderbolts to give warning to the people of Rome.

Originally linked with farming as Jupiter Elicius, his role changed as the city grew, eventually obtaining his own temple on Capitoline Hill. Later, he became Jupiter Imperator Invictus Triumphator – Supreme General, Unconquered, and ultimately, Jupiter Optimus Maximus – Best and Greatest. His supremacy would be temporarily set aside during the reign of Emperor Elagabalus who attempted to replace the religion of Rome with that of the Syrian god Elagabal. After the emperor's assassination, his successor, Alexander Severus, returned Jupiter to his former glory.

Next, Jupiter's wife/sister was Juno, for whom the month of June is named – she was the equivalent of the Greek Hera. Besides being the supreme goddess with a temple on Esquiline Hill, she was the goddess of light and moon, embodying all of the virtues of Roman matron hood – as Juno Lucina she became the goddess of childbirth and fertility.



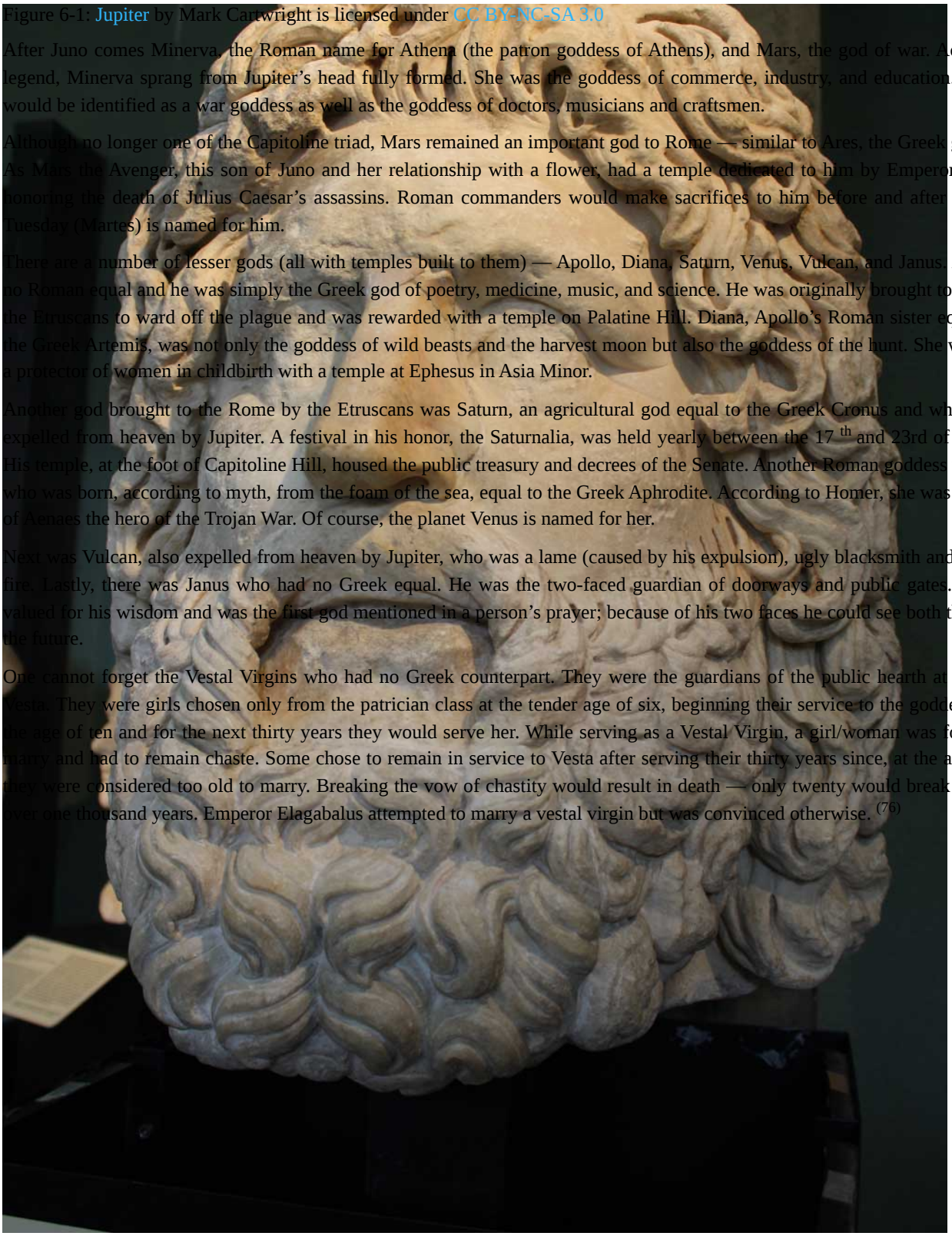


Figure 6-1: Jupiter by Mark Cartwright is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

After Juno comes Minerva, the Roman name for Athena (the patron goddess of Athens), and Mars, the god of war. According to legend, Minerva sprang from Jupiter's head fully formed. She was the goddess of commerce, industry, and education. Later, she would be identified as a war goddess as well as the goddess of doctors, musicians and craftsmen.

Although no longer one of the Capitoline triad, Mars remained an important god to Rome — similar to Ares, the Greek god of war. As Mars the Avenger, this son of Juno and her relationship with a flower, had a temple dedicated to him by Emperor Augustus, honoring the death of Julius Caesar's assassins. Roman commanders would make sacrifices to him before and after battles and Tuesday (Martes) is named for him.

There are a number of lesser gods (all with temples built to them) — Apollo, Diana, Saturn, Venus, Vulcan, and Janus. Apollo had no Roman equal and he was simply the Greek god of poetry, medicine, music, and science. He was originally brought to the city by the Etruscans to ward off the plague and was rewarded with a temple on Palatine Hill. Diana, Apollo's Roman sister equivalent to the Greek Artemis, was not only the goddess of wild beasts and the harvest moon but also the goddess of the hunt. She was seen as a protector of women in childbirth with a temple at Ephesus in Asia Minor.

Another god brought to the Rome by the Etruscans was Saturn, an agricultural god equal to the Greek Cronus and who had been expelled from heaven by Jupiter. A festival in his honor, the Saturnalia, was held yearly between the 17 th and 23rd of December. His temple, at the foot of Capitoline Hill, housed the public treasury and decrees of the Senate. Another Roman goddess was Venus, who was born, according to myth, from the foam of the sea, equal to the Greek Aphrodite. According to Homer, she was the mother of Aenaes the hero of the Trojan War. Of course, the planet Venus is named for her.

Next was Vulcan, also expelled from heaven by Jupiter, who was a lame (caused by his expulsion), ugly blacksmith and the god of fire. Lastly, there was Janus who had no Greek equal. He was the two-faced guardian of doorways and public gates. Janus was valued for his wisdom and was the first god mentioned in a person's prayer; because of his two faces he could see both the past and the future.

One cannot forget the Vestal Virgins who had no Greek counterpart. They were the guardians of the public hearth at the Atrium Vesta. They were girls chosen only from the patrician class at the tender age of six, beginning their service to the goddess Vesta at the age of ten and for the next thirty years they would serve her. While serving as a Vestal Virgin, a girl/woman was forbidden to marry and had to remain chaste. Some chose to remain in service to Vesta after serving their thirty years since, at the age of forty, they were considered too old to marry. Breaking the vow of chastity would result in death — only twenty would break the vow in over one thousand years. Emperor Elagabalus attempted to marry a vestal virgin but was convinced otherwise. [76]

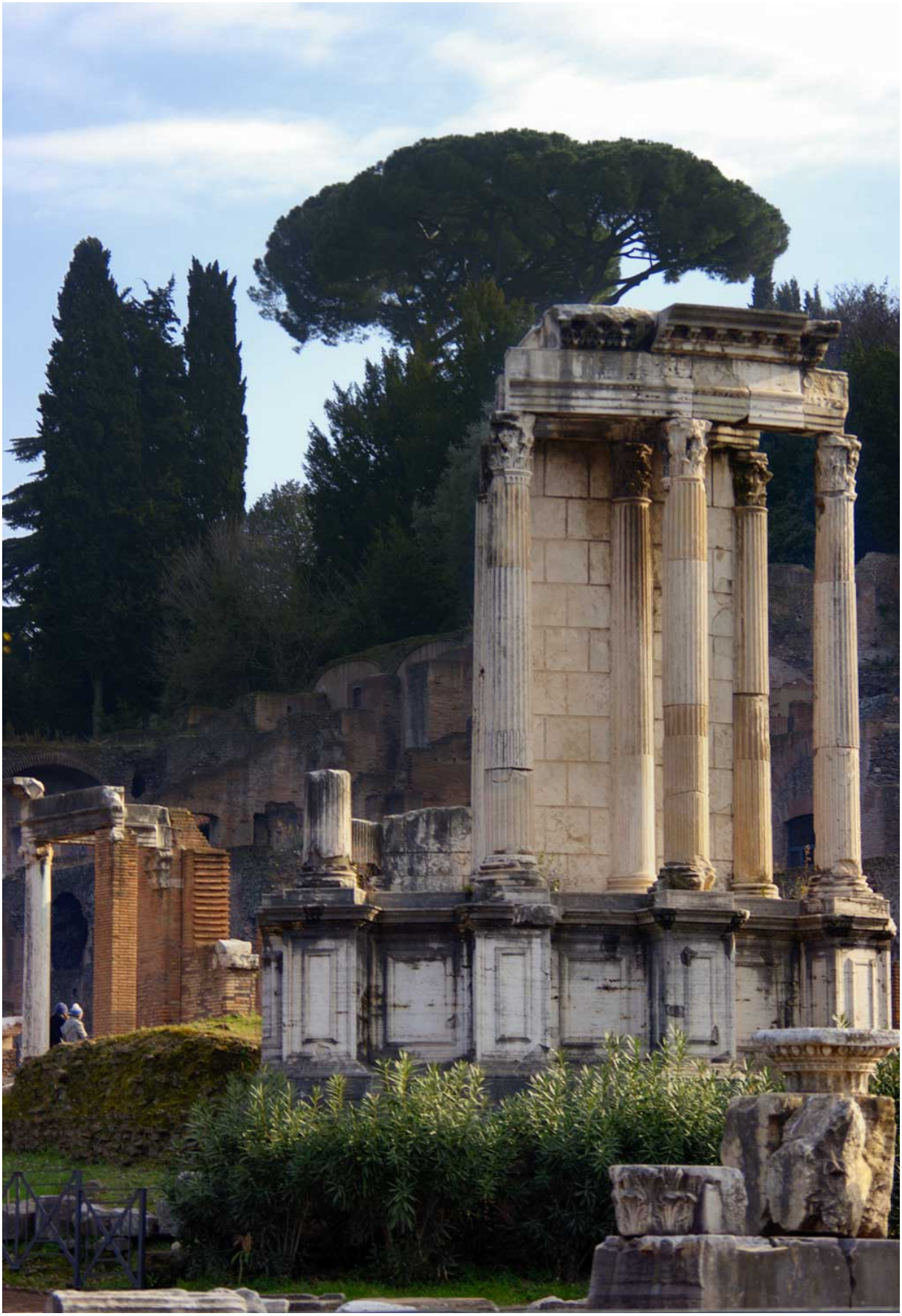




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6.3: Cults

The Imperial Cult

The idea of deification of the emperor came during the time of Emperor Augustus. He resisted the Senate's attempts to name him a god during his reign as he thought himself the son of a god, not a god. Upon his death, the Roman Senate rewarded him with deification which was an honor that would be bestowed upon many of his successors. Often, an emperor would request his predecessor to be deified. Of course, there were a few exceptions, notably, Tiberius, Caligula, Nero and Domitian, who were considered too abhorrent to receive the honor. Caligula and Nero believed themselves living gods while Domitian thought himself the reincarnation of Hercules.

As Imperial cult developed over time, the worshipper would receive a libellus, or certificate of proof that certified that the worshipper had sacrificed to the Roman Emperor (more affectionately known as the "Son of God"). As the proliferation of private religions began to spring up throughout the Roman Empire promising personal salvation in exchange for fidelity to the cult, proof of sacrifice developed as a way to identify Roman citizens whose allegiance were not with the Roman state. (76)

Private Cults

Private religious cults — or "Mystery Religions" as they have come to be called — that appeared throughout the Roman Empire were often imported from areas taken over by the Roman state. As "foreign religions' they gained in popularity because they offered a religious experience that was personalized, unlike the religion promoted by the Roman state. Indeed, whereas the religion of the state promised only solidarity at the level of citizenship, mystery faiths thrived because they provided a sense of solidarity between likeminded believers. That they often addressed individualized matters such as forgiveness, salvation, and personal identification with the Divine made them even more attractive to persons living in the Roman Empire. (1)

Mithraism

The Mithraic Mysteries, also known as Mithraism, were a mystery cult in the Roman world where followers worshipped the Indo-Iranian deity Mithras (Akkadian for "contract") as the god of friendship, contract and order. The cult first appeared in the late 1 st century CE and, at an extraordinary pace, spread from the Italian Peninsula and border regions across the whole of the Roman empire.

The cult, like many others, was a secret one. The most important element of the myth behind the Mithraic Mysteries was Mithras' killing of a bull; this scene is also known as "tauroctony". It was believed that from the death of the bull — an animal often seen as a symbol of strength and fertility — sprung new life. Rebirth was an essential idea in the myth of Mithraic Mysteries. The sacrifice of the bull established a new cosmic order and was also associated with the moon, which was also associated with fertility.



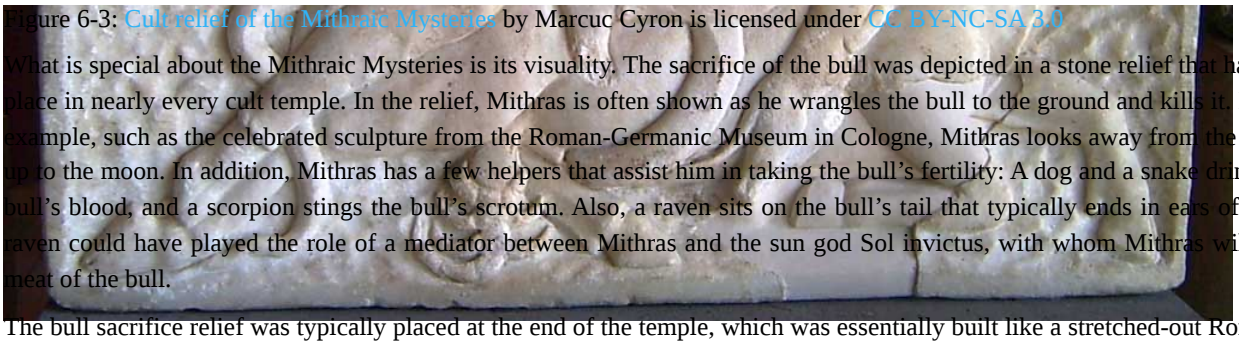


Figure 6-3: Cult relief of the Mithraic Mysteries by Marcuc Cyron is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

What is special about the Mithraic Mysteries is its visuality. The sacrifice of the bull was depicted in a stone relief that had a central place in nearly every cult temple. In the relief, Mithras is often shown as he wrangles the bull to the ground and kills it. In a typical example, such as the celebrated sculpture from the Roman-Germanic Museum in Cologne, Mithras looks away from the dying bull, up to the moon. In addition, Mithras has a few helpers that assist him in taking the bull's fertility: A dog and a snake drink from the bull's blood, and a scorpion stings the bull's scrotum. Also, a raven sits on the bull's tail that typically ends in ears of grain. The raven could have played the role of a mediator between Mithras and the sun god Sol invictus, with whom Mithras will share the meat of the bull.

The bull sacrifice relief was typically placed at the end of the temple, which was essentially built like a stretched-out Roman dining room — an aisle flanked by two broad, raised benches. However, the sacrifice of the bull was rarely enacted by the worshippers themselves. Worshippers did imitate how Mithras shared the bull's meat with Sol, as fragments of dishes and bones of animals that have been found in these temples testify. High-quality pork, chicken and a large quantity of wine were consumed in high-spirited cultic feasts that connected the worshippers to each other and to Mithras.

The Mithraic Mysteries were not just about fun and games, however. There were strict rules as to how the feasts were organised, for example, regarding hygiene. What is more, there were seven degrees of initiation, ranging from "corax" (raven) to "pater" (father), of which each had its own type of clothing. The other degrees were "nymphus" (bridegroom), "miles" (soldier), "leo" (lion), "perses" (Persian), and "heliodromus" (sun-runner). Each degree of initiation had a different task to fulfill, e.g. a "raven" had to carry the food, while the "lions" offered sacrifices to the "father". Also, the initiates had to take part in tests of courage. The paintings in the temple of Mithras at Santa Maria Capua Vetere show us different scenes of this ritual.



Figure 6-4: Mithraeum in Saarbrucken by Anna16 is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

An initiate, blindfolded and naked, is led to the ceremony by an assistant. Later, the initiate has to kneel before the "father", who holds a torch or a sword in his face. Finally, he is stretched out on the floor, as if he had died. This probably was a ritual "suicide" in which the initiate was "killed" with a non-lethal theatre-sword, and was then reborn. [77]

Isis Cult

Isis is an ancient Egyptian goddess, associated with the earlier goddess Hathor, who became the most popular and enduring of all the Egyptian deities. Her name comes from the Egyptian Eset, ("the seat") which referred to her stability and also the throne of Egypt as she was considered the mother of every pharaoh through the king's association with Horus, Isis' son. Her name has also been interpreted as Queen of the Throne, and her original headdress was the empty throne of her murdered husband Osiris. Her symbols are the scorpion (who kept her safe when she was in hiding), the kite (a kind of falcon whose shape she assumed in bringing her husband back to life), the empty throne, and the sistrum. She is regularly portrayed as the selfless, giving, mother, wife, and protectress, who places other's interests and well-being ahead of her own.



Figure 6-5: Temple of Isis, Delos by Mark Cartwright is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

She was also known as Weret-Kekau ("the Great Magic") for her power and Mut-Netjer, "Mother of the Gods" but was known by many names depending on which role she was fulfilling at the moment. As the goddess who brought the yearly inundation of the Nile which fertilized the land she was Sati, for example, and as the goddess who created and preserved life she was Ankhet, and so on.

In time, she became so popular that all gods were considered mere aspects of Isis and she was the only Egyptian deity worshiped by everyone in the country. She and her husband and son replaced the Theban Triad of Amon, Mut, and Khons, who had been the most popular trinity of gods in Egypt. Osiris, Isis, and Horus are referred to as the Abydos Triad. Her cult began in the Nile Delta and her most important sanctuary was there at the shrine of Behbeit El-Hagar, but worship of Isis eventually spread to all parts of Egypt.

Both men and women served Isis as clergy and no doubt rituals concerning her worship were conducted along the lines of other deities: a temple was built as her earthly home which housed her statue and this image was reverently cared for by the priests and priestesses. The people of Egypt were encouraged to visit the temple to leave offerings and make supplications but no one except the high priest or priestess was allowed into the sanctuary where the statue of the goddess resided. Beyond this, however, little is known of the details of the rituals surrounding her worship. Like the Eleusinian Mysteries, the Cult of Isis grew into a Mystery Religion promising the secrets of life and death to initiates, who were then sworn to secrecy. It is known that the cult promised

eternal life to those who were admitted to its secrets. The people who worshiped her throughout Egypt may or may not have been full initiates into her cult and, either way, left no record of how the goddess was honored.

It was not until Isis was worshiped in Rome that people wrote about the cult to any great degree and by then it was clear that knowledge of the rituals involved was only for initiates. Her temple on the island of Philae in Upper Egypt would remain an active pilgrimage site for thousands of years until closed in the 6 th century CE by the Christian emperor Justinian. In her role as "throne goddess", she was considered the mother of all kings, but her benevolence was not limited to royalty. Isis dominated the religious sensibilities of the people at the same time that Christianity was taking form through the evangelical missions of St. Paul c. 42â€"62 CE. The concept of the Dying and Reviving God which had long been established through the Osiris myth was now made manifest in the figure of the son of God, Jesus the Christ. In time, epithets for Isis became those for the Virgin Mary such as "Mother of God" and "Queen of Heaven" as the new religion drew on the power of the older belief to establish itself. The worship of Isis was the most stubborn of pagan beliefs to rival the new faith and continued longer than any other. (78)

Bacchus Cult

Dionysus (Roman name: Bacchus) was the ancient Greek god of wine, merriment, and theatre. Being the bad boy of Mt. Olympus, he was perhaps the most colorful of the Olympian Gods. In Greek mythology, despite being the son of Zeus and Semele (the daughter of Kadmos and Harmonia), Dionysus did not receive the best start in life when his mother died while still pregnant. Hera, wife of Zeus, was jealous of her husband's illicit affair and craftily persuaded Semele to ask Zeus to reveal himself to her in all his godly splendour. This was too much for the mortal and she immediately expired; however, Zeus took the unborn child and reared him in his thigh.



Figure 6-6: Dionysos by Mark Cartwright is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

Dionysus travelled widely, even as far as India, and spread his cult throughout Greece, indeed he was known as being of an eastern origin himself. Orgiastic rituals were held in his honor, where the participants were taken over by a Dionysian frenzy of dancing and merriment to such a degree that they transcended themselves. It is believed that theatre sprang from this activity as, like Dionysus' worshippers, actors strive to leave behind their own persona and become one with the character they are playing. Indeed, priests of Dionysus were given seats of honor in Greek theatres. (79)

As the Romans incorporated Greek culture into itself, so also came the worship of Dionysus. The appearance of Greek culture had been, for the most part, positive. Under this Greek influence, the Roman gods became more human, exhibiting such diverse characteristics as jealousy, love, and hate. However, unlike in Greece, in Rome an individual's self-expression of belief was not considered as important as adherence to ritual. In an effort to avoid religious zeal, the state demanded a strict adherence to a rigid set of rituals. While this integration of the Greeks gods was never seen as a viable threat — they easily fit into the existing array of gods — some cults proved to be something completely different: a genuine danger to the prevailing state religion.

In 186 BCE the Roman Senate, recognizing a potential menace, suppressed the worship of the Greek god of wine, Dionysus, known to the Romans as Bacchus. His worship is best remembered for its intoxicating festival held on March 17, a day when a Roman male youth would supposedly become a man. The cult was viewed as being excessively brutal, supposedly involving ritual murder and sexual excess. As a result, many of its adherents were either imprisoned or executed. It should be noted, however, that the authority's fear of this cult was largely generated, not from first-hand experience (the cult's rituals were always conducted in secret) but from the writings of the historian Livy (c. 64 BCEâ€“17 CE) who consistently portrayed the cult as a dangerous menace to social stability and characterized adherents as little more than drunken beasts. (80)



Figure 6-7: Cybele by Dave & Margie Hill / Kleerup is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Cybele Cult

Originally, the Cybelean cult was brought to Rome during the time of the Second Punic War (218â€“201 BCE). At that time the Carthaginian general Hannibal was wreaking havoc in Italy, posing a serious threat to the city of Rome. The Sibylline Books, books of prophecy consulted by the Roman Senate in times of emergencies, predicted that Italy would be freed by an Idaean mother of Pessinus; to many, this meant Cybele. A black meteorite, representing the goddess, was brought to Rome from Asia Minor in 204 BCE. Miraculously, Hannibal and his army left shortly afterwards to defend Carthage against the invading Romans; a temple honoring Cybele would be built on Palatine Hill in 191 BCE.

The cult eventually achieved official recognition during the reign of Emperor Claudius (41â€“44 CE). Ultimately, her appeal as an agrarian goddess would enable her to find adherents in northern Africa as well as Transalpine Gaul.

Due to its agricultural nature, her cult had tremendous appeal to the average Roman citizen, more so women than men. She was responsible for every aspect of an individual's life. She was the mistress of wild nature, symbolized by her constant companion, the lion. Not only was she was a healer (she both cured and caused disease) but also the goddess of fertility and protectress in time of war (although, interestingly, not a favorite among soldiers), even offering immortality to her adherents.

She is depicted in statues either on a chariot pulled by lions or enthroned carrying a bowl and drum, wearing a mural crown, flanked by lions. Followers of her cult would work themselves into an emotional frenzy and self-mutilate, symbolic of her lover's self-castration.

Important to the worship of Cybele was Attis, the Phrygian god of vegetation, also considered a resurrection god (similar to the Greek Adonis). Supposedly, Attis was Cybele's lover, although some sources claim him to be her son. Unfortunately, he fell in love with a mortal and chose to marry. According to one story, on the day of their wedding banquet, the irate and jealous goddess apparently struck panic into those who attended the wedding. Afraid for his own safety (no mention is made of his bride), the frightened groom fled to the nearby mountains where he gradually became insane, eventually committing suicide but not before castrating himself. Regaining her own sanity, the remorseful Cybele appealed to Zeus to never allow Attis's corpse to decay. Myth claims that he would return to life during the yearly rebirth of vegetation; thus identifying Attis as an early dying-and-reviving god figure.

Cybele was one of many cults that appeared in Rome. Some were considered harmless, the Cult of Isis for example, and allowed to survive while others, like Bacchus, were seen as a serious threat to the Roman citizens and was persecuted. Of course, almost all of these cults disappeared with the arrival of Christianity when Rome became the center of this new religion. The Cult of Cybele lasted until the 4 th century CE, at which time Christianity dominated the religious landscape and pagan beliefs and rituals gradually became transformed or discarded to suit the new faith. (80)

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6.4: Early Christian Religion and Culture

Early Christian Religion and Culture

Life of Jesus

The life of Jesus began in north and central Palestine, a region between the Dead Sea and the Jordan River in the east and the Eastern Mediterranean in the west. This region was under Roman control since the 1st century BCE, initially as a tributary kingdom. The Roman campaigns, coupled with internal revolts and the incursion of the Parthians, made the region very unstable and chaotic up until 37 BCE, when Herod the Great (c.73 BCEâ€“4 BCE) became king. The region gradually gained political stability and became prosperous. Although Jewish in religion, Herod was a vassal king who served the interests of the Roman Empire.

Jesus was born towards the end of the reign of Herod the Great (died 4 BCE) and brought up in Nazareth, Galilee. He was named Jesus (Yeshu'a in Aramaic, Yehoshua or Joshua in Hebrew, Iesous in Greek, Iesus in Roman) and was conceived between the engagement and marriage of his parents whose names were Mary (Miriam in Hebrew and Mariam in Aramaic) and Joseph (Yossef in Hebrew, Yosep in Aramaic). In Matthew 13.55 it is said that his father was a carpenter, and Mark 6.3 says that this was also Jesus' profession. It was a common practice during that time that sons would follow their father's occupation, so it would be safe to believe that Jesus was a carpenter. Although not certain, it is probable that Jesus' education included a detailed study of the Hebrew Scriptures, a very common practice among the devout poor in Israel.

His public ministry began after being baptized by John the Baptist. According to the gospel of Luke, this was when Jesus was about 30 years of age. According to Mark (11.27â€“33), Jesus saw John the Baptist as an authority and possibly a source of inspiration. It seems that he performed baptisms parallel to John the Baptist (John 3.22). After the arrest of John the Baptist (Mark 1.14), Jesus began a new kind of ministry, spreading the message of the kingdom of God approaching and stressing the importance of repentance by the people of Israel.

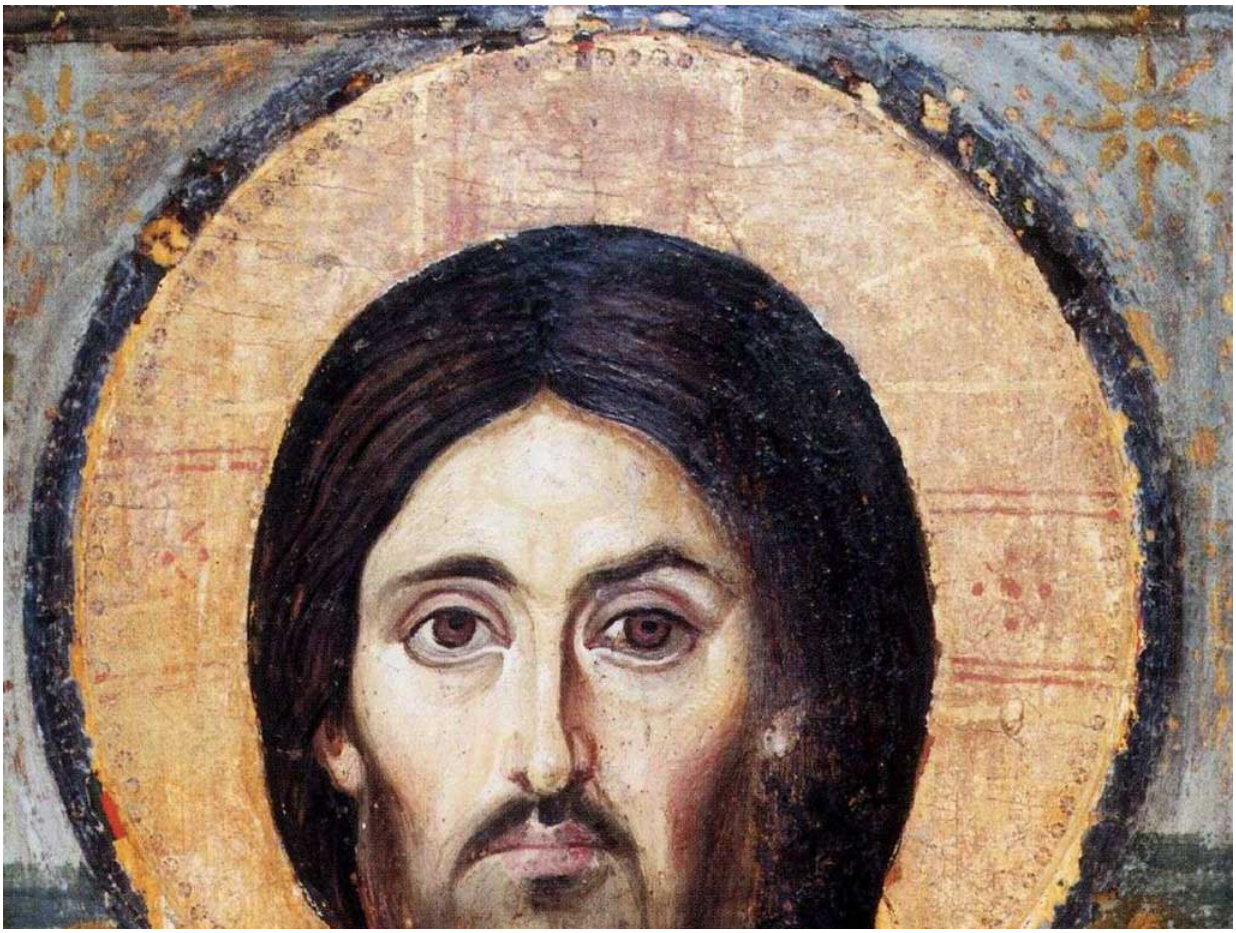




Figure 6-8: Jesus Christ by Hardscarf is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

Jesus was heavily influenced by the prophet Isaiah, who considered the coming of the reign of God a central topic (Isa. 52.7). Many of Jesus' teachings have allusions to Isaiah, and he also quotes him on many occasions. Jesus is presented as an eschatological prophet announcing the definitive coming of God, its salvation, and the end of time.

Jesus gradually gained popularity and thousands of followers are mentioned in the gospels. He shared some attributes with the Pharisees and the Essenes, two of the Jewish sects at that time. Like the Pharisees, his teaching methods included the expression of thoughts about the human condition in the form of aphorisms and parables, and he also shared the belief in the general authority of Hebrew sacred scriptures. Unlike the Pharisaic teachers, Jesus believed that outward compliance with the Law was not of utmost importance and that values such as the love for enemies were more important.

Moreover, Jesus summed up his ethical views in the double command concerning love: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark 12.28â€“31; Matthew 22.35â€“40 and Luke 10.25â€“28). The Essenes had a very simple way of life, a pacifist spirit, common ownership of property, common meals, they practiced exorcisms, and they stressed the love for each other, all practices seen in the ministry of Jesus.

At some point towards the end of his career, Jesus moved to Jerusalem in Judea, reaching the climax of his public life. Here he engaged in different disputes with his main adversaries. At the same time, some religious authorities were said to entrap him into self-incrimination by raising controversial topics, mostly of a theological nature. The gospels offer different reasons as to why the Sanhedrin (the Jewish court) was interested in executing Jesus, but only John (11.47â€“53) seems convincing enough: Jesus was seen as a trouble-maker who threatened public harmony.

A Roman intervention to restore order, thus breaking the fine balance between Jewish and Roman power, did not interest the Sanhedrin. An arresting party finally took Jesus to the Sanhedrin, where he was judged, found guilty of blasphemy, and condemned to death. However, the execution order had to be issued by a Roman authority; the Jewish court did not have such power at that time. Therefore, Jesus was brought to the procurator of Rome who ordered Jesus' execution because Jesus never denied the charges he should have been convicted and not executed, as the Roman law required in case of confession for such a penalty. On a hill outside Jerusalem, Jesus was finally crucified and killed, which was not a Jewish form of punishment but a common Roman practice.

The Early Christian Movement

Following Jesus' death, the Christian religion continued to flourish. This was in large part to missionaries like the apostle Paul who successfully reshaped the religion, making it more Greco-Roman in orientation than Jewish. Indeed, playing down the importance of circumcision and pork abstinence, Paul was able to make the budding faith more palatable to a Gentile audience. Emphasizing themes such as life-after-death and personal redemption, Paul promoted Christianity in terms not unlike those promoted by the various mystery religions of the day. As such, Christianity became a competitor for converts within a very crowded religious marketplace.

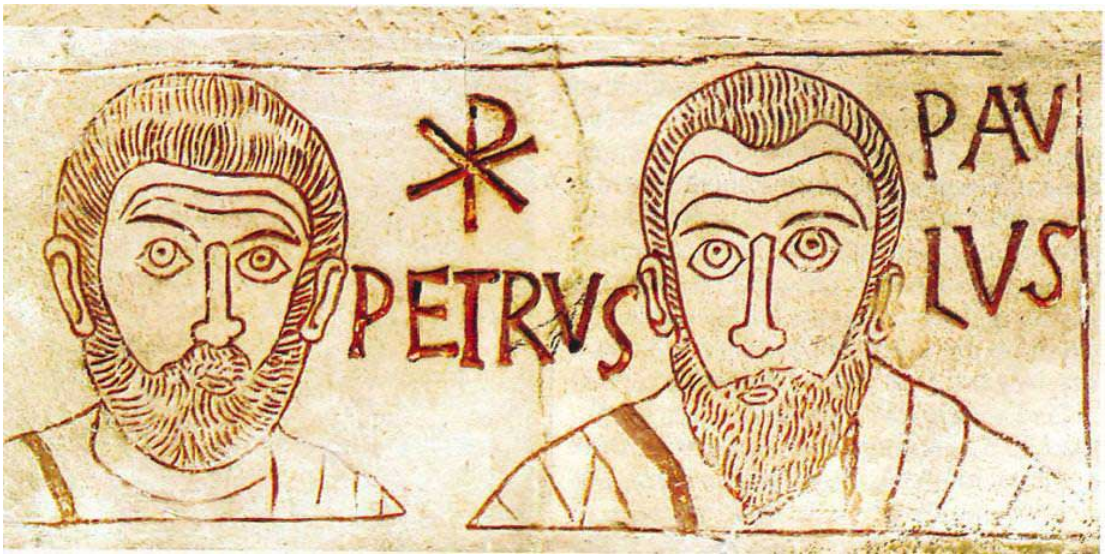


Figure 6-9: Saints Peter and Paul, from a catacomb etching by Anonymous is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

From the Roman point of view, they initially identified Christianity as a sect of the Jewish religion. As Christian believers became increasingly Gentile in orientation, however, practitioners of the faith became a problem for Roman rulers. Around the year 98, Nerva decreed that Christians — unlike the Jews — would no longer be able to pay a tax in order to absolve themselves from demonstrating devotion to the Roman gods. This opened the way to the persecutions of Christians for disobedience to the emperor, as many refused to sacrifice to the Roman gods and the emperor. Thus, members of the Early Christian movement often became political targets and scapegoats for the social ills and political tensions of specific rulers and turbulent periods during the first three centuries, CE; however, this persecution was sporadic and rarely Empire-wide, but it was devastating, nonetheless.

The so-called Great Persecution — during the reign of Diocletian — was the last and most severe persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. This lasted from 302â€“311 CE. By this point, however, the Emperor's sweeping endeavor to wipe out the religion proved an impossibility as Christians comprised upwards of ten percent of the Roman population. In the end, the persecution failed to check the rise of the church. By 324, Constantine was sole ruler of the empire, and Christianity had become his favored religion. (82)(83)(84)

Constantine's Relationship with Christianity

While the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great reigned (306â€“337 CE), Christianity began to transition to the dominant religion of the Roman Empire. Historians remain uncertain about Constantine's reasons for favoring Christianity, and theologians and historians have argued about which form of Early Christianity he subscribed to. There is no consensus among scholars as to whether he adopted his mother Helena's Christianity in his youth, or (as claimed by Eusebius of Caesarea) encouraged her to convert to the faith himself. Some scholars question the extent to which he should be considered a Christian emperor: "Constantine saw himself as an 'emperor of the Christian people.' If this made him a Christian is the subject of debate," although he allegedly received a baptism shortly before his death.

Constantine's decision to cease the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire was a turning point for early Christianity, sometimes referred to as the Triumph of the Church, the Peace of the Church, or the Constantinian Shift. In 313, Constantine and Licinius issued the Edict of Milan, decriminalizing Christian worship. The emperor became a great patron of the Church and set a precedent for the position of the Christian emperor within the Church, and the notion of orthodoxy, Christendom, ecumenical councils, and the state church of the Roman Empire, declared by edict in 380. He is revered as a saint and is an apostle in the Eastern Orthodox Church and Oriental Orthodox Church for his example as a "Christian monarch." (85)

Christianity After Constantine

After Constantine, the Christianization of the Roman Empire would continue apace. Under Theodosius I (r. 378â€“395), Christianity became the state religion. By the 5 th century, Christianity was the empire's predominant faith, and filled the same role paganism had at the end of the 3rd century. Because of the persecution, however, a number of Christian communities were driven between those who had complied with imperial authorities (traditores) and those who had refused. In Africa, the Donatists, who

protested the election of the alleged traditor, Caecilian, to the bishopric of Carthage, continued to resist the authority of the central church until after 411. The Melitians in Egypt left the Egyptian Church similarly divided. (82)

Early Christian Art

Early Christian, or Paleochristian, art was produced by Christians or under Christian patronage from the earliest period of Christianity to, depending on the definition used, between 260 and 525. In practice identifiably Christian art only survives from the second century onwards. After 550, Christian art is classified as Byzantine, or of some other regional type.

It is difficult to know when distinctly Christian art began. Prior to 100, Christians may have been constrained by their position as a persecuted group from producing durable works of art. Since Christianity was largely a religion of the lower classes in this period, the lack of surviving art may reflect a lack of funds for patronage or a small numbers of followers. The Old Testament restrictions against the production of graven images (an idol or fetish carved in wood or stone) might have also constrained Christians from producing art. Christians could have made or purchased art with pagan iconography but given it Christian meanings. If this happened, “Christian” art would not be immediately recognizable as such.

Early Christians used the same artistic media as the surrounding pagan culture. These media included fresco, mosaics, sculpture, and manuscript illumination. Early Christian art not only used Roman forms, it also used Roman styles. Late Classical art included a proportional portrayal of the human body and impressionistic presentation of space. The Late Classical style is seen in early Christian frescos, such as those in the Catacombs of Rome, which include most examples of the earliest Christian art.

Early Christian art is generally divided into two periods by scholars: before and after the Edict of Milan of 313. The end of the period of Early Christian art, which is typically defined by art historians as being in the fifth through seventh centuries, is thus a good deal later than the end of the period of Early Christianity as typically defined by theologians and church historians, which is more often considered to end under Constantine, between 313 and 325.(83)

Early Christian Painting

In a move of strategic syncretism, Early Christians adapted Roman motifs and gave new meanings to what had been pagan symbols. Among the motifs adopted were the peacock, grapevines, and the “Good Shepherd.” Early Christians also developed their own iconography. Such symbols as the fish (ikhthus), were not borrowed from pagan iconography.

During the persecution of Christians under the Roman Empire, Christian art was necessarily and deliberately furtive and ambiguous, using imagery that was shared with pagan culture but had a special meaning for Christians. The earliest surviving Christian art comes from the late second to early fourth centuries on the walls of Christian tombs in the catacombs of Rome. From literary evidence, there might have been panel icons which have disappeared.

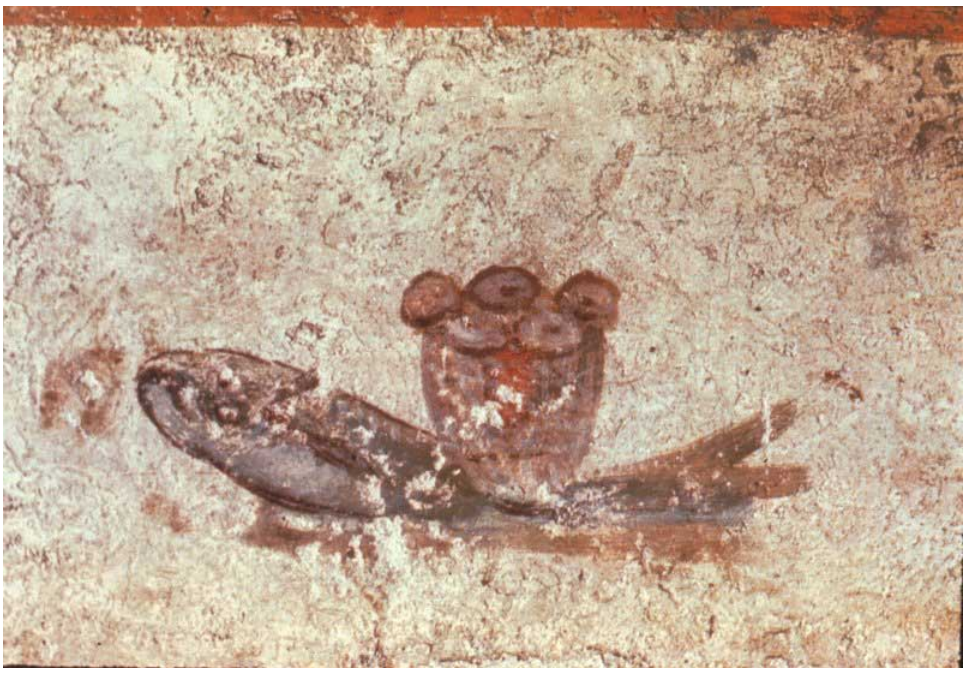


Figure 6-10: Eucharistic bread and fish by Leinad-Z~commonswiki is licensed under Public Domain

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Initially Jesus was represented indirectly by pictogram symbols such as the Ichthys, the peacock, the Lamb of God, or an anchor. Later, personified symbols were used, including Jonah, whose three days in the belly of the whale prefigured the interval between the death and resurrection of Jesus, Daniel in the lion's den, or Orpheus charming the animals. However, the depiction of Jesus was well-developed by the end of the pre-Constantinian period. He was typically shown in narrative scenes, with a preference for New Testament miracles, and few of scenes from his Passion.

A variety of different types of appearance were used, including the thin long-faced figure with long centrally-parted hair that was later to become the norm. But in the earliest images as many show a stocky and short-haired beardless figure in a short tunic, who can only be identified by his context. In many images of miracles Jesus carries a stick or wand, which he points at the subject of the miracle rather like a modern stage magician (though the wand is significantly larger).



Figure 6-11: Healing of a bleeding women by unknown from Wikimedia is licensed under Public Domain

The image of The Good Shepherd, a beardless youth in pastoral scenes collecting sheep, was the most common of these images and was probably not understood as a portrait of the historical Jesus. These images bear some resemblance to depictions of kouroi

figures in Greco-Roman art.



Figure 6-12: Good shepherd by Leinad-Z~commonswiki is licensed under Public Domain



Figure 6-13: Good shepherd from Wikimedia is licensed under Public Domain

The almost total absence from Christian paintings during the persecution period of the cross, except in the disguised form of the anchor, is notable. The cross, symbolizing Jesus's crucifixion, was not represented explicitly for several centuries, possibly because crucifixion was a punishment meted out to common criminals, but also because literary sources noted that it was a symbol recognized as specifically Christian, as the sign of the cross was made by Christians from the earliest days of the religion. (83)

House Church at Dura-Europos

The house church at Dura-Europos is the oldest known house church. One of the walls within the structure was inscribed with a date that was interpreted as 231. It was preserved when it was filled with earth to strengthen the city's fortifications against an attack by the Sassanians in 256 CE. Despite the larger atmosphere of persecution, the artifacts found in the house church provide evidence of localized Roman tolerance for a Christian presence. This location housed frescos of biblical scenes including a figure of Jesus healing the sick.

When Christianity emerged in the Late Antique world, Christian ceremony and worship were secretive. Before Christianity was legalized in the fourth century, Christians suffered intermittent periods of persecution at the hands of the Romans. Therefore, Christian worship was purposefully kept as inconspicuous as possible. Rather than building prominent new structures for express religious use, Christians in the Late Antique world took advantage of pre-existing, private structures — houses.



Figure 6-14: House Church at Dura-Europos by Heretiq (assumed) is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5

The house church in general was known as the domus ecclesiae, Latin for house and assembly. Domi ecclesiae emerged in third-century Rome and are closely tied to domestic Roman architecture of this period, specifically to the peristyle house in which the rooms were arranged around a central courtyard. These rooms were often adjoined to create a larger gathering space that could accommodate small crowds of around fifty people.

Other rooms were used for different religious and ceremonial purpose, including education, the celebration of the Eucharist, the baptism of Christian converts, storage of charitable items, and private prayer and mass. The plan of the house church at Dura-Europos illustrates how house churches elsewhere were designed.

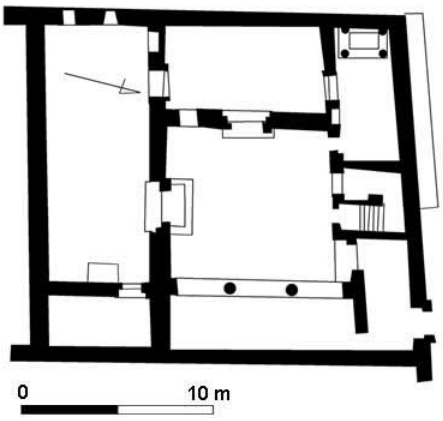


Figure 6-15: Plan of the house with church of Dura Europos by Udimu is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

When Christianity was legalized in the fourth century, Christians were no longer forced to use pre-existing homes for their churches and meeting houses. Instead, they began to build churches of their own. Even then, Christian churches often purposefully featured unassuming—even plain—exteriors. They tended to be much larger as the rise in the popularity of the Christian faith meant that churches needed to accommodate an increasing volume of people. [(83)]

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: Byzantine and Muslim Culture

7.1: About This Module- Byzantine and Muslim Culture

7.2: The Byzantine Empire

7.3: Islamic Civilization

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7.1: About This Module- Byzantine and Muslim Culture

Topics Covered:

- Byzantine and Muslim Civilizations to Include
  - Byzantine and Muslim Architecture such as the Hagia Sophia
  - Aniconism and Iconoclasm
  - Constantinople
  - Justinian
  - Muhammad and Islam

This module introduces students to Byzantine and Muslim artistic, political, and religious expressions that developed between late antiquity and the Late Middle Ages. Students will determine what cultural artifacts such as the Hagia Sophia and the Qur'an tell us about the historical context of the Byzantine and Muslim civilizations. Students will demonstrate understanding of cultural expressions by noting how the role that icons played in Byzantine and Muslim culture. Students will recognize the contribution that Byzantines and Muslims made to the world, particularly in the fields of Law and Medicine. Finally, students will also demonstrate proficiency in critical thought by comparing the role that religion played in the governance of the Byzantine Empire and early Muslim states. (1)

Learning Outcomes Related to this Module

1. Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
2. Recognize the relationships between cultural expressions and their contexts
3. Understand cultural expressions
4. Interpret and evaluate cultural artifacts and/or their contexts for significance
5. Recognize the important contributions of the classical world; understand and analyze specific primary texts from the classical world

Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Sort events in historical order from the Byzantine and Islamic civilizations.
- Identify the cultural contributions of the Byzantine and Islamic civilizations.
- Identify the historical developments that led to the rise and fall of the Byzantine Empire.
- Identify religious developments within the Greek Orthodox Church during the Middle Ages.
- Identify key elements of Islamic belief and practice.
- Identify the historical developments that led to the development of Islam in the Middle East and the rise of the early caliphates.
- Identify artistic and architectural achievements of Byzantine and Muslim culture.
- Identify major Byzantine and Islamic figures and their achievements. (1)

Assigned Readings

- Learning Unit – Byzantine and Muslim Culture

Assignments | Learning Activities

- Review Learning Unit
- Participate in Discussion 7
- Complete Timeline Assignment 7
- Complete Assessment Module 7

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7.2: The Byzantine Empire

The Beginnings of the Byzantine Empire

The Byzantine Empire was the continuation of the Roman Empire in the Greek-speaking, eastern part of the Mediterranean. Christian in nature, it was perennially at war with the Muslims, Flourishing during the reign of the Macedonian emperors, its demise was the consequence of attacks by Seljuk Turks, Crusaders, and Ottoman Turks.

Byzantium was the name of a small, but important town at the Bosphorus, the strait which connects the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean to the Black Sea, and separates the continents of Europe and Asia. In Greek times the town was at the frontier between the Greek and the Persian world. In the fourth century BCE, Alexander the Great made both worlds part of his Hellenistic universe, and later Byzantium became a town of growing importance within the Roman Empire.

By the third century CE, the Romans had many thousands of miles of border to defend. Growing pressure caused a crisis, especially in the Danube/Balkan area, where the Goths violated the borders. In the East, the Sasanian Persians transgressed the frontiers along the Euphrates and Tigris. The emperor Constantine the Great (reign 306–337 CE) was one of the first to realize the impossibility of managing the empire's problems from distant Rome. (86)



Figure 7-1: Map of Constantinople by Cristoforo Buondelmonti is licensed under Public Domain

In 330 CE, Constantine decided to make Byzantium, which he had established a couple of years before and named after himself, his new residence. Constantinople lay halfway between the Balkan and the Euphrates, and not too far from the immense wealth and manpower of Asia Minor, the vital part of the empire.

"Byzantium" was to become the name for the East-Roman Empire. After the death of Constantine, in an attempt to overcome the growing military and administrative problem, the Roman Empire was divided into an eastern and a western part. The western part is considered as definitely finished by the year 476 CE, when its last ruler was dethroned and a military leader, Odoacer, took power. (86)

Byzantine Culture

Since the age of the great historian Edward Gibbon, the Byzantine Empire has a reputation of stagnation, great luxury and corruption. Most surely the emperors in Constantinople held an eastern court. That means court life was ruled by a very formal hierarchy. There were all kinds of political intrigues between factions. However, the image of a luxury-addicted, conspiring, decadent court with treacherous empresses and an inert state system is historically inaccurate. On the contrary: for its age, the Byzantine Empire was quite modern. Its tax system and administration were so efficient that the empire survived more than a thousand years.

The culture of Byzantium was rich and affluent, while science and technology also flourished. Very important for us, nowadays, was the Byzantine tradition of rhetoric and public debate. Philosophical and theological discourses were important in public life, even emperors taking part in them. The debates kept knowledge and admiration for the Greek philosophical and scientific heritage alive. Byzantine intellectuals quoted their classical predecessors with great respect, even though they had not been Christians. And although it was the Byzantine emperor Justinian who closed Plato's famous Academy of Athens in 529 CE, the Byzantines are also responsible for much of the passing on of the Greek legacy to the Muslims, who later helped Europe to explore this knowledge again and so stood at the beginning of European Renaissance. (86)

Byzantine Religion

In the course of the fourth century, the Roman world became increasingly Christian, and the Byzantine Empire was certainly a Christian state. It was the first empire in the world to be founded not only on worldly power, but also on the authority of the Church. Paganism, however, stayed an important source of inspiration for many people during the first centuries of the Byzantine Empire.

When Christianity became organized, the Church was led by five patriarchs, who resided in Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome. The Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) decided that the patriarch of Constantinople was to be the second in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Only the pope in Rome was his superior. After the Great Schism of 1054 CE the eastern (Orthodox) church separated from the western (Roman Catholic) church. The center of influence of the orthodox churches later shifted to Moscow. (86)

Byzantine Iconography

Icon painting, as distinct from other forms of painting, emerged in the Early Byzantine period as an aid to religious devotion. In contrast, earlier Christian art had relied more on allegory and symbolism. For example, earlier art might have featured a lamb or a fish rather than Christ in human form. Before long, religious figures were being depicted in their human form to emphasize their humanity as well as their spirituality. While this issue would be debated and challenged during the later Iconoclastic period, for a time, images of the saints in icon paintings flourished.

After the adoption of Christianity as the only permissible Roman state religion under Theodosius I, Christian art began to change not only in quality and sophistication but also in nature. Paintings of martyrs and their feats began to appear, and early writers commented on their lifelike effect. Statues in the round were avoided as being too close to the principal artistic focus of pagan cult practices, as they have continued to be (with some small-scale exceptions) throughout the history of Eastern Christianity.

Icons were more religious than aesthetic in nature. They were understood to manifest the unique "presence" of the figure depicted by means of a "likeness" to that figure maintained through carefully maintained canons of representation. Therefore, very little room is made for artistic license. Almost every aspect of the subject matter has a symbolic aspect. Christ, the saints, and the angels all have halos. Angels, as well as some depictions of the Holy Trinity, have wings because they are messengers. Figures have consistent facial appearances, hold attributes personal to them, and use a few conventional poses.

Color plays an important role, as well. Gold represents the radiance of Heaven. Red signifies divine life, while blue is the color of human life. White is the Uncreated Light of God, only used for scenes depicting the resurrection and transfiguration of Christ. In icons of Jesus and Mary, Jesus wears a red undergarment with a blue outer garment (God as Human), and Mary wears a blue undergarment with a red outer garment (humanity granted divine gifts). Thus, the doctrine of deification is conveyed by icons. Most icons incorporate some calligraphic text naming the person or event depicted. Because letters also carry symbolic significance, writing is often presented in a stylized manner. (87)

Justinian

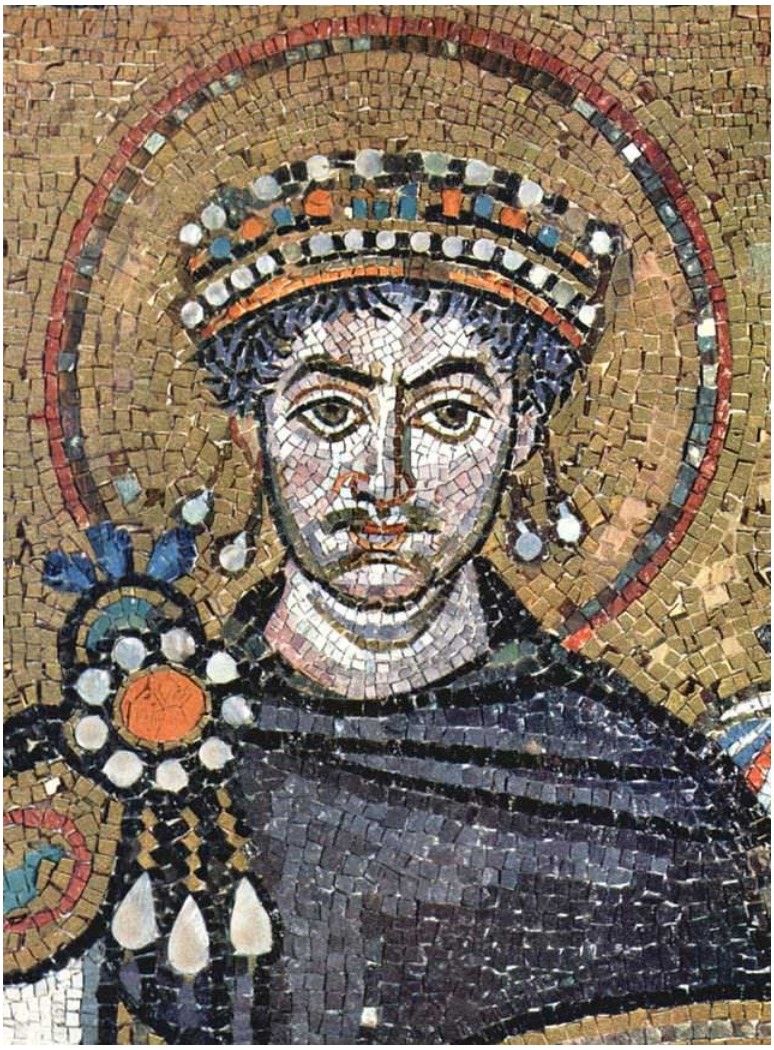


Figure 7-2: Justinian I sponsored by a Greek banker, Julius Argentarius is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 3.0

Byzantine history goes from the founding of Constantinople as imperial residence on 11 May 330 CE until Tuesday 29 May 1453 CE, when the Ottoman sultan Memhet II conquered the city. Most times the history of the Empire is divided in three periods.

The first of these, from 330 till 867 CE, saw the creation and survival of a powerful empire. During the reign of Justinian (527–565 CE), a last attempt was made to reunite the whole Roman Empire under one ruler, the one in Constantinople. This plan largely succeeded: the wealthy provinces in Italy and Africa were reconquered, Libya was rejuvenated, and money bought sufficient diplomatic influence in the realms of the Frankish rulers in Gaul and the Visigothic dynasty in Spain. The rediscovered unity was celebrated with the construction of the church of Holy Wisdom, Hagia Sophia, in Constantinople. The price for the reunion, however, was high. Justinian had to pay off the Sasanian Persians, and had to deal with firm resistance, for instance in Italy.

Under Justinian, the lawyer Tribonian (500–547 CE) created the famous Corpus Iuris. The Code of Justinian, a compilation of all the imperial laws, was published in 529 CE; soon the Institutions (a handbook) and the Digests (fifty books of jurisprudence), were added. The project was completed with some additional laws, the Novellae. The achievement becomes even more impressive when we realize that Tribonian was temporarily relieved of his function during the Nika riots of 532 CE, which in the end weakened the position of patricians and senators in the government, and strengthened the position of the emperor and his wife. (86)

Justinian I devoted much of his reign (527–565 CE) to reconquering Italy, North Africa, and Spain. During his reign, he sought to revive the empire's greatness and reconquer the lost western half of the historical Roman Empire. This attempt at restoration included an ambitious building program in Constantinople and elsewhere in the empire, by far the most substantial architectural achievement by one person in history.

One notable structure for which Justinian was responsible was the Hagia Sophia, or Church of Holy Wisdom, built by Isidorus of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles, both of whom would oversee most building projects that Justinian ordered within Constantinople. (88)

The Hagia Sophia

Translated as “Holy Wisdom,” the Hagia Sophia was originally built and dedicated in the fourth century and served as the cathedral, or bishop’s seat, for Constantinople. From its dedication in 360 CE to the Nika Revolt of 532 CE, which proved to be the most violent week of rioting in city’s history, the Hagia Sophia was destroyed twice and rebuilt once, reflecting the symbolic power this religious structure held in its relation not only to Christianity but also to the city of Constantinople.

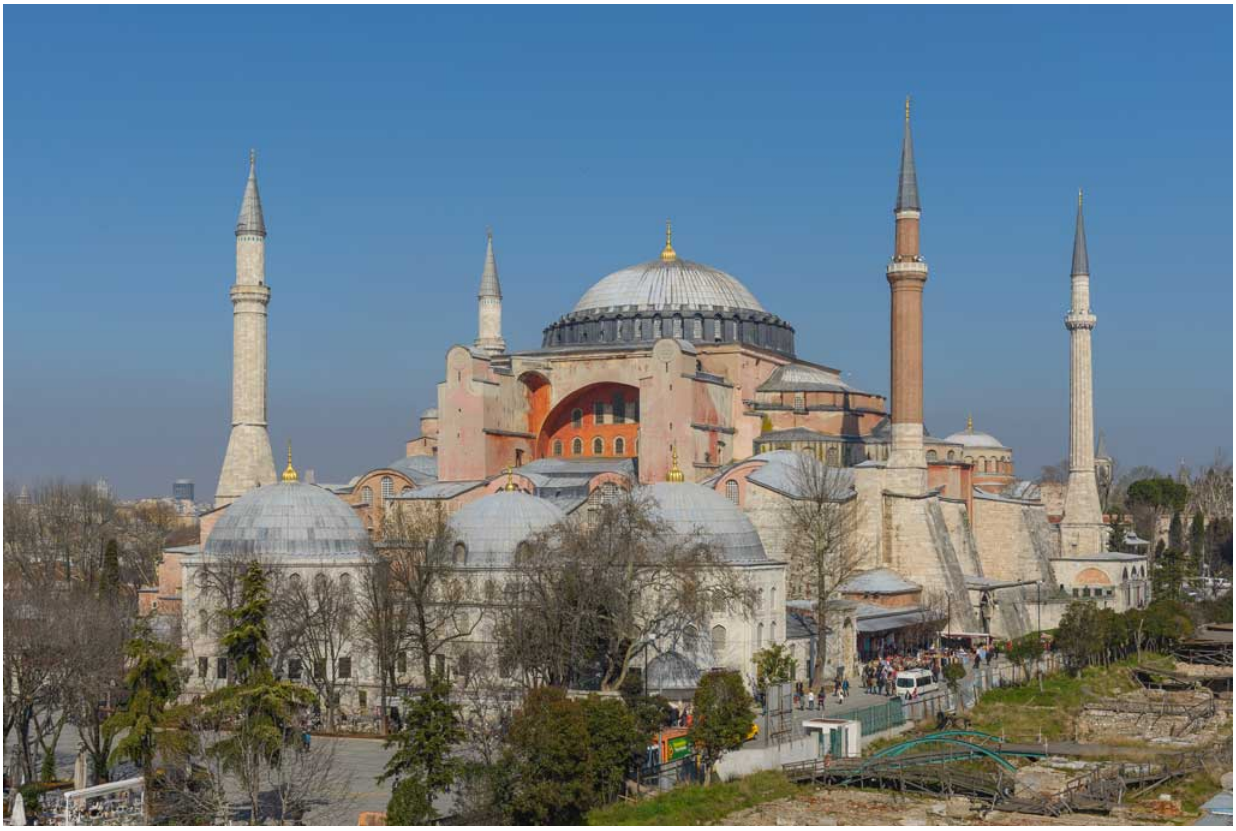


Figure 7-3: Hagia Sophia by Arild Vågen is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

One of Justinian I’s first building campaigns following the Nika Revolt was to rebuild this cathedral. He turned to scholars Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus to design a revolutionary new church, one that adopted a central plan with extensions to the west and east by half dome apses. The dramatically raised, soaring central dome seems to magically float on light, creating a visually spectacular interior that originally had vibrant mosaic work.

Unfortunately, much of the original mosaic work has been destroyed.

Earthquakes in the sixth and ninth centuries, and the period of Byzantine Iconoclasm beginning around 726 CE, significantly damaged the structure and decoration of the Hagia Sophia. In its conversion to a mosque in 1453, when the Ottoman Empire overtook Constantinople, the religious work experienced more degradation, as mosque workers were known to sell individual mosaic tesserae as good luck charms for those who visited the space. (89)



Figure 7-4: The Christ Pantocrator of the Deesis mosaic in Hagia Sophia by Myrabella is licensed under Public Domain

Justinian's Law

Byzantine Emperor Justinian I achieved lasting fame through his judicial reforms, particularly through the complete revision of all Roman law, something that had not previously been attempted. There existed three codices of imperial laws and other individual laws, many of which conflicted or were out of date. The total of Justinian's legislature is known today as the *Corpus juris civilis* . It

was not in general use during the Early Middle Ages. After the Early Middle Ages, interest in it revived. It was “received” or imitated as private law, and its public law content was quarried for arguments by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities. The revived Roman law, in turn, became the foundation of law in all civil law jurisdictions.

The provisions of the *Corpus Juris Civilis* also influenced the canon law of the Roman Catholic Church; it was said that *ecclesia vivit lege romana* — the church lives by Roman law. Its influence on common law legal systems has been much smaller, although some basic concepts from the *Corpus* have survived through Norman law — such as the contrast, especially in the Institutes, between “law” (statute) and custom. The *Corpus* continues to have a major influence on public international law. Its four parts thus constitute the foundation documents of the western legal tradition. (90)

Iconoclast Controversy



Figure 7-5: Byzantine iconoclasm by Chludov 9th century is licensed under Public Domain

Around 726 CE, a period of iconoclasm brought the majority of Byzantine artistic production to a halt. Literally translated as “image breaking,” iconoclasm involved the destruction or desecration of religious imagery for the sake of preventing idolatry, as illustrated in a ninth-century drawing from the Chudlov Psalter. This moment was spurred by ongoing religious debate regarding the function and appropriateness of religious imagery. Those who argued against the use of images feared that worshipers would became too engrossed in the image itself, worshiping the image as an idol rather than focusing on the religious narrative or figures it represents. This controversial issue came to a head under Emperor Leo III, who prohibited the creation of new religious imagery and called for the removal and destruction of extant imagery. During this period, the only acceptable imagery to be included in church interiors was the cross. Following this iconoclastic outbreak, the Middle Byzantine Period (843–1204 CE) began when Empress Theodora reinstated the practice of venerating icons, thereby ushering in a new generation of artistic and architectural production.

The return of the splendor of Byzantine interior decoration can be seen in the Saint Mark’s Cathedral, Venice. Expanding the footprint of the Hagia Sophia to take on a Greek cross shape, Saint Mark’s Cathedral includes five monumental domes, each replete with golden mosaic work (on which work continued until the seventeenth century). While the imagery is no less lavish than earlier examples, imagery has been simplified (e.g., the removal of many superfluous details) since at this point, artists sought to emphasize the primacy of the religious narrative or figure being portrayed.

This is illustrated in a relatively contemporaneous version of Christ Pantocrator in the Church of the Dormition, Daphni, Greece (c. 1080–1100 CE). Located in the central dome of the church, this Christ Pantocrator looms large over worshipers. Holding the New Testament in his left arm and assuming a gesture of blessing with his right, Christ here assumes the traditional posture as Pantocrator, or “ruler of all,” a conventional representation of Christ that became popular during this era. (89)

The Collapse of the Byzantine Empire

After Justinian, contraction largely defines Byzantine history. The first onset of the Bubonic plague in Europe was one factor that contributed to a weakening of the Byzantine Empire in political and economic ways. As the disease spread throughout the Mediterranean world, the empire's ability to resist its enemies weakened. By 568 CE, the Lombards successfully invaded northern Italy and defeated the small Byzantine garrison, leading to the fracturing of the Italian peninsula, which remained divided and split until re-unification in the 19 th century CE. In the Roman provinces of North Africa and the Near East, the empire was unable to stem the encroachment of Arabs. The decreased size, and the inability of the Byzantine army to resist outside forces, was largely due to its inability to recruit and train new volunteers due to the spread of illness and death. The decrease in the population not only impacted the military and the empire's defenses, but the economic and administrative structures of the empire began to collapse or disappear.

Decay became inevitable after the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 CE after the Byzantine army was bested by the Seljuk Turks in combat. After the battle, the Byzantine Empire lost Antioch, Aleppo, and Manzikert, and within years, the whole of Asia Minor was overrun by the Seljuk Kingdom. The loss of territory and personnel left a power vacuum that western Europeans proved more than willing to fill. The Byzantine Emperor sent a request for help to pope Urban II, who responded by summoning the western world for the Crusades. The western warriors swore loyalty to the emperor, reconquered parts of Anatolia, but kept Antioch, Edessa, and the Holy Land for themselves. For more than half a century, the empire was ruled by monarchs from the West. The Byzantine Empire continued to lose territory, however, until finally the Ottoman Empire under Mehmet II conquered Constantinople in 1453 CE and took over government. (91)(86)

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7.3: Islamic Civilization

Islamic Civilization

The Rise of Muhammad

A man meditating alone in a cave near Mecca received a religious vision. This vision laid the foundations for a new religion. The year was 610 and the man's name was Muhammad. And the belief system that arose from Muhammad's ideas became the basis of one of the world's most widely practiced religions: Islam.

Muhammad was born around 570 in the city of Mecca, located on the Arabian Peninsula. Both of his parents died before Muhammad was six and he was raised by his grandfather and uncle. His family belonged to a poor clan that was active in Mecca politics.

Following the traditions of wealthy families, he spent part of his childhood living with a Bedouin family. Bedouins led fairly isolated lives as nomadic herders in the harsh Arabian desert. Muhammad's experiences among these people most likely had a strong influence on the development of Islam.

In his twenties, Muhammad began working as a merchant and soon married his employer, a rich woman named Khadijah. Over the next 20 years he became a wealthy and respected trader, traveling throughout the Middle East. He and his wife had six children — two boys (who did not live into adulthood) and four girls. By the time he was 40, he began having religious visions that would change his life.

While meditating in a cave on Mount Hira, Muhammad had a revelation. He came to believe that he was called on by God to be a prophet and teacher of a new faith, Islam, which means literally "submission."

This new faith incorporated aspects of Judaism and Christianity. It respected the holy books of these religions and its great leaders and prophets — Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others. Muhammad called Abraham "Khalil" ("God's friend") and identified him as Islam's ancient patriarch. Islam traces its heritage through Abraham's son Ishmael.

Muhammad believed that he himself was God's final prophet.

Central to Islamic beliefs are the Five Pillars of Faith, which all followers of Islam — called Muslims — must follow:

- Profession that there is only one universal God: Allah.
- Followers of Islam (Muslims) are expected to pray five times each day while facing Mecca.
- All Muslims are expected to pay a yearly tax that is mostly intended to help the poor and needy.
- For the entire month of Ramadan, Muslims must not eat, smoke, drink, or have sexual relations from sunrise to sunset
- All able Muslims must make a pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca at least once in their lifetimes.

Muhammad's message was especially well received by the poor and slaves. But many people were opposed to his message. This opposition only seemed to make him more determined. After years of publicly promoting his ideas, he became so disliked that some began plotting his murder.

In 622, fearing for his life, Muhammad fled to the town of Medina. This flight from Mecca to Medina became known as the Hegira, Arabic for "flight." The Muslim calendar begins on this year.

In Medina, the local people welcomed Muhammad and his followers. There, Muhammad built the first mosque, or Islamic temple, and began to work to separate Islam from Judaism and Christianity, which had originally influenced him.

Whereas his followers had originally prayed while facing toward Jerusalem, he now had them face toward Mecca. Muhammad continued to have revelations from Allah. The ideas from these revelations formed the basis of a poetic text called the Koran, which contains the fundamental ideas of Islam.

Muhammad fought a number of battles against the people of Mecca. In 629, Muhammad returned to Mecca with an army of 1500 converts to Islam and entered the city unopposed and without bloodshed. Before his death two years later, he forcefully converted most of the Arabian Peninsula to his new faith and built a small empire. [92]

Succession after Muhammad's Death

With Muhammad's death in 632 CE, disagreement broke out among his followers over deciding his successor. Muhammad's prominent companion Umar ibn al-Khattab nominated Abu Bakr, Muhammad's friend and collaborator. To retain the cohesion of the Islamic state, Abu Bakr divided his Muslim army to force the Arabian tribes into submission. After a series of successful campaigns, Abu Bakr's general Khalid ibn Walid defeated a competing prophet and the Arabian peninsula was united under the caliphate in Medina. Once the rebellions had been quelled, Abu Bakr began a war of conquest. In just a few short decades, his campaigns led to one of the largest empires in history. Muslim armies conquered most of Arabia by 633, followed by north Africa, Mesopotamia, and Persia, significantly shaping the history of the world through the spread of Islam.

Abu Bakr nominated Umar as his successor on his deathbed. Umar ibn Khattab, the second caliph, was killed by a Persian named Piruz Nahavandi. Umar's successor, Uthman Ibn Affan, was elected by a council of electors (Majlis). Uthman was killed by members of a disaffected group. Ali then took control, but was not universally accepted as caliph by the governors of Egypt, and later by some of his own guard. He faced two major rebellions and was assassinated by Abdl-alRahman, a Kharijite. Ali's tumultuous rule lasted only five years. The followers of Ali later became the Shi'a minority sect of Islam, which rejects the legitimacy of the first three caliphs. The followers of all four Rashidun caliphs (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali) became the majority Sunni sect. [93]

The Islamic Caliphates

The Umayyad family had first come to power under the third caliph, Uthman ibn Affan (r. 644–656), but the Umayyad regime was founded by Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan, long-time governor of Syria, after the end of the First Muslim Civil War in 661 CE. Syria remained the Umayyads' main power base thereafter, and Damascus was their capital.

The Umayyad caliphate was marked both by territorial expansion and by the administrative and cultural problems that such expansion created. Despite some notable exceptions, the Umayyads tended to favor the rights of the old Arab families, and in particular their own, over those of newly converted Muslims (mawali). Therefore, they held to a less universalist conception of Islam than did many of their rivals.

During the period of the Umayyads, Arabic became the administrative language, in which state documents and currency were issued. Mass conversions brought a large influx of Muslims to the caliphate. The Umayyads also constructed famous buildings such as the Dome of the Rock at Jerusalem and the Umayyad Mosque at Damascus.

According to one common view, the Umayyads transformed the caliphate from a religious institution (during the Rashidun) to a dynastic one. However, the Umayyad caliphs do seem to have understood themselves as the representatives of God on Earth.

Many Muslims criticized the Umayyads for having too many non-Muslim, former Roman administrators in their government. St. John of Damascus was also a high administrator in the Umayyad administration. As the Muslims took over cities, they left the people's political representatives and the Roman tax collectors and administrators. The people's political representatives calculated and negotiated taxes. The central government and the local governments got paid respectively for the services they provided. Many Christian cities used some of the taxes to maintain their churches and run their own organizations. Later, the Umayyads were criticized by some Muslims for not reducing the taxes of the people who converted to Islam.

The Umayyad dynasty was overthrown by another family of Meccan origin, the Abbasids, in 750 CE. The Abbasids distinguished themselves from the Umayyads by attacking their moral character and administration. In particular, they appealed to non-Arab Muslims, known as mawali, who remained outside the kinship-based society of the Arabs and were perceived as a lower class within the Umayyad empire. The Abbasid dynasty descended from Muhammad's youngest uncle, Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib (566–653 CE), from whom the dynasty takes its name.

The Abbasids, who ruled from Baghdad, had an unbroken line of caliphs for over three centuries, consolidating Islamic rule and cultivating great intellectual and cultural developments in the Middle East in the Golden Age of Islam. By 940 CE, however, the power of the caliphate under the Abbasids began waning as non-Arabs gained influence and the various subordinate sultans and emirs became increasingly independent. The political power of the Abbasids largely ended with the rise of the Buyids and the Seljuq Turks in 1258 CE. Though lacking in political power, the dynasty continued to claim authority in religious matters until after the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517. [93][94][95]

Islamic Golden Age

From the 8 th century to the 13 th century, during which much of the historically Islamic world was ruled by various caliphates, science, economic development, and cultural works flourished. This period is traditionally understood to have begun during the reign of the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid (786–809) with the inauguration of the House of Wisdom in Baghdad, where scholars from various parts of the world with different cultural backgrounds were mandated to gather and translate all of the world's classical knowledge into the Arabic language. (11)

Islamic Literature

With the introduction of paper, information was democratized and it became possible to make a living from simply writing and selling books. The use of paper spread from China into Muslim regions in the 8 th century, and then to Spain (and then the rest of Europe) in the 10 th century. Paper was easier to manufacture than parchment and less likely to crack than papyrus, and could absorb ink, making it difficult to erase and ideal for keeping records. Islamic paper makers devised assembly-line methods of hand-copying manuscripts to turn out editions far larger than any available in Europe for centuries. The best known fiction from the Islamic world is *The Book of One Thousand and One Nights* , which took form in the 10 th century and reached its final form by the 14 th century, although the number and type of tales vary.

The Arabs assimilated the scientific knowledge of the civilizations they had conquered, including the ancient Greek, Roman, Persian, Chinese, Indian, Egyptian, and Phoenician civilizations. Scientists recovered the Alexandrian mathematical, geometric, and astronomical knowledge, such as that of Euclid and Claudius Ptolemy.(96)

Islamic Scholarship

Persian scientist Muhammad ibn MÅ«sÄ‍ al-KhwÄ‍rizmÄ« significantly developed algebra in in his landmark text, *Kitab al-Jabr wa-l-Muqabala* , from which the term "algebra" is derived. The term "algorithm" is derived from the name of the scholar al-Khwarizmi, who was also responsible for introducing the Arabic numerals and Hindu-Arabic numeral system beyond the Indian subcontinent. In calculus, the scholar Alhazen discovered the sum formula for the fourth power, using a method readily generalizable to determine the sum for any integral power. He used this to find the volume of a paraboloid.

Medicine was a central part of medieval Islamic culture. Responding to circumstances of time and place, Islamic physicians and scholars developed a large and complex medical literature exploring and synthesizing the theory and practice of medicine. Islamic medicine was built on tradition, chiefly the theoretical and practical knowledge developed in India, Greece, Persia, and Rome. Islamic scholars translated their writings from Syriac, Greek, and Sanskrit into Arabic and then produced new medical knowledge based on those texts. In order to make the Greek tradition more accessible, understandable, and teachable, Islamic scholars organized the Greco-Roman medical knowledge into encyclopedias. (96)

Islamic Art

Ceramics, glass, metalwork, textiles, illuminated manuscripts, and woodwork flourished during the Islamic Golden Age. Manuscript illumination became an important and greatly respected art, and portrait miniature painting flourished in Persia. Calligraphy, an essential aspect of written Arabic, developed in manuscripts and architectural decoration.

Islamic art is not restricted to religious art, but instead includes all of the art of the rich and varied cultures of Islamic societies. It frequently includes secular elements and elements that are forbidden by some Islamic theologians. Islamic religious art differs greatly from Christian religious art traditions. Because figural representations are generally considered to be forbidden in Islam, the word takes on religious meaning in art as seen in the tradition of calligraphic inscriptions. Calligraphy and the decoration of manuscript Qu'rans is an important aspect of Islamic art as the word takes on religious and artistic significance. Islamic architecture, such asmosques and palatial gardens of paradise, are also embedded with religious significance.

While examples of Islamic figurative painting do exist, and may cover religious scenes, these examples are typically from secular contexts, such as the walls of palaces or illuminated books of poetry. Other religious art, such as glass mosque lamps, Girih tiles, woodwork, and carpets usually demonstrate the same style and motifs as contemporary secular art, although they exhibit more prominent religious inscriptions.

Islamic art was influenced by Greek, Roman, early Christian, and Byzantine art styles, as well as the Sassanian art of pre-Islamic Persia. Central Asian styles were brought in with various nomadic incursions; and Chinese influences had a formative effect on

Islamic painting, pottery, and textiles. [96][97]

Themes of Islamic Art

There are repeating elements in Islamic art, such as the use of stylized, geometrical floral or vegetal designs in a repetition known as the arabesque. The arabesque in Islamic art is often used to symbolize the transcendent, indivisible and infinite nature of God. Some scholars believe that mistakes in repetitions may be intentionally introduced as a show of humility by artists who believe only God can produce perfection.



Figure 7-6: A doorway at the Mughal Agra Fort, India by Hans A. Rosbach is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Typically, though not entirely, Islamic art has focused on the depiction of patterns and Arabic calligraphy, rather than human or animal figures, because it is believed by many Muslims that the depiction of the human form is idolatry and thereby a sin against God, forbidden in the Qur'an. However, depictions of the human form and animals can be found in all eras of Islamic secular art. Depictions of the human form in art intended for the purpose of worship is considered idolatry and is forbidden in Islamic law, known as Sharia law. [97]

Islamic Calligraphy

In a religion where figural representations are considered to be an act of idolatry, it is no surprise that the word and its artistic representation have become an important aspect in Islamic art. The most important religious text in Islam is the Qur'an, which is believed to be the word of God. There are many examples of calligraphy and calligraphic inscriptions pertaining to verses from the Qur'an in Islamic arts.



Figure 7-7: A section of the Koran by unknown artist is licensed under Public Domain

The earliest form of Arabic calligraphy is kufic script, which is noted for is angular form. Arabic is read from right to left and only the consonants are written. The black ink in the image above from a 9 th century Qur'an marks the consonants for the reader. The red dots that are visible on the page note the vowels.

However, calligraphic design is not limited to the book in Islamic art. Calligraphy is found in several different types of art, such as architecture. The interior of the Hagia Sophia, for example, features calligraphic inscriptions within its six interior roundels as well its uppermost dome.

As in Europe in the Middle Ages, religious exhortations such as Qur'anic verses may be also included in secular objects, especially coins, tiles, and metalwork. Calligraphic inscriptions were not exclusive to the Qur'an, but also included verses of poetry or recorded ownership or donation. Calligraphers were highly regarded in Islam, reinforcing the importance on the word and its religious and artistic significance. (98)



Figure 7-8: Example of zoomorphic arabic calligraphy by YassineMrabet is licensed under Public Domain

Islamic Architecture

Islamic architecture encompasses a wide range of both secular and religious styles. The principal Islamic architectural example is the Mosque. Specifically recognizable Islamic architectural style emerged soon after Muhammad's time, and incorporated Roman building traditions with the addition of localized adaptations of the former Sassanid and Byzantine models.

The Islamic mosque has historically been both a place of prayer and a community meeting space. The early mosques are believed to be inspired by Muhammad's home in Medina, which had served as the first mosque. The Great Mosque of Kairouan (in Tunisia) is one of the best preserved and most significant examples of early great mosques. Founded in 670, it contains all of the architectural features that distinguish early mosques: a minaret, a large courtyard surrounded by porticos, and a hypostyle prayer hall. (99)

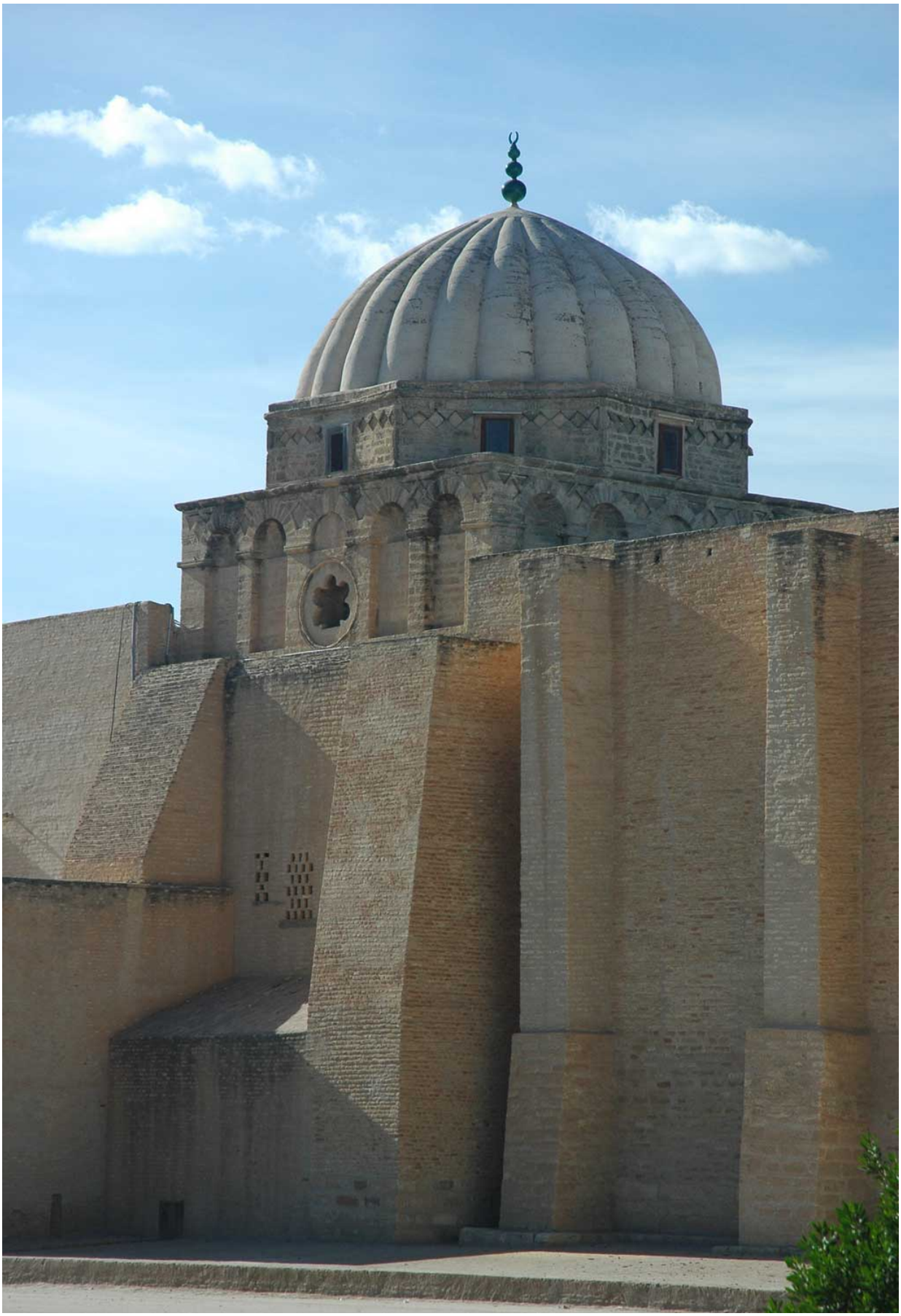


Figure 7-9: Dome of the mihrab by GIRAUD Patrick is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.5

After the Ottoman Conquest, many of the Christian mosaics within the Hagia Sophia were covered over with Islamic calligraphy and only rediscovered in the 20 th century CE after the secularization of Turkey (Hagia Sophia became a museum in 1935 CE). This includes the mosaic on the main dome which was probably a Christ Pantocrator (All-Powerful) which spanned the whole ceiling and is now covered by remarkable gold calligraphy. On the floor of the nave there is the Omphalion (navel of the earth), a large circular marble slab which is where the Roman and Byzantine Emperors were coronated. One of the final additions the Ottoman Sultans made to finalize the transition from Christian basilica to Islamic mosque was the inclusion of eight massive medallions hung on columns in the nave which have Arabic calligraphy inscribed upon them with the names of Allah, the Prophet, the first four Caliphs, and the Prophet's two grandsons. The Ottomans also added a mihrab, a minbar, and four enormous minarets in order to complete the transition to a mosque.



Figure 7-10: Hagia Sophia, Istanbul by Magnus Manske is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Additionally, after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 CE, the genius of Hagia Sophia's architects continued to dominate the conquering Ottomans who made use of the designs for their mosques. The Ottomans conquered the city, but the artistic culture of the Byzantines, in a way, conquered the Ottomans. Hagia Sophia, under orders from Mehmed the Conqueror, was converted into a mosque within days of the conquest preserving the Byzantine architectural legacy in a new form and era.

Later Ottoman mosques were equally influenced by Hagia Sophia. The Blue Mosque, for example, preserves a layout inspired by Hagia Sophia that builds upon its innovations of pendentives and semi-domes to create internal space. Additionally, Islam's use of geometric shapes and patterns, as opposed to Orthodox Christianity's use of icons, also finds continuity in Greco-Roman-Byzantine's use of geometry in sacred architecture as mentioned previously. In fact, the very same Sinan who built the Suleymaniye also worked to repair the millennium-old Hagia Sophia during the reign of Selim II. (100)



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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Western European Civilization During the Middle Ages

8.1: About This Module- Western European Civilization During the Middle Ages

8.2: Early Middle Ages and Western Society

8.3: The Rise of Islam, Carolingian Europe, New Kingdoms, and a Revived Byzantium

8.4: Art, Architecture, and Military and Technological Developments

8.5: High Middle Ages

8.6: The Late Middle Ages and Collapse of Byzantium

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8.1: About This Module- Western European Civilization During the Middle Ages

Topics Covered:

- Latin West Civilization to Include
  - Bubonic Plague
  - Carolingian Culture
  - Christianity during the Middle Ages
  - Crusades
  - Latin West Artistic styles such as Romanesque and Gothic
  - Latin West Architecture styles such as Westwork
  - Ottonian Culture
  - The Crusades
  - The Feudal System and its Collapse

This module introduces students to Western European civilization during the Middle Ages. Students will determine what cultural artifacts what architecture from the Carolingian, Gothic and Romanesque eras tell us about their historical contexts. Students will demonstrate understanding of cultural expressions by noting how the art produced by Western Europeans during the Middle Ages compared with their Byzantine neighbors. Students will recognize the contributions made by Western Europeans during the Middle Ages with respect to the reintroduction the democratic ideals in the West and the birth of the nation-state. Students demonstrate critical thinking by assessing the extent to which it is appropriate to refer to the Middle Ages as the 'Dark Ages.' [(1)]

Learning Outcomes Related to this Module

1. Demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking
2. Recognize the relationships between cultural expressions and their contexts
3. Understand cultural expressions
4. Interpret and evaluate cultural artifacts and/or their contexts for significance
5. Recognize the important contributions of the medieval world; understand and analyze specific primary texts from the medieval world

Objectives

Upon completion of this module, the student will be able to:

- Sort events in historical order from Middle Age Western European civilization.
- Identify the historical developments that resulted from the collapse of the Roman Empire in Western Europe.
- Identify economic, political, and religious continuities and changes that transpired in Western Europe over the course of the Middle Ages.
- Identify artistic and architectural during the Middle Ages, to include the Carolingian, Ottonian, Romanesque and Gothic eras.
- Compare Western European and Byzantine civilizations during the Middle Ages. [(1)]

Assigned Readings

- Learning Unit – Western European Civilization During the Middle Ages

Assignments

- Review Learning Unit
- Participate in Discussion 8
- Complete Timeline Assignment 8
- Complete Assessment Module 8
- Complete and submit Final Exam
- Submit Capstone Project | Final Paper

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8.2: Early Middle Ages and Western Society

The Middle Ages: An Overview

The Middle Ages or Medieval period is a stretch of European history that lasted from the 5 th until the 15 thcenturies. It began with the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, and was followed by the Renaissance and the Age of Discovery. The Middle Ages is the middle period of the traditional division of Western history into Classical, Medieval, and Modern periods. The period is subdivided into the Early Middle Ages, the High Middle Ages, and the Late Middle Ages.

In the Early Middle Ages, depopulation, deurbanization, and barbarian invasions, which began in Late Antiquity, continued. The barbarian invaders formed new kingdoms in the remains of the Western Roman Empire. In the 7 thcentury North Africa and the Middle East, once part of the Eastern Roman Empire (the Byzantine Empire), became an Islamic Empire after conquest by Muhammad's successors. Although there were substantial changes in society and political structures, the break with Antiquity was not complete. The still sizeable Byzantine Empire survived and remained a major power. The empire's law code, the Code of Justinian, was widely admired. In the West, most kingdoms incorporated extant Roman institutions, while monasteries were founded as Christianity expanded in western Europe. The Franks, under the Carolingian dynasty, established an empire covering much of western Europe; the Carolingian Empire endured until the 9 th century, when it succumbed to the pressures of invasion — the Vikings from the north; the Magyars from the east, and the Saracens from the south.

During the High Middle Ages, which began after AD 1000, the population of Europe increased greatly as technological and agricultural innovations allowed trade to flourish and crop yields to increase. Manorialism — the organization of peasants into villages that owed rent and labor services to the nobles; and feudalism — the political structure whereby knights and lower-status nobles owed military service to their overlords, in return for the right to rent from lands and manors – were two of the ways society was organized in the High Middle Ages. The Crusades, first preached in 1095, were military attempts, by western European Christians, to regain control of the Middle Eastern Holy Land from the Muslims. Kings became the heads of centralized nation states, reducing crime and violence but making the ideal of a unified Christendom more distant. Intellectual life was marked by scholasticism, a philosophy which emphasized joining faith to reason, and by the founding of universities. The philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, the paintings of Giotto, the poetry of Dante and Chaucer, the travels of Marco Polo, and the architecture of Gothic cathedrals such as Chartres are among the outstanding achievements of this period.

The Late Middle Ages were marked by difficulties and calamities, such as famine, plague, and war, which much diminished the population of western Europe; in the four years from 1347 through 1350, the Black Death killed approximately a third of the European population. Controversy, heresy, and schism within the Church paralleled the warfare between states, the civil war, and peasant revolts occurring in the kingdoms. Cultural and technological developments transformed European society, concluding the Late Middle Ages and beginning the Early Modern period. (101)

Early Middle Ages

Although the political structure in western Europe had changed, the divide is not as extensive as some historians have claimed. Although the activity of the barbarians is usually described as "invasions", they were not just military expeditions but were migrations of entire peoples into the Empire. Such movements were aided by the refusal of the western Roman elites to either support the army or pay the taxes that would have allowed the military to suppress the migration.

The emperors of the 5 th century were often controlled by military strongmen such as Stilicho (d. 408), Aspar (d. 471), Ricimer (d. 472), or Gundobad (d. 516), and when the line of western emperors ceased, many of the kings who replaced them were from the same background as those military strongmen. Intermarriage between the new kings and the Roman elites was common.



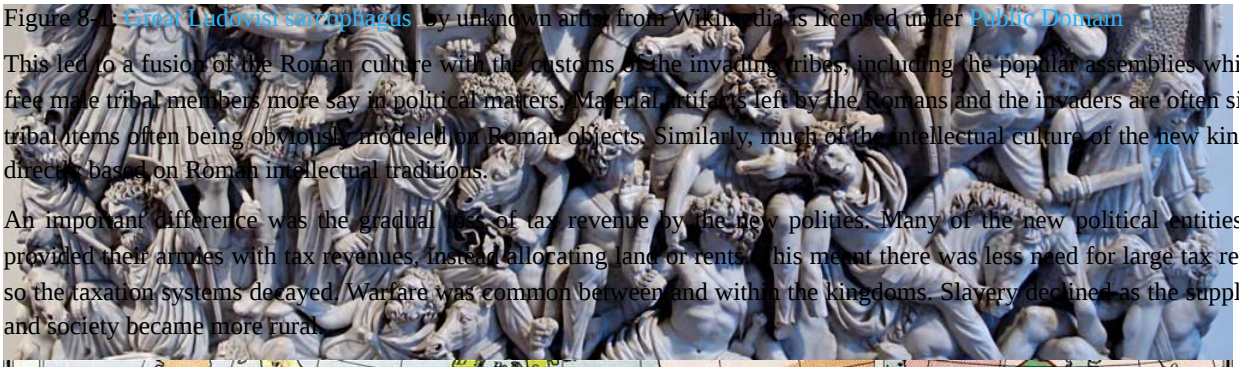


Figure 8-1: Great Ladovisi sarcophagus by unknown artist from Wikimedia is licensed under Public Domain

This led to a fusion of the Roman culture with the customs of the invading tribes, including the popular assemblies which allowed free male tribal members more say in political matters. Material artifacts left by the Romans and the invaders are often similar, with tribal items often being obviously modeled on Roman objects. Similarly, much of the intellectual culture of the new kingdoms was directly based on Roman intellectual traditions.

An important difference was the gradual loss of tax revenue by the new polities. Many of the new political entities no longer provided their armies with tax revenues, instead allocating land or rents. This meant there was less need for large tax revenues and so the taxation systems decayed. Warfare was common between and within the kingdoms. Slavery declined as the supply declined, and society became more rural.



Figure 8-2: Europe around 650 by Ramsey Muir is licensed under Public Domain

Between the 5 th and 8 th centuries, new peoples and powerful individuals filled the political void left by Roman centralized government. The Ostrogoths settled in Italy in the late 5 th century under Theodoric (d. 526) and set up a kingdom marked by its cooperation between the Italians and the Ostrogoths, at least until the last years of Theodoric's reign. The Burgundians settled in Gaul, and after an earlier kingdom was destroyed by the Huns in 436, formed a new kingdom in the 440s between today's Geneva and Lyon. This grew to be a powerful kingdom in the late 5 th and early 6 th centuries. In northern Gaul, the Franks and Britons set up small kingdoms. The Frankish kingdom was centered in northeastern Gaul and the first king of whom much is known is Childeric (d. 481).

Under Childeric's son Clovis (r. 509â€“511), the Frankish kingdom expanded and converted to Christianity. The Britons, related to the natives of Britannia — modern-day Great Britain, settled in what is now Brittany. Other kingdoms were established by the Visigoths in Spain, the Suevi in northwestern Spain, and the Vandals in North Africa. In the 6 th century, the Lombards settled in northern Italy, replacing the Ostrogothic kingdom with a grouping of duchies that occasionally selected a king to rule over all of them. By the late 6 th century this arrangement had been replaced by a permanent monarchy.

With the invasions came new ethnic groups into parts of Europe, but the settlement was uneven, with some regions such as Spain having a larger settlement of new peoples than other places. Gaul's settlement was uneven, with the barbarians settling much heavier in the northeast than in the southwest. Slavonic peoples settled in central and eastern Europe and into the Balkan Peninsula. The settlement of peoples was accompanied by changes in languages. The Latin of the Western Roman Empire was gradually

replaced by languages based on but distinct from Latin, which are collectively known as romance languages. These changes from Latin to the new languages took many centuries and went through a number of stages. Greek remained the language of the Byzantine Empire, but the migrations of the Slavs added Slavonic languages to Eastern Europe. (101)

Western Society

Society in western Europe changed with the new rulers. Some of the Roman elite families died out while others became more involved with Church than secular affairs. The older values of Latin scholarship and education mostly disappeared, and while literacy remained important, it became a practical skill rather than a sign of elite status. In the 4 th century, Jerome dreamed that God rebuked him for spending more time reading Cicero than the Bible.

By the 6 th century, Gregory of Tours had a similar dream, but instead of being chastised for reading Cicero, he was chastised for learning shorthand. By the late 6 th century, the principal means of religious instruction in the Church ceased to be the book and was replaced with music and art. Most intellectual efforts went towards imitating classical scholarship, but some original works were created, along with now-lost oral compositions. The writings of Sidonius Apollinaris, Cassiodorus, and Boethius were typical of the age.

With laymen, a similar change took place, with the aristocratic culture focusing on great feasts held in halls. Clothing for the elites was richly embellished with jewels and gold. Lords and kings supported entourages of fighters who formed the backbone of the military forces of the time. Family ties within the elites were important, as were the virtues of loyalty, courage, and honour. These ties led to the prevalence of the feud in aristocratic society, examples of which included those related by Gregory of Tours that took place in Merovingian Gaul.

Most feuds seem to have ended quickly with the payment of some sort of compensation usually ending the feud. Women took part in aristocratic society mainly in terms of their functions as wives or mothers of men, with the role of mother of a ruler being especially prominent in Merovingian Gaul. In Anglo-Saxon society, the lack of many child rulers meant less role for women as queen mothers but this was compensated for by the increased role played by abbesses of monasteries. Only in Italy does it appear that women were considered as always under the protection and control of some male relative.

Peasant society is much less documented than the nobility. Most of the surviving information available to historians comes from archaeology; few detailed written records documenting peasant life remain from before the 9 thcentury. Most the descriptions of the lower classes come from either law codes or writers from the upper classes. Landholding patterns in the West were not uniform, with some areas having greatly fragmented landholding patterns and other areas with a pattern of large, contiguous blocks of land being the norm. These differences allowed for a wide variety of peasant societies with some being dominated by aristocratic landholders and others having a great deal of autonomy.



Figure 8-3: Medieval illustration of men harvesting wheat with reaping-hooks by Ann Scott is licensed under Public Domain

Land settlement also varied greatly. Some peasants lived in large settlements that numbered as many as 700 inhabitants. Others lived in small groups of a few families and still others lived on isolated farms spread over the countryside. There were also areas where the pattern was a mix of two or more of those systems. Unlike in the late Roman period, there was no sharp break between the legal status of the free peasant and the aristocrat, and it was possible for a free peasant's family to rise into the aristocracy over a number of generations through military service to a powerful lord.

Roman city life and culture changed greatly in the early Middle Ages. Although Italian cities remained inhabited places, they contracted greatly in size. Rome shrank from a population of hundreds of thousands to around 30,000 by the end of the 6 th century. Roman temples were converted into Christian churches and the city walls remained in use. In Northern Europe, cities also shrank, while the public monuments and other public buildings were raided for building materials. The establishment of new kingdoms often meant some growth for the towns chosen as capitals. (101)

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8.3: The Rise of Islam, Carolingian Europe, New Kingdoms, and a Revived Byzantium

The Rise of Islam and Early Contact with Western Europe

Religious beliefs in the Eastern Empire and Persia were in flux during the late 6 th and early 7 th centuries. Judaism was an active proselytising faith, and at least one Arab political leader converted to Judaism. Christianity had active missions competing with the Persian's Zoroastrianism in seeking converts, especially among residents of the Arabian Peninsula. All strands came together with emergence of Islam in Arabia during the lifetime of Muhammad. After Muhammad's death in 632, Islamic forces went on to conquer much of the Eastern Empire as well as Persia, starting with Syria in 634â€“635 and later as far as Egypt in 640â€“641, Persia between 637 and 642, North Africa in the later 7 th century and the Iberian Peninsula in 711. By 714, Islamic forces controlled much of the peninsula, a region they called Al-Andalus.

The Islamic conquests only slowed in the middle of the 8 th century. The first check was the defeat of Muslim forces at the Battle of Poitiers in 732, which led to the reconquest of southern France by the Franks. But the main reason for the ebbing of Islamic conquests in Europe was the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty and its replacement by the Abbasid dynasty. The Abbasids moved their capital to Baghdad and their interests were more concerned with the Middle East than Europe. The Abbasids lost control of sections of the Muslim lands — with Umayyad descendants taking over the Iberian Peninsula along with the Aghlabids controlling North Africa and the Tulunids ruling Egypt. By the middle of the 8 th century, new trading patterns were emerging in the Mediterranean, with trade between the Franks and the Arabs replacing the old Roman patterns of trade. Franks traded timber, furs, swords and slaves to the Arabs in return for silks and other fabrics, spices, and precious metals. (101)

Trade and Economy

The barbarian invasions of the 4 th and 5 th centuries caused disruption in trade networks around the Mediterranean. African trade goods disappear from the archeological record slowly, first disappearing from the interior of Europe and by the 7 th century they are usually only found in a few cities such as Rome or Naples. By the end of the 7 thcentury, under the impact of the Muslim conquests, African products are no longer found in Western Europe, and have been mostly replaced by local products. The replacement of trade goods with local products was a trend throughout the old Roman lands that happened in the Early Middle Ages. This was especially marked in the lands that did not lie on the Mediterranean, such as northern Gaul or Britain. What non-local goods that appear in the archeological record are usually luxury goods. In the northern parts of Europe, not only were the trade networks local, but those goods that were produced were simple, with little use of pottery or other complex products. Around the Mediterranean Sea, however, pottery remained prevalent and appears to have been traded over medium range networks and not just produced locally. (101)

Church and Monasticism

Christianity was a major unifying factor between Eastern and western Europe before the Arab conquests, but the conquest of North Africa sundered maritime connections between those areas. Increasingly the Byzantine Church, which became the Orthodox Church, differed in language, practices, and liturgy from the western Church, which became the Catholic Church. The Eastern Church used Greek instead of the western Latin. Theological and political differences emerged, and by the early and middle 8 th century issues such as iconoclasm, clerical marriage, and state control of the church had widened enough that the cultural and religious differences were greater than the similarities. The formal break came in 1054, when the papacy and the patriarchy of Constantinople clashed over papal supremacy and mutually excommunicated each other, which led to the division of Christianity into two churches — the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church.



Figure 8-4: The map of the eastern/western allegiances in 1054 with the former country borders by from Wikimedia is licensed under Public Domain

The ecclesiastical structure of the Roman Empire survived the barbarian invasions in the west mostly intact, but the papacy was little regarded, with few of the western bishops looking to the bishop of Rome for religious or political leadership. Many of the popes prior to 750 were in any case more concerned with Byzantine affairs and eastern theological concerns.

The Early Middle Ages witnessed the rise of monasticism in the West. The shape of European monasticism was determined by traditions and ideas that originated in the deserts of Egypt and Syria. Most European monasteries were of the type that focuses on community experience of the spiritual life, called cenobitism, which was pioneered by Pachomius (d. 348) in the 4 th century. Monastic ideals spread from Egypt to western Europe in the 5 th and 6 thcenturies through hagiographical literature such as the Life of Anthony. Benedict of Nursia (d. 547) wrote the Benedictine Rule for Western monasticism during the 6 th century, detailing the administrative and spiritual responsibilities of a community of monks led by an abbot. Monks and monasteries had a deep effect on the religious and political life of the Early Middle Ages, in various cases acting as land trusts for powerful families, centres of propaganda and royal support in newly conquered regions, and bases for mission and proselytization.

In addition, they were the main and sometimes only outposts of education and literacy in a region. Many of the surviving manuscripts of the Roman classics were copied in monasteries in the early Middle Ages. Monks were also the authors of new works, including history, theology, and other subjects, which were written by authors such as Bede (d. 735), a native of northern England who wrote in the late 7 th and early 8 th century. (101)

Carolingian Europe



Figure 8-5: Bataille de Poitiers by Charles de Steuben is licensed under Public Domain

The Frankish kingdom in northern Gaul split into kingdoms called Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgundy during the 6th and 7 th centuries, under the Merovingians who were descended from Clovis. The 7 th century was a tumultuous period of civil wars between Austrasia and Neustria. Such warfare was exploited by Pippin, the Mayor of the Palace for Austrasia who became the power behind the throne. Later members of his family line inherited the office, acting as advisors and regents. One of his descendants, Charles Martel (d. 741), won the Battle of Poitiers in 732, halting the advance of Muslim armies across the Pyrenees.

Across the English Channel in the British Isles, the island of Britain was divided into small states dominated by the kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, and East Anglia, which were descended from the Anglo-Saxon invaders. Smaller kingdoms in present-day Wales and Scotland were still under the control of the original native Britons and Picts. Ireland was divided into even smaller political units, usually known as tribal kingdoms, which were under the control of kings. There were perhaps as many as 150 local kings in Ireland, of varying importance.



Figure 8-6: The Coronation of Charlemagne by Raphael is licensed under Public Domain

The coronation of Charlemagne as emperor on Christmas Day 800 is regarded as a turning-point in medieval history, marking a return of the Western Roman Empire, since the new emperor ruled over much of the area previously controlled by the western emperors. It also marks a change in Charlemagne's relationship with the Byzantine Empire, as the assumption of the imperial title by the Carolingians asserted their equivalency to the Byzantine state. There were a number of differences between the newly established Carolingian Empire and both the older Western Roman Empire and the concurrent Byzantine Empire.

The Frankish lands were rural in character, with only a few small cities. Most of the people were peasants settled on small farms. Little trade existed and much of that was with the British Isles and Scandinavia, in contrast to the older Roman Empire which had its trading networks centered on the Mediterranean. The administration of the empire was from an itinerant court that traveled with the emperor as well as through approximately 300 imperial officials called counts, who administered the counties which the empire had been divided into. Clergy and local bishops served as officials, as well as the imperial officials called missi dominici, who served as roving inspectors and troubleshooters. (101)

Carolingian Renaissance

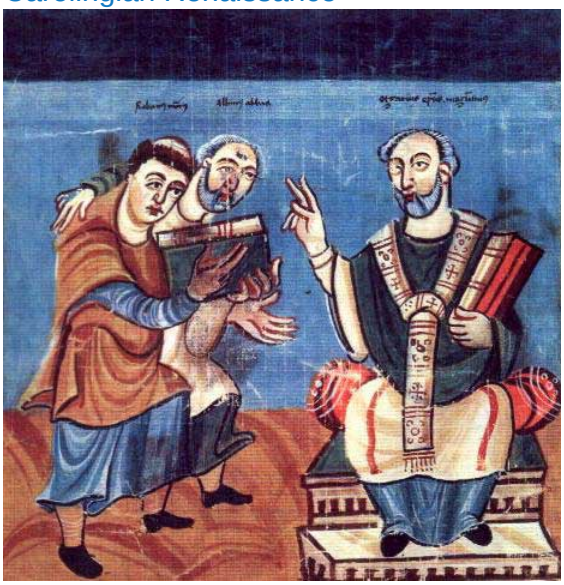


Figure 8-7: Raban Maur (left), supported by Alcuin (middle), dedicates his work to Archbishop Otgar of Mainz (Right) by Fulda is licensed under Public Domain

Charlemagne's court in Aachen was the center of the cultural revival sometimes referred to as the "Carolingian Renaissance". The period saw an increase in literacy, developments in the arts, architecture and jurisprudence, as well as liturgical and scriptural studies. The English monk Alcuin (d. 804) was invited to Aachen and brought the education available in the monasteries of Northumbria. Charlemagne's chancery — or writing office — made use of a new script today known as Carolingian minuscule, allowing a common writing style that advanced communication across much of Europe. Charlemagne sponsored changes in church liturgy, imposing the Roman form of church service on his domains, as well as the Gregorian chant form of liturgical music in the churches.

An important activity for scholars during this period was the copying, correcting, and dissemination of basic works on religious and secular topics, with the aim of encourage learning. New works on religious topics and schoolbooks were also produced. Grammarians of the period modified the Latin language, changing it from the Classical Latin of the Roman Empire into a more flexible form to fit the needs of the church and government. By the reign of Charlemagne, the language had become enough different from the classical that it came to be called Medieval Latin. (101)

Breakup of the Carolingian Empire

The breakup of the Carolingian Empire was accompanied by invasions, migrations, and raids of external foes. The Atlantic and northern shores were harassed by the Vikings, who also raided the British Isles and settled in both Britain and Ireland as well as the distant island of Iceland. A further settlement of Vikings was made in France in 911 under the chieftain Rollo (d. around 931), who received permission from the Frankish king Charles the Simple (r. 898â€“922) to settle in what became Normandy. The eastern parts of the Frankish kingdoms, especially Germany and Italy, were under constant Magyar assault until their great defeat at the Battle of the Lechfeld in 955. The breakup of the Abbasid dynasty meant that the Islamic world fragmented into a number of smaller political states, some of which began expanding into Italy and Sicily, as well as over the Pyrenees into the southern parts of the Frankish kingdoms. (101)

New Kingdoms and a Revived Byzantium

Efforts by local kings to fight back the invaders led to the formation of new political entities. In Anglo-Saxon England, King Alfred the Great (r. 871â€“899) in the late 9 th century came to a settlement with the Viking invaders, with Danish settlements in Northumbria, Mercia, and parts of East Anglia. By the middle of the 10 thcentury, Alfred's successors had conquered Northumbria, and restored English control over most of the southern part of the island of Great Britain. In northern Britain, Kenneth mac Alpin (d. c. 860) united the Picts and the Scots into the Kingdom of Alba. In the early 10 th century, the Ottonian dynasty had established

itself in Germany, and the Ottonians were engaged in driving back the Magyar. Their efforts culminated in the coronation in 962 of Otto I (r. 936â€“973) as emperor.

In 972, Otto secured the recognition of his title by the Byzantine Empire, and sealed the recognition with the marriage of his son Otto II to Theophanu, a daughter of an earlier Byzantine Emperor Romanos II (r. 959â€“963). Italy was drawn into the Ottonian sphere by the late 10 th century, after a period of instability, with Otto III spending much of his later reign in Italy. The western Frankish kingdom was more fragmented, and although a nominal king remained theoretically in charge, much of the political power had devolved to the local lords.

Missionary efforts to Scandinavia during the 9 th and 10 th centuries helped strengthen the growth of kingdoms there. Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian kingdoms gained power and territory in the course of the 9 th and 10 thcenturies, and some of the kings converted to Christianity, although the process was not complete by 1000. Scandinavians also expanded and colonized throughout Europe. Besides the settlements in Ireland, England, and Normandy, further settlement took place in what became Russia as well as in Iceland. Swedish traders and raiders ranged down the rivers of the Russian steppe, and even attempted to seize Constantinople in 860 and in 907. Christian Spain, initially driven into a small section of the peninsula in the north, expanded slowly south during the 9 th and 10 th centuries, establishing the kingdoms of Asturias and LeÃ³n in the process. (101)



Figure 8-8: Illustration of the brothers Cyril and Methodius bringing Christianity to the Slavic peoplesfrom Wikimedia is licensed under Public Domain

The frescoes at Saint Benedikt at Mals, Italy are contemporary with those at neighboring Saint John at MÃ¼stair. They belong to a limited set of surviving frescoes of the Carolingian period. The frescoes are mostly distributed in three niches in the altar wall, showing Jesus Christ flanked by pope Gregory the Great and Saint Stephen. On the walls separating the niches are donor portraits below a troop of 12 angels, and scenes showing Gregory writing his*Dialogi* and disputing with Paulus Diaconus (Paul the Deacon) alongside scenes showing Paul of Tarsus and a fragment of a scene from the life of Saint Benedict. (102)



Figure 8-9: Scenes of saints' lives by James Steakley is licensed under Public Domain

Mosaics were created by assembling small pieces of colored glass, stone, pigments, and other materials. The mosaics were created in Charlemagne's Palatine Chapel at Aachen, whose interior remains adorned with arch-to-dome mosaics. Like the Byzantine mosaics that influenced their design, those that adorn Charlemagne's chapel feature floral motifs and classicized figures in various poses against largely gold backgrounds. (102)

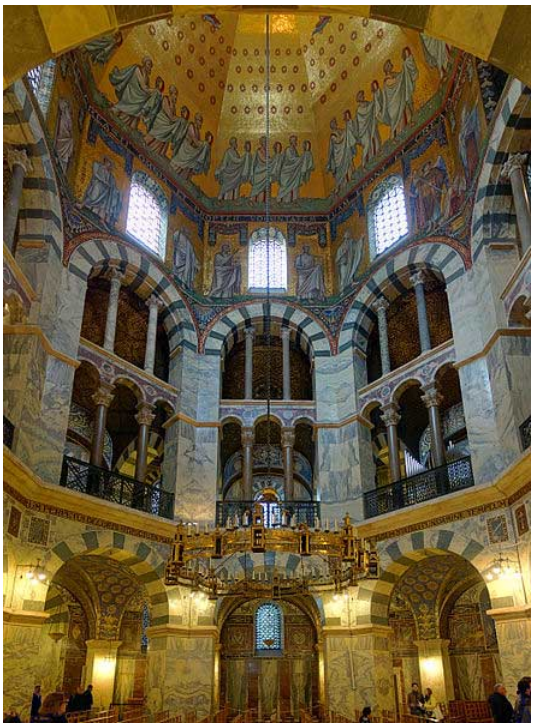


Figure 8-10: Interior picture of the Palatine Chapel at Aachen by Velvet is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The most famous mosaic in Charlemagne's chapel showed an enthroned Christ worshiped by the Evangelist's symbols and the 24 elders of the Apocalypse. This mosaic no longer survives, but a restored one remains in theapse of the oratory at Germigny-des-PrÃ©s (806), discovered in 1820 under a coat of plaster and depicting the Ark of the Covenant adored by angels. (102)



Figure 8-11: Mosaic of the Ark of the Covenant by Manfred Heyde is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0
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8.4: Art, Architecture, and Military and Technological Developments

Art and Architecture

Art

Surviving examples of painting from this era consist mainly of frescoes and mosaics produced in present-day France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, northern Italy, and the Low Countries. These sites have allowed art historians to theoretically conceptualize Carolingian paintings. Paintings show an attempt to conform to Charlemagne's desire to revive the Roman Empire under a Christian banner. The figures in the frescoes, although relatively flat and posed in a stylized manner, display a degree of modeling and an acknowledgement of the body beneath the clothing. Their facial expressions and body language imply a sense of interaction, although few stand in profile and none turn their backs to the viewer .

Surviving frescoes show a greater degree of modeling, a variety of poses, and a relatively naturalistic rendering of draperies and acknowledgement of the bodies beneath. Outside the elite circle that produced these works, however, the quality of visual art was much lower. (102)

Architecture

Carolingian architecture is the style of northern European pre-Romanesque architecture belonging to the Carolingian Renaissance . During the eighth and ninth centuries, the Carolingian dynasty (named for Charlemagne) dominated western Europe politically, culturally, and economically.

Carolingian architecture is characterized by its conscious attempts to emulate Roman classicism and Late Antique architecture. The Carolingians thus borrowed heavily from early Christian and Byzantine architectural styles, although they added their own innovations and aesthetic style. The result was a fusion of divergent cultural aesthetic qualities.

The gatehouse of Lorsch Abbey, built around 800 CE in Germany, exemplifies classical inspiration for Carolingian architecture, built as a triple-arched hall dominating the gateway, with the arcaded faÃ§ade interspersed withengaged Corinthian columns and pilasters above. In addition to the engaged columns and arcades , the apse-like structures on either side of the gatehouse recall the ancient Roman basilicas , which were the sites of important government events. (103)



Figure 8-12: Carolingian gatehouse of Lorsch Abbey by Matthias Holländer Heyde is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

By contrast , the Palatine Chapel in Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), with its sixteen-sided ambulatory and overhead gallery, was inspired by the Byzantine-style octagonal church of San Vitale in Ravenna. The chapel makes use of ancient spolia , conceivably from Ravenna, as well as newly carved materials. The bronze decoration is of extraordinarily high quality, especially the doors with lion heads and the interior railings with Corinthian order columns and acanthus scrolls. Like San Vitale, the Palatine Chapel is a centrally-planned church whose domeserves as its focal point. However, at Aachen, the barrel and groin vaults and

octagonal cloister vault in the dome reflect late Roman practices rather than the Byzantine techniques employed at San Vitale. Its round arches and massive supporting piers draw from Western Roman influence. A multicolored marble veneer creates a sumptuous interior. A monumental western entrance complex called the westwork is also drawn from Byzantine architecture.

Carolingian churches are generally basilican like the Early Christian churches of Rome, and commonly incorporated westworks, arguably the precedent for the western faÃ§ades of later medieval cathedrals . A westwork (German: *westwerk*) is a monumental west-facing entrance section of a medieval church. This exterior consists of multiple stories between two towers, while the interior includes an entrance vestibule, a chapel, and a series of galleries overlooking the nave. The westwork first originated in the ancient churches of Syria.

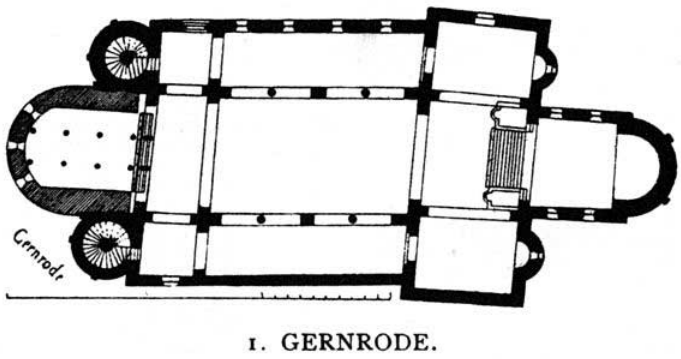
The westwork of Corvey Abbey (873–885), Germany, is the oldest surviving example. Like the gate house from Lorsch Abbey, the westwork of Corvey consists of a symmetrical arcade of three round arches at the base . This arcaded pattern repeats in the windows on the second and third stories. The heavy masonry throughout the faÃ§ade recalls the massive appearance of the interior of the Palatine Chapel. On the upper stories of the center and towers of the westwork, a range of modified classical columns divide and accent the windows, also round arches. (103)



Figure 8-13: a stone walkway leading up to the entrance way of Corvey Abbey by Aeggy is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The Ottonians adopted the Carolingian double-ended variation on the Roman basilica, featuring apses at the east and west ends of the church rather than just the east. Most Ottonian churches make generous use of the round arch, have flat ceilings, and insert massive rectangular piers between columns in regular patterns, as seen in St. Cyriakus at Gernrode and St. Michael's at Hildesheim. (103)

One of the finest surviving examples of Ottonian architecture is St. Cyriakus Church (960-965) in Gernrode, Germany. The central body of the church has a nave with two aisles flanked by two towers, characteristic of Carolingian architecture. However, it also displays novelties anticipating Romanesque architecture, including the alternation of pillars and columns (a common feature in later Saxon churches), semi-blind arcades in galleries on the nave, and column capitals decorated with stylized acanthus leaves and human heads. (104)



1. GERNRODE.

Figure 8-14: Floor plan of St. Cyriakus at Gernrode by Georg Dehio/Gustav von Bezold is licensed under Public Domain



Figure 8-15: Exterior of St. Cyriakus, Gernrode by Hejkal is licensed under CC BY 2.0 Germany



Figure 8-16: St. Cyriakus from the interior by RomkeHoekstra is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Metalworking

Carolingian-era metalworkers primarily worked with gold, gems, ivory, and other precious materials. For instance, luxury Carolingian manuscripts were given treasure bindings and elaborately ornate covers in precious metals set with jewels around central carved ivory panels. Metalwork subjects were often narrative religious scenes in vertical sections, largely derived from Late Antique paintings and carvings. Those with more hieratic images, such as the front and back covers of the Lorsch Gospels, were derived from consular diptychs and other imperial art.

Charles the Bald's Palace School Workshop

Important Carolingian examples of metalwork came out of Charles the Bald's Palace School workshop, and include the cover of the Lindau Gospels, the cover of the *Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram* , and the *Arnulf Ciborium* . All three of these works feature fine relief figures in repoussÃ© gold. Another work associated with the Palace School is the frame of an antique serpentine dish, now located in the Louvre.

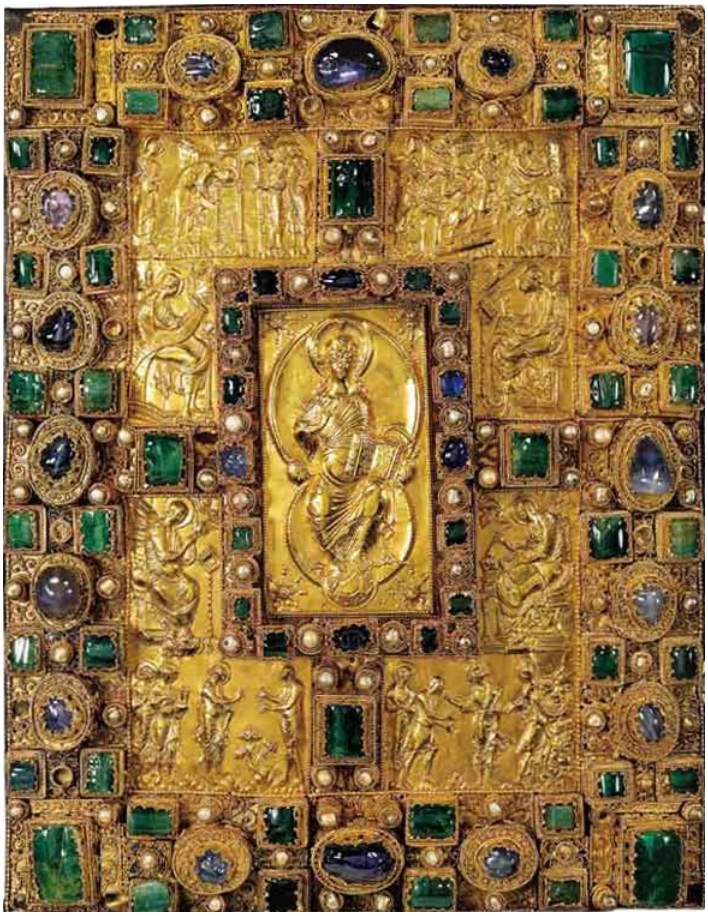


Figure 8-17: Cover of the Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram by the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München is licensed under Public Domain

Under Charlemagne, there was a revival of large-scale bronze casting in imitation of Roman designs, although metalwork in gold continued to develop. For example, the Aachen chapel's figure of Christ in gold (now lost) was the first-known work of this type and became a crucial inspiring feature of northern European medieval art. Another one of the finest examples of Carolingian metalwork is the *Golden Altar* (824–859), also known as the*Paliotto* , in the Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio in Milan (since damaged by World War II bombings). The altar's four sides are decorated with images in gold and silver repoussÃ© framed by borders of filigree, precious stones, andenamel . (105)

An Imperial Portrait

Charlemagne's personal appearance is known from a good description by a personal associate Einhard, whose biography of the emperor describes him as tall and well-built with a round head and wide eyes. This written portrait is confirmed by contemporary depictions of the emperor, his exhumed body, and sculptures believed to depict his likeness. One possibility is a bronze equestrian statuette once housed in Aachen Cathedral. Typical of sculpture in the round produced during the Carolingian period, the statuette is small, approximately eight inches high.

The rider is depicted with a mustache, an open crown on his head, and a riding cloak fastened with a fibula. Like the architecture and painting of the time, this sculpture reflects Charlemagne's desire to recreate the Roman Empire, as it bears similarities with a large-scale bronze equestrian portrait of Marcus Aurelius from the second century. Similar to the ancient Roman emperor, the mounted Carolingian ruler wears a calm expression as he rides without holding the reins. Rather, he holds a sword (now lost) in his right hand and an imperial orb in his left. Unlike its ancient predecessor, the horse does not pounce on a missing enemy but calmly prances, reflecting the stateliness of the rider. (105)

Several gold reliquaries, including one in the form of a portrait bust of Charlemagne, were produced under later dynasties, especially after his canonization in the 12 th century. (105)



Figure 8-18: Statue of Charlemagne mounted on a horse holding a sword, on marble base by Charles Marville is licensed under Public Domain

The Ottonians were also renowned for their metalwork, producing bejeweled book covers and massive bronze church doors with relief carvings depicting biblical scenes, a process so complex that it would not be repeated until the Renaissance. Fine, small-scale metal sculpture flourished and exquisite book covers made of ivory and embellished with gems, enamels, crystals, and cameos were produced during this period. (106)

The Cross of Lothair

Many of the finest examples of the *crux gemmata* (jeweled cross) date from Ottonian rule. These wooden crosses were encased in carved gold and silver and encrusted with jewels and engraved gems. Arguably the finest of these Ottonian jeweled crosses is the *Cross of Lothair* , dating from around 1,000 and housed in the Aachen Cathedral . The cross takes its name from the large engraved green rock crystal seal near its base , which bears the portrait and name of the Carolingian ruler Lothair II, King of Lotharingia (835–869).



Figure 8-19: Cross of Lothair by CEphoto, Uwe Aranas is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

The cross was actually commissioned over a century later for Otto III, the Holy Roman Emperor . The cross bears a cameo of the great Roman emperor Augustus Caesar on one side and an engraving of the crucifixion of Jesus on the other. The cross thus represents both church and state in keeping with the Ottonian agenda, and connects the Ottonian emperors to the original Roman emperors.

The cross also depicts the Hand of God holding a wreath containing a dove representing the Holy Spirit uction of the entire Trinity into the crucifixion, iconography that has been repeated for centuries.

Ottonian relief figures from treasure bindings and cast sculptures are often more stylized yet more dramatic than their restrained Carolingian counterparts. The cover of the *Codex Aureus of Echternach* (1030-1050) dates from about 50 years before the manuscript. The metalwork is attributed to the Trier workshop set up by Egbert, Archbishop of Trier. It centers on an ivory plaque showing the Crucifixion. Surrounding the ivory plaque are panels with figures in repoussÃ© gold relief. The style of the metal reliefs differ significantly from the central plaque. These panels are set in a framework with larger elements made up of alternating units of gold filigree set with gems and cloisonnÃ© enamel with stylized plant motifs. Thinner gold bands set with small pearls run along the diagonal axes, further separating the relief images into compartments and creating an “X” that may stand for “Christ.” The figures are produced in an elegant elongated style that contrasts strongly with the forceful and slightly squat figures of the ivory. (106)

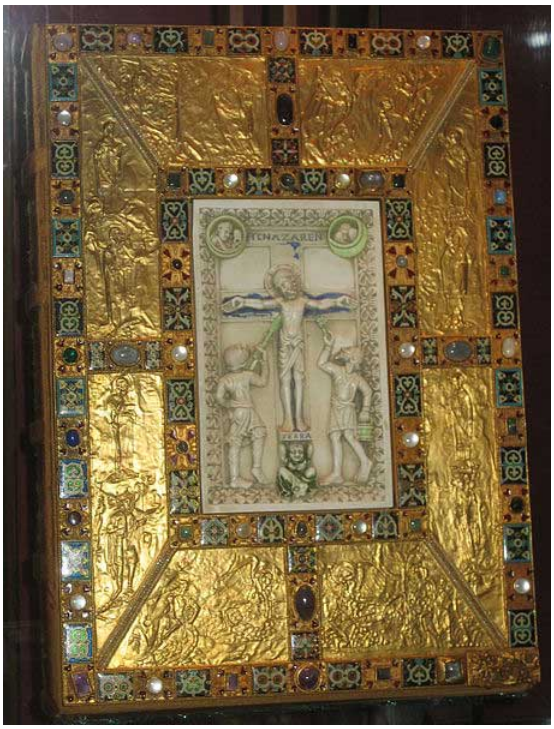


Figure 8-20: Codex Aureus of Echternach by Zinneke at Luxembourgish Wikipedia is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Bronze Sculptures in Hildesheim

Ottonian metalwork also includes objects produced from non-precious metals. The most famous of these is the pair of church doors, the Bernward Doors, commissioned by Bishop Bernward of Hildesheim. They contain biblical scenes from the Gospels and the Book of Genesis in bronze relief, each cast in a single piece. These powerfully simple compositions convey their meanings by emphatic gestures, a hallmark of the Ottonian style. (106)

The figures on the Bernward Doors feature a progressive style of relief, leaning out from the background instead of extending a uniform distance. A particularly apt example of this is the figure of Mary with the baby Jesus in the depiction of the Adoration of the Magi. While her lower body is still in low relief, her upper body and Christ project out further and her head and shoulders are cast in the round. This unusual style was used for artistic reasons, not because of technical limitations. (106)



Figure 8-21: Bernward Doors by Bischöfliche Pressestelle Hildesheim (bph) is licensed under Public Domain

Military and Technological Developments

During the later Roman Empire, the principal military developments had to do with attempts to create an effective cavalry force as well as the continued development of highly specialized types of troops. The creation of cataphract-type soldiers was an important feature of 5 th century Roman military developments. The various invading tribes had differing emphasis on types of soldiers — ranging from the primarily infantry Anglo-Saxon invaders of Britain to the Vandals and Visigoths which had a high percentage of cavalry in their armies.



Figure 8-22: The Skylitzes manuscript in Madrid by unknown artist is licensed under Public Domain

During the early invasion period, the stirrup had not been introduced into warfare, which limited the usefulness of cavalry as shock troops, but not to the extent that has generally been proclaimed. It was still possible for cavalry to use shock tactics in battle, especially when the saddle was built up in front and back to allow greater support to the rider. The greatest changes in military affairs during the invasion was the adoption of the Hunnic composite bow in place of the earlier, and weaker, Scythian composite bow. Another development of the invasion period was the increasing use of longswords and the decrease in the use of scale armor and the increasing use of mail amour and lamellar armor.

During the early Carolingian period, a decline in the importance of infantry and light cavalry began, with a corresponding dominance of military events by the elite. The use of militia-type levies of the free population declined over the Carolingian period.

Although much of the Carolingian armies were mounted, a large proportion during the early period appear to have been mounted infantry, rather than true cavalry. One exception was Anglo-Saxon England, where the armies were still composed of local levies, known as the fyrd, which were led by the local elites. In military technology, one of the main change was the return of the crossbow, which had previously been known in Roman times, but reappeared as a military weapon during the last part of the Early Middle Ages. Another great change was the introduction of the stirrup, which allowed the more effective use of cavalry as shock troops. One final technological change that had implications beyond the military was the horseshoe, which allowed horses to be used in rocky terrain. (101)

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8.5: High Middle Ages

High Middle Ages

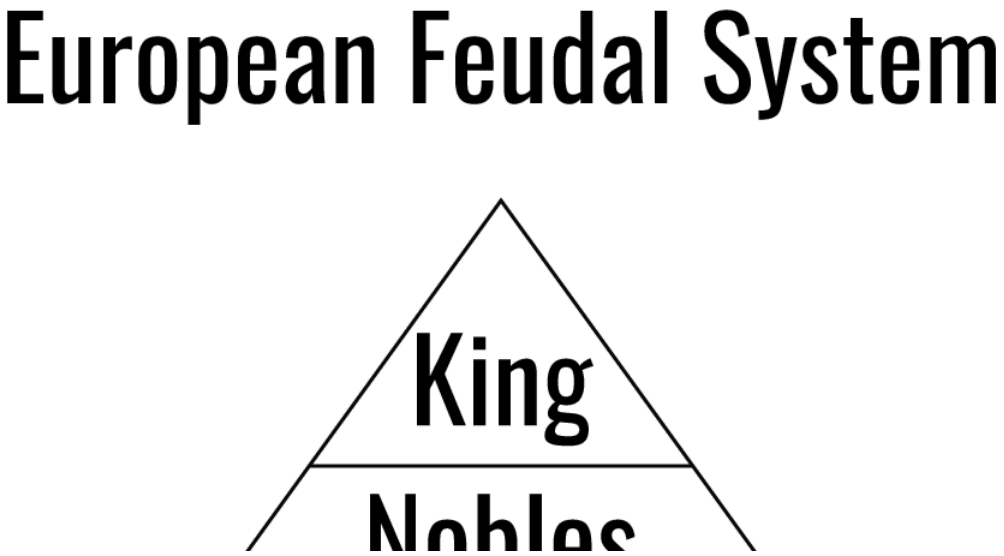
Society and Life



Figure 8-23: Representation of the tripartite social order of the middle ages by an unknown author is licensed under Public Domain

The High Middle Ages saw an expansion of population with rough estimates of the increase from the year 1000 until 1347 indicating that the population of Europe grew from 35 to 80 million. The exact cause or causes of the growth remain unclear; improved agricultural techniques, the decline of slaveholding, a more clement climate and the lack of invasion have all been put forward.

As much as 90 percent of the European population remained rural peasants. Many of them were no longer settled in isolated farms but had gathered into small communities, usually known as manors or villages. These peasants were often subject to noble overlords and owed them rents and other services, in a system known as manorialism. There remained a few free peasants throughout this period and beyond.



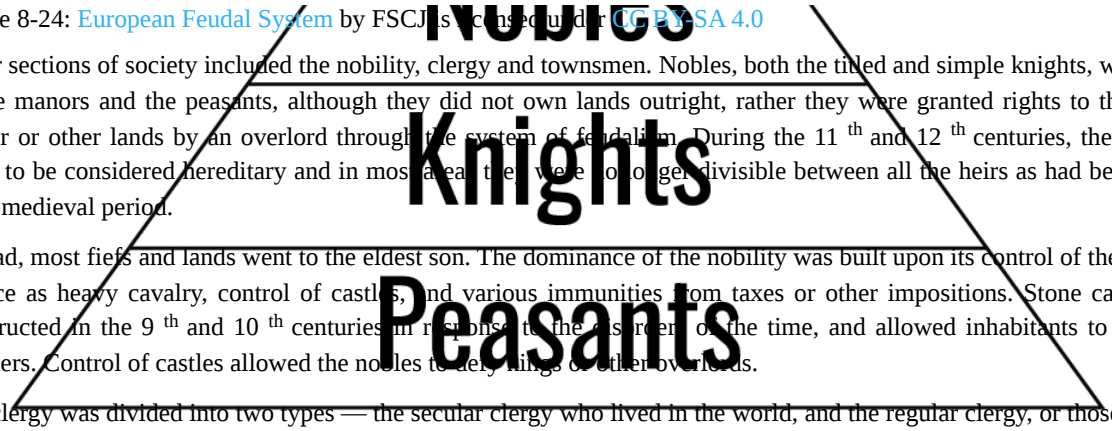


Figure 8-24: European Feudal System by FSCJ is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Other sections of society included the nobility, clergy and townsmen. Nobles, both the titled and simple knights, were the exploiters of the manors and the peasants, although they did not own lands outright, rather they were granted rights to the income from a manor or other lands by an overlord through the system of feudalism. During the 11 th and 12 th centuries, these lands, or fiefs, came to be considered hereditary and in most areas they were no longer divisible between all the heirs as had been the case in the early medieval period.

Instead, most fiefs and lands went to the eldest son. The dominance of the nobility was built upon its control of the land, its military service as heavy cavalry, control of castles, and various immunities from taxes or other impositions. Stone castles began to be constructed in the 9 th and 10 th centuries in response to the disorders of the time, and allowed inhabitants to take refuge from invaders. Control of castles allowed the nobles to defy kings or other overlords.

The clergy was divided into two types — the secular clergy who lived in the world, and the regular clergy, or those who lived under a religious rule and were usually monks. Most of the regular clergy were drawn from the ranks of the nobility, the same social class that served as the recruiting ground for the upper levels of the secular clergy. The local parish priests were often drawn from the peasant class. Townsmen were in a somewhat unusual position, as they did not fit into the traditional three-fold division of society into nobles, clergy, and peasants. During the 12 thand 13 th centuries, the ranks of the townsmen expanded greatly as existing towns grew and new population centers were founded.

In Central and Northern Italy and in Flanders, the rise of towns that were, to a degree, self-governing, stimulated economic growth and created an environment for new types of trade associations. Commercial cities on the shores of the Baltic entered into agreements known as the Hanseatic League, and Italian city-states such as Venice, Genoa, and Pisa expanded their trade throughout the Mediterranean. Besides new trading opportunities, agricultural and technological improvements enabled the increase in crop yields, which in turn allowed the trade networks to expand. Rising trade brought new methods of dealing with money, and gold coinage was again minted in Europe, at first in Italy and later in France and other countries. New forms of commercial contracts emerged, allowing risk to be shared among merchants. Accounting methods improved, partly through the use of double-entry bookkeeping; letters of credit also emerged, to allow easy transmission of money through the trading networks. (101)

Political States

The High Middle Ages is the formative period in the history of the Western state. Kings in France, England and Spain consolidated their power, and set up lasting governing institutions. Also new kingdoms like Hungary and Poland, after their conversion to Christianity, became Central-European powers. The Papal Monarchy reached its apogee in the early 13 th century under the pontificate of Innocent III (pope 1198–1216). Northern Crusades and the advance of Christian kingdoms and military orders into previously pagan regions in the Baltic and Finnic northeast brought the forced assimilation of numerous native peoples into European culture.

During the early High Middle Ages, Germany was ruled by the Saxon dynasty, which struggled to control the powerful dukes ruling over territorial duchies tracing back to the Migration period. In 1024, the ruling dynasty changed to the Salian dynasty, who famously clashed with the papacy under Emperor Henry IV (r. 1084–1105) over church appointments. His successors continued to struggle against the papacy as well as the German nobility.

France under the Capetian dynasty, began to slowly expand its power over the nobility, managing to expand out of the Ile de France to exert control over more of the country as the 11 th and 12 th centuries. They faced a powerful rival in the Dukes of Normandy, who in 1066 under William the Conqueror (duke 1035–1087), conquered England (r. 1066–1087) and created a cross-channel empire that would last, in various forms, throughout the rest of the Middle Ages. Normans not only expanded into England, but also settled in Sicily and southern Italy, when Robert Guiscard (d. 1085) landed there in 1059 and established a duchy that later became a kingdom. Under the Angevin dynasty of King Henry II (r. 1154–1189) and his son King Richard I, the kings of England ruled over England and large sections of France, brought to the family by Henry II's marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine, heiress to much of southern France.

However, Richard's younger brother King John (r. 1199–1216) lost Normandy and the rest of the northern French possessions in 1204 to the French king Philip II Augustus. This led to dissension among the English nobility, while John's financial exactions to pay for his unsuccessful attempts to regain Normandy led in 1215 to Magna Carta, a charter that confirmed the rights and privileges

of free men in England. Under Henry III (r. 1216–1272), John's son, further concessions were made to the nobility, and royal power was diminished. The French monarchy continued to make gains against the nobility during the late 12 th and 13 th centuries, bringing more territories within the kingdom under their personal rule and centralizing the royal administration. Under King Louis IX, royal prestige rose to new heights as Louis served as a mediator for most of Europe. (101)

Crusades



Figure 8-25: A battle of the Second Crusade by anonymus is licensed under Public Domain

In the 11 th century, the Seljuk Turks took over much of the Middle East, taking Persia during the 1040s, Armenia in the 1060s, and capturing Jerusalem in 1070. In 1071, the Turkish army defeated the Byzantine army at the Battle of Manzikert and captured the Byzantine Emperor Romanus IV (r. 1068–1071). This allowed the Turks to invade Asia Minor, which dealt a dangerous blow to the Byzantine Empire by seizing a large part of the empire's population and its economic heartland. Although the Byzantines managed to regroup and recover somewhat, they never regained Asia Minor and were often on the defensive afterwards. The Turks also ran into difficulties, losing control of Jerusalem to the Fatimids of Egypt and suffering from a series of internal civil wars.

The Crusades were intended to seize Jerusalem from Muslim control. The first Crusade was proclaimed by Pope Urban II (pope 1088–1099) at the Council of Clermont in 1095 in response to a request from the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (r. 1081–1118) for aid against further Muslim advances. Urban promised indulgence to anyone who took part. Tens of thousands of people from all levels of society mobilized across Europe, and captured Jerusalem in 1099 during the First Crusade. The crusaders consolidated their conquests in a number of crusader states. During the 12 th century and 13 th century, there were a series of conflicts between these states and the surrounding Islamic states. Further crusades were called to aid the crusaders, or such as the Third Crusade, called to try to regain Jerusalem, which was captured by Saladin in 1187. In 1203, the Fourth Crusade was diverted from the Holy Land to Constantinople, and captured that city in 1204, setting up a Latin Empire of Constantinople and greatly weakening the Byzantine Empire, which finally recaptured Constantinople in 1261, but the Byzantines never regained their former strength. By 1291 all the crusader states had been either captured or forced from the mainland, with a titular Kingdom of Jerusalem surviving on the island of Cyprus for a number of years after 1291.

Popes called for crusades to take place other than in the Holy Land, with crusades being proclaimed in Spain, southern France, and along the Baltic. The Spanish crusades became fused with the Reconquista, or reconquest, of Spain from the Muslims. Although the Templars and Hospitallers took part in the Spanish crusades, Spanish military religious orders were also founded similar to the Templars and Hospitallers, with most of them becoming part of the two main orders of Calatrava and Santiago by the beginning of the 12 th century. Northern Europe also remained outside Christian influence until the 11 th century or later; these areas also became crusading venues as part of the Northern Crusades of the 12 th through the 14 th centuries. These crusades also spawned a military order, the Order of the Sword Brothers. Another order, the Teutonic Knights, although originally founded in the Crusader states, focused much of its activity in the Baltic after 1225, and in 1309 moved its headquarters to Marienburg in Prussia. (101)

Intellectual life

During the 11 th century, developments in philosophy and theology led to increased intellectual activity. There was debate between the realists and the nominalists over the concept of " universals". Philosophical discourse was stimulated by the rediscovery of

Aristotle and his emphasis on empiricism and rationalism. Scholars such as Peter Abelard (d. 1142) and Peter Lombard (d. 1164) introduced Aristotelian logic into theology. The late 11 th and early 12 th century also saw the rise of cathedral schools throughout western Europe, signaling the shift of learning from monasteries to cathedrals and towns. Cathedral schools were then in turn replaced in the late 11 th century by the universities established in major European cities.

Philosophy and theology fused in scholasticism, an attempt by 12 th and 13 th -century scholars to reconcile Christian theology with itself, which eventually resulted in a system of thought that tried to employ a systemic approach to truth and reason. This culminated in the thought of Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), who wrote the Summa Theologica, or Summary of Theology.



Figure 8-26: St. Thomas Aquinas sitting between Aristotle and Plato by DIRECTMEDIA Publishing GmbH is licensed under Public Domain

Besides the universities, royal and noble courts saw the development of chivalry and the ethos of courtly love. This culture was expressed in the vernacular languages rather than Latin, and comprised poems, stories, legends and popular songs spread by troubadors, or wandering minstrels. Often the stories were written down in the chansons de geste, or “songs of great deeds”, such as The Song of Roland or The Song of Hildebrand.

Besides these products of chivalry, other writers composed histories, both secular and religious. Geoffrey of Monmouth (d. around 1155) composed his Historia Regum Britanniae, which was a collection of stories and legends about Arthur. Other works were more clearly history, such as Otto von Freising’s (d. 1158) Gesta Friderici Imperatoris detailing the deeds of Emperor Frederick I or William of Malmesbury’s (d. around 1143) Gesta Regum on the kings of England.

Legal studies also advanced during the 12 th century. Both secular law and canon law, or ecclesiastical law, were studied in the High Middle Ages. Secular law, or Roman law, was advanced greatly by the discovery of the corpus iuris civilis in the 11 th century, and by 1100 Roman law was being taught at Bologna. This led to the recording and standardization of legal codes throughout western

Europe. Canon law was also studied, and around 1140 a monk named Gratian (flourished 12 th century), a teacher at Bologna, wrote what became the standard text of canon law — the Decretum.

Among the results of the Greek and Islamic influence on this period in European history was the replacement of Roman numerals with the decimal positional number system and the invention of algebra, which allowed more advanced mathematics. Astronomy also advanced, with the translation of Ptolemy's Almagest from Greek into Latin in the late 12 th century. Medicine was also studied, especially in southern Italy, where Islamic medicine influenced the school at Salerno. (101)

Technology and military

In the 12 th and 13 th centuries, Europe saw a number of innovations in methods of production and economic growth. Major technological advances included the invention of the windmill, the first mechanical clocks, the first investigations of optics and the creation of crude lenses, the manufacture of distilled spirits and the use of the astrolabe. Glassmaking advanced with the development of a process that allowed the creation of transparent glass in the early 13 th century. Transparent glass made possible the science of optics by Roger Bacon (d. 1294), who is credited with the invention of eyeglasses.

A major agricultural innovation was the development of a 3-field rotation system for planting crops. The development of the heavy plow allowed heavier soils to be farmed more efficiently, an advance that was helped along by the spread of the horse collar, which led to the use of draught horses in place of oxen. Horses are faster than oxen and require less pasture, factors which aided the utilization of the 3-field system.

The development of cathedrals and castles advanced building technology, leading to the development of large stone buildings. Ancillary structures included new town halls, houses, bridges, and tithe barns. Shipbuilding also improved, with the use of the rib and plank method rather than the old Roman system of mortice and tenon. Other improvements to ships included the use of lateen sails and the stern-post rudder, both of which increased the speed at which ships could be sailed.

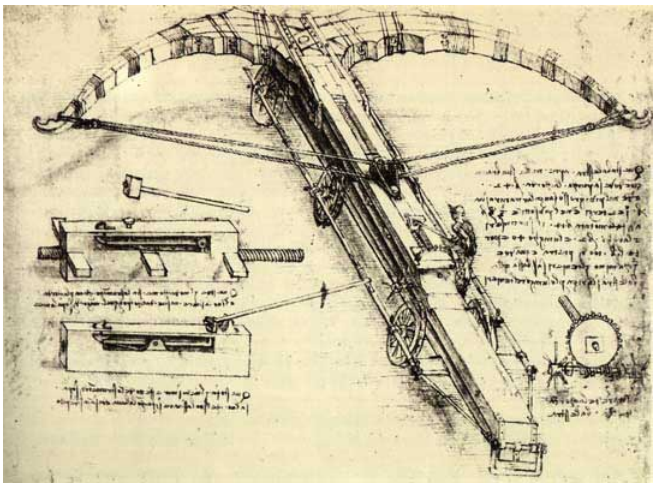


Figure 8-27: DaVinci Crossbow by Leonardo da Vinci is licensed under Public Domain

Crossbows, which had been known in Late Antiquity, increased in use, partly because of the increase in siege warfare in the 10 th and 11 th centuries. Military affairs saw an increase in the use of infantry with specialized roles during this period. Besides the still dominant heavy cavalry, armies often included both mounted and infantry crossbowmen, as well as sappers and engineers. The increasing use of crossbows during the 12 th and 13 thcenturies led to the use of closed-face helmets, heavy body armor, as well as horse armor. Gunpowder was known in Europe by the mid-13 th century with a recorded use in European warfare by the English against the Scots in 1304, although it was merely used as an explosive and not as a weapon. Cannon were being used for sieges in the 1320s, and hand held guns were known and in use by the 1360s. (101)

Architecture and Art

The High Middle Ages gave rise to two new art traditions in the West: The Romanesque and Gothic styles of art.Romanesque art refers to the art of Europe from the late 10 th century to the rise of the Gothic style in the 13 thcentury or later, depending on region. The term "Romanesque" was invented by 19 th century art historians to refer specifically to architecture of the time period,

which retained many basic features of Roman architectural style — most notably semi-circular arches — but retained distinctive regional characteristics.

In Southern France, Spain, and Italy, there was architectural continuity with the Late Antique period, but the Romanesque style was the first style to spread across the whole of Catholic Europe and thus the first pan-European style since Imperial Roman Architecture. Romanesque art was also influenced by Byzantine art, especially in painting, and by the anti-classical energy of the decoration of the Insular art of the British Isles. From these elements was forged a highly innovative and coherent style. (107)

Romanesque Art and Architecture

Combining features of Roman and Byzantine buildings along with other local traditions, Romanesque architecture is distinguished by massive quality, thick walls, round arches, sturdy piers, groin vaults, large towers, and decorative arcades. Each building has clearly defined forms and a symmetrical plan, resulting in a much simpler appearance than the Gothic buildings that would follow. The style can be identified across Europe, despite regional characteristics and materials. (107)



Figure 8-28: Maria Laach Abbey by Goldi64 is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Painting

Aside from architecture, the art of the period was characterized by a vigorous style in both painting and sculpture. In churches, painting continued to follow Byzantine iconographic models. Christ in Majesty, the Last Judgement and scenes from the Life of Christ remained among the most common depictions. In illuminated manuscripts , the most lavishly decorated examples of the period included bibles or psalters . As new scenes were depicted, more originality developed. They used intensely saturated primary colors , which now exist in their original brightness only in stained glass and well-preserved manuscripts. Stained glass first came to wide use during this period, although there are few surviving examples.

Pictorial compositions usually had little depth as they were limited to the narrow spaces of historiated initials,column capitals , and church tympanums. The tension between a tight frame and a composition that sometimes escapes its designated space is a recurrent theme in Romanesque art. Figures often varied in size in relation to their importance, and landscape backgrounds were absent or closer to abstract decorations than realism, as in the trees in the “Morgan Leaf.” Human forms were often elongated and contorted to fit the shape provided and at times appeared to be floating in space. These figures focused on linear details with emphasis on drapery folds and hair.(107)



Figure 8-29: The Morgan Leaf by an unknown author is licensed under Public Domain

Sculpture

Sculpture also exhibited a vigorous style, evident in the carved capitals of columns, which often depicted complete scenes consisting of several figures. Precious objects sculpted in metal, enamel, and ivory , such as reliquaries , also had high status in this period. While the large wooden crucifix and statues of the enthroned Madonna were German innovations at the start of the period, the high relief carvings of architectural elements are most evocative of this style.

In a significant innovation, the tympanums of important church portals were carved with monumental schemes, again depicting Christ in Majesty or the Last Judgement but treated with more freedom than in painted versions. These portal sculptures were meant to both intimidate and educate the viewer . As there were no equivalent Byzantine models, Romanesque sculptors felt free to expand in their treatment of tympanums. (107)

Gothic Art and Architecture

Gothic art developed after the Romanesque , in the 12 th century. The style continued to be used well into the 16 thcentury in some parts of Europe, while giving way to the Renaissance style earlier in other regions. The style was developed in Northern France due to socioeconomic, political, and theological reasons.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, people fled cities as they were no longer safe. The Romanesque era saw many people living in the countryside of France while cities remained largely abandoned. During this time period, the French monarchy was weak and feudal landowners exerted a large amount of regional power. In the 12 th century, the French royalty strengthened their power, their titles, and their landholdings, which led to more centralized government. Additionally, due to advancements in agriculture, population and trade increased. These changes brought people back to the cities, which is where we find the most expressive medium for the Gothic style — cathedrals. (108)

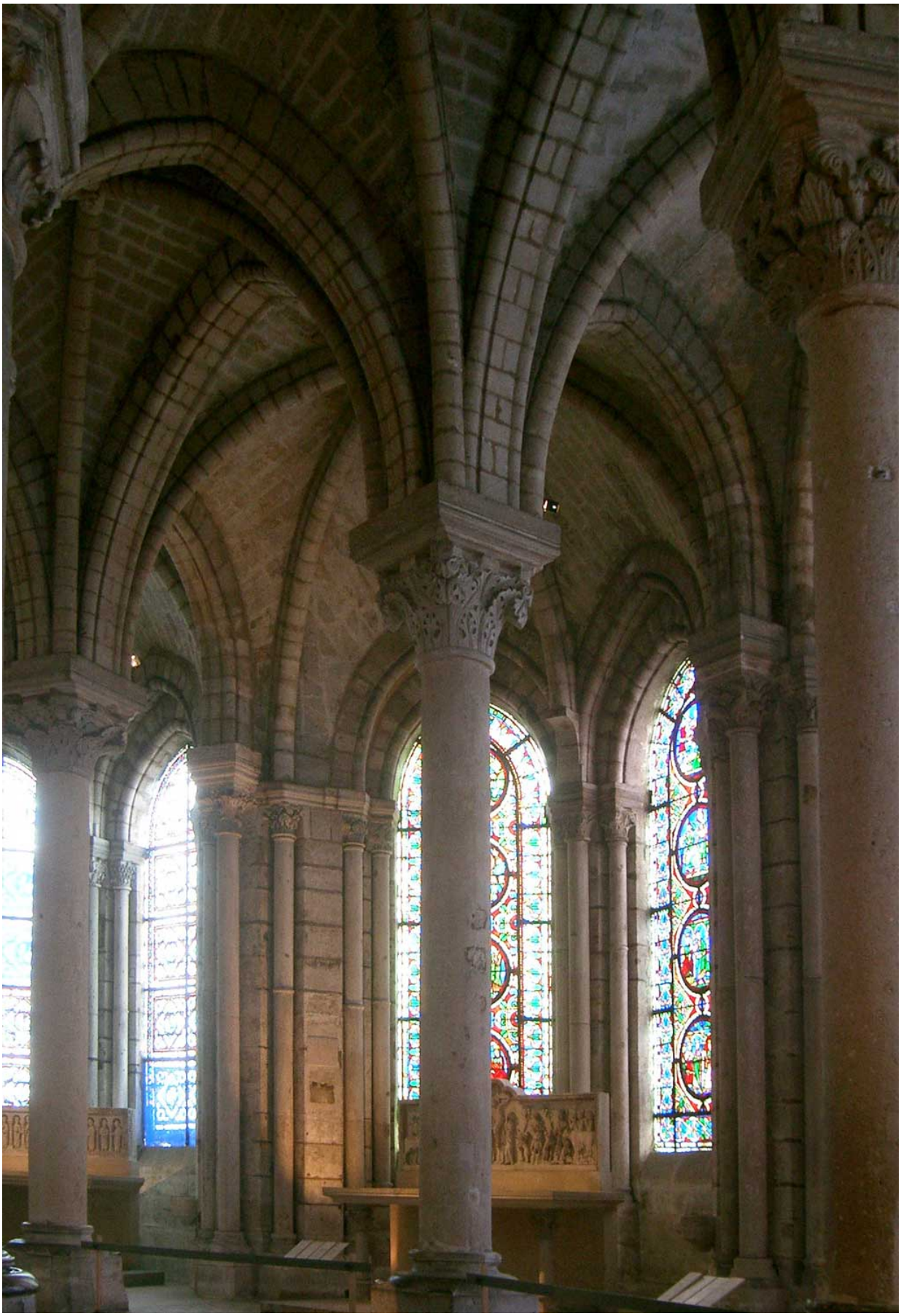
Gothic Architecture

Gothic architecture is unique in that we can pinpoint the exact place, the exact moment, and the exact person who developed it. Around 1137, Abbot Suger began re-building the Abbey Church of St. Denis. In his re-designs, which he wrote about extensively, we can see elements of what would become Gothic architecture, including the use ofsymmetry in design and ratios.

Ratios became essential to French Gothic cathedrals because they expressed the perfection of the universe created by God. This is where we also see stained glass emerge in Gothic architecture. Abbot Suger adopted the idea that light equates to God. He wrote that he placed pictures in the glass to replace wall paintings and talked about them as educational devices. A form of visual media

for the uneducated masses, the windows were instructional in theology during the Gothic era, and the light itself was a metaphor for the presence of God.

Cathedrals served as religious centers and they were important for local economies. Pilgrims would travel throughout Europe to see relics , which would bring an influx of travelers and money to cities with Cathedrals. (108)



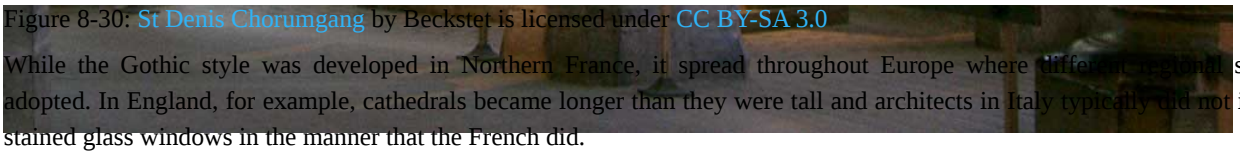


Figure 8-30: St Denis Chorumgang by Beckstet is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

While the Gothic style was developed in Northern France, it spread throughout Europe where different regional styles were adopted. In England, for example, cathedrals became longer than they were tall and architects in Italy typically did not incorporate stained glass windows in the manner that the French did.

Boundless. “Gothic Art. Boundless Art History Boundless, 20 Nov. 2016. Retrieved 16 Dec. 2016 from boundless Website

Gothic Painting

Illuminated manuscripts provide excellent examples of Gothic painting. A prayer book, known as the book of hours, became increasingly popular during the Gothic age and was treated as a luxury item. The Hours of Mary of Burgundy, produced in Flanders c. 1477, contains a miniature showing Mary of Burgundy in devotion with a wonderful depiction of a French Gothic Cathedral behind her.



Figure 8-31: Painting of a woman reading a book, sitting in front of a miniature depiction of Mary with the child Jesus on her lap by die beiden Künstler Nicolas Spierinc und Liétard van Lathem is licensed under Public Domain

Sculpture & Metalwork

Sculpture during the Gothic era really sheds light on the knowledge of artists working during this time period. Some historians believed that artists and artisans during the Gothic era had “forgotten” how to create realistic works of art, or art influenced by the classical age. However, a viewer only needs to look at the work of Nicolas of Verdun to see that artists could and did work in a classical style during the Gothic era. Additionally, sculpture produced in Germany during the Gothic era is especially noted for its lifelikeness.



Figure 8-32: Shrine of the Three Kings by Arminia is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

Church Life

Monastic reform became an important issue during the 11 th century, as elites began to worry that monks were not adhering to the rules binding them to a strictly religious life. Cluny Abbey, founded in the MÃ¢con region of France in 909, was established as part of the Cluniac Reforms, a larger movement of monastic reform in response to this fear. Cluny quickly established a reputation for austerity and rigor and sought to maintain a high quality of spiritual life by electing its own abbot without interference from laymen, thus maintaining economic and political independence from local lords and placing itself under the protection of the papacy.

Monastic reform inspired change in the secular church. The ideals that it was based upon were brought to the papacy by Pope Leo IX (pope 1049–1054), and provided the ideology of the clerical independence that led to the Investiture Controversy in the late 11 th century. This involved Pope Gregory VII (pope 1073–1085) and Emperor Henry IV, who initially clashed over episcopal appointments, a dispute that turned into a battle over the ideas of investiture, clerical marriage, and simony. The emperor saw the protection of the Church as one of his responsibilities as well as wanting to preserve the right to appoint his own choices as bishops within his lands, but the papacy insisted on the Church’s independence from secular lords. These issues themselves remained unresolved after the compromise of 1122 known as the Concordat of Worms. The conflict represents a significant stage in the creation of a papal monarchy separate from and equal to lay authorities. It also had the permanent consequence of empowering German princes at the expense of the German emperors.



Figure 8-33: Vision of St. Bernard with St. Benedict and John the Evangelist by Web Gallery of Art is licensed under Public Domain

The High Middle Ages was a period of great religious movements. Besides the Crusades and monastic reforms, people sought to participate in new forms of religious life. New monastic orders were founded, including the Carthusians and the Cistercians. The Cistercians, especially, expanded rapidly in their early years under the guidance of Bernard of Clairvaux. These new orders were formed in response to the feeling of the laity that Benedictine monasticism no longer met the needs of the laymen. Laymen and those wishing to enter the religious life wanted to return to the simpler hermetical monasticism of early Christianity or to live an Apostolic life. Besides new monastic orders, religious pilgrimages were encouraged, with old pilgrimage sites such as Rome, Jerusalem, and Compostela seeing renewed visitation and new sites such as Monte Gargano and Bari rising to prominence.

In the 13 th century, mendicant orders — the Franciscans and the Dominicans — who swore vows of poverty and earned their living by begging, were approved by the papacy. Besides the recognized orders, other religious groups such as the Waldensians and the Humiliati attempted to return to the life of early Christianity in the middle 12 thand early 13 th centuries, but they were condemned as heretical by the papacy. Others joined the Cathars, another heretical movement condemned by the papacy. In 1209, a crusade was preached against the Cathars, the Albigensian Crusade, which in combination with the medieval Inquisition, finally eliminated them. (101)

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8.6: The Late Middle Ages and Collapse of Byzantium

Late Middle Ages

War, Famine, and Plague



Figure 8-34: Omne Bonum or plague victims blessed by priest by James le Palmer is licensed under Public Domain

The first years of the 14 th century were marked by a number of famines, culminating in the Great Famine of 1315–1317. The causes of the Great Famine were not just related to the ongoing climatic change that was taking place, a slow transition from the Medieval Warm Period to the Little Ice Age, but also had causes in overspecialization in single crops, which left the population vulnerable when bad weather caused crop failures. Other troubles included an economic downturn and the aforementioned climate change — which resulted in the average annual temperature for Europe declining during the 14 th century. But knowledge of Asia and the trade routes to China expanded during the period, through the invasions of the Mongols and the travels of Marco Polo.

These troubles were followed in 1347 by the Black Death, a disease that spread throughout Europe in the years 1348, 1349, and 1350. The death toll was probably about 35 million people in total in Europe, about one-third of the population. Towns were especially hard-hit because of the crowded conditions. Large areas of land were left sparsely inhabited, and in some places fields were left unworked. Because of the sudden decline in available laborers, the price of wages rose as landlords sought to entice workers to their fields, but the lower rents were balanced out by the lower demand for food, which cut into agricultural income.

Urban workers also felt that they had a right to greater earnings, and popular uprisings broke out across Europe. Among the uprisings were the jacquerie in France, the Peasants' Revolt in England, and revolts in the cities of Florence in Italy and Ghent and Bruges in Flanders. The trauma of the plague led to an increased piety throughout Europe, which manifested itself in the foundation of new charities, the extreme self-mortification of the flagellants, and the scapegoating of the Jews. Conditions were further unsettled by the return of the plague throughout the rest of the 14 th century. It continued to strike Europe throughout the rest of the Middle Ages. (101)

State Resurgence

The Late Middle Ages also witnessed the rise of strong, royalty-based nation-states throughout Europe, particularly in England, France, and the Christian kingdoms of the Iberian Peninsula — Aragon, Castile, and Portugal. The long conflicts of the later Middle Ages strengthened royal control over the kingdoms, even though they were extremely hard on the peasantry. Kings profited from warfare by gaining land and extended royal legislation throughout their kingdoms. Paying for the wars required that the methods of taxation become more efficient and the rate of taxation often increased. The requirement to obtain the consent of those taxed meant that representative bodies such as the English Parliament or the French Estates General gained some power and new authority.

Throughout the 14 th century, French kings sought to expand their influence throughout the kingdom at the expense of the territorial holdings of the nobility. This ran into difficulties when they attempted to confiscate the holdings of the English kings in southern France, leading to the Hundred Years' War, which lasted until 1453. At first, the English under King Edward III and his son Edward, the Black Prince, won the battles of CrÃ©cy and Poitiers, captured the city of Calais and won control of much of France. The stresses of this war almost caused the disintegration of the French kingdom during the early years of the war. In the early 15 th century, France once more teetered on the brink of dissolving, but in the late 1420s military successes led by Joan of Arc (d. 1431) led to the eventual victory of the French kings over the English with the capture of the last of the English possessions in southern France in 1453. The price was high, as the population of France at the end of the Wars was likely half what it had been prior to the start of the conflict.

Conversely, the Wars had a positive effect on English national identity, doing much to fuse the various local identities into a national English ideal. The conflict with the French also helped create a national culture in England that was separate from French culture, which had been the dominant cultural influence in England prior to the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War. The early Hundred Years' War also saw the dominance of the English longbow, and the appearance of cannon on the battlefield at CrÃ©cy in 1346.

In modern-day Germany, the Empire continued, but the elective nature of the imperial crown meant that there was no strong dynasty around which a strong state could form. Further east, the kingdoms of Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia grew into powerful kingdoms. The Iberian Peninsula kingdoms continued to gain land from the Muslim kingdoms of the peninsula, with Portugal concentrating on expanding overseas during the 15 th century while the other kingdoms were riven by difficulties over the royal succession and other concerns throughout the 15 th century.

England, after losing the Hundred Years' War, went on to suffer a long civil war known as the Wars of the Roses, which lasted into the 1490s, after Henry Tudor consolidated his hold on England from his victory over King Richard III at Bosworth in 1485. Scandinavia went through a period of union under the Union of Kalmar in the late 14 th and early 15 th century, but dissolved once more after the death of Queen Margaret I of Denmark (r. in Denmark 1353–1412), who had united Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. The major power around the Baltic Sea was the city states of the Hanseatic League, a commercial confederation which traded from western Europe to Russia. Scotland emerged from English domination under King Robert the Bruce (r. 1306–1329), who secured papal recognition of his kingship in 1328. (101)

Collapse of Byzantium

Although the Palaeologi emperors managed to recapture Constantinople from the western Europeans in 1261, they were never able to regain control of much of the former imperial lands. They usually controlled only a small section of the Balkan Peninsula near Constantinople, the city itself, and some coastal lands on the Black Sea and around the Aegean Sea. The former Byzantine lands in the Balkans were divided between the new kingdoms of Serbia and Bulgaria and the city-state of Venice. The power of the Byzantine emperors was threatened by a new Turkish tribe, the Ottomans, who established themselves in Anatolia in the 13 th century and steadily expanded throughout the 14 th century. The Ottomans expanded into Europe, reducing Bulgaria to a vassal state by 1366 and taking over Serbia after the Serbian defeat at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. Western Europeans rallied to the plight of the Christians in the Balkans and declared a new Crusade in 1396, and a great army was sent to the Balkans which met defeat at the Battle of Nicopolis. Constantinople finally was captured by the Ottomans in 1453 (101)

Controversy within the Church

The troubled 14 th century saw both the Avignon Papacy of 1305–1378, also called the "Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy" (a reference to the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews), and then the Great Schism that lasted from 1378 to 1418, when there were two, then later three, rival popes, each supported by a number of states. In the early years of the 15 th century, after a century of turmoil, ecclesiastical officials convened in Constance in 1414, and in 1415 the council deposed one of the rival popes, leaving only two claimants. Further depositions followed, and in November 1417 the council elected Martin V (pope 1417–1431) as pope.

Besides the schism, the western church was riven by theological controversies, some of which turned into heresies. John Wyclif (d. 1384), an English theologian, was condemned as a heretic in 1415 for teaching that the laity should have access to the text of the Bible as well as holding views on the Eucharist that were contrary to church doctrine.

Wyclif's teachings influenced two of the major heretical movements of the later Middle Ages — Lollardry in England and Hussitism in Bohemia. The Bohemians were also influenced by the teaching of Jan Hus, who was eventually burned at the stake in 1415 after being condemned as a heretic by the Council of Constance. The Hussite church, although subject to a crusade being called against it, survived past the end of the Middle Ages.

The papacy refined the concept of transubstantiation further in the Late Middle Ages, stating that the clergy alone was allowed to partake of the wine in the Eucharist. This further distanced the secular laity from the clergy. The laity continued the practices of pilgrimages, veneration of relics, and the belief in power of the Devil. Mystics such as Meister Eckhart (d. 1327) or Thomas Ã Kempis (d. 1471) wrote works that taught the laity to focus on their inner spiritual life, something that contributed to the Protestant Reformation. Besides mysticism, belief in witches and witchcraft became widespread, and by the late 15 th century the Church had begun to lend credence to populist fears of witchcraft with its condemnation of witches in 1484 and the publication of the Malleus Maleficarum, the most popular handbook for witchhunters, in 1486. (101)

Scholars, Intellectuals, and Exploration

The Later Middle Ages saw a reaction against scholasticism led by John Duns Scotus (d. 1308) and William of Ockham (d. around 1348), both of whom objected to the application of reason to faith. Their efforts, along with others, led to an undermining of the prevailing Platonic idea of "universals". Ockham's insistence that reason operates independently of faith allowed science to be separated from theology and philosophy. Legal studies were marked by the steady advance of Roman law into areas of jurisprudence previously governed by customary law. The one exception to this trend was England, where the common law remained pre-eminent. Countries also codified their laws, with legal codes being promulgated in countries as far apart as Castile, Poland, and Lithuania.



Figure 8-35: a university class room from the Middle Ages by Laurentius de Voltolina is licensed under Public Domain

Education remained mostly focused on the training of future clergy. The basic learning of the letters and numbers remained the province of the family or a village priest, but the secondary subjects of the trivium – grammar, rhetoric, logic — were studied in either cathedral schools or in schools provided by cities. Commercial secondary schools spread also, with some towns in Italy having more than one such enterprise. Universities also spread throughout Europe in the 14 th and 15 th centuries.

The rise of vernacular literature increased in pace, with Dante, Petrarch and Giovanni Boccaccio in 14 th century Italy, Geoffrey Chaucer and William Langland in England, and FranÃ§ois Villon and Christine de Pizan in France. Much literature remained religious in character, but although much of this continued to be written in Latin, a new demand developed for saints' lives and other devotional tracts in the vernacular languages. This was fed by the growth of the devotio moderna movement, most prominently in the formation of the Brethren of the Common Life, but also in the works of German mystics such as Meister Eckhart and Johannes Tauler. Theatre also developed in the guise of miracle plays put on by the Church. At the end of the period, the development of the printing press around 1450 led to the establishment of publishing houses throughout Europe by 1500.

Beginning in the early 15 th century, the countries of the Iberian peninsula began sponsoring exploration past the boundaries of Europe. Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal (d. 1460), sent expeditions that discovered the Canary Islands, the Azores, and Cape Verde during his lifetime. After his death, exploration continued, with Bartholomew Diaz (d. 1500) going around the Cape of Good Hope in 1486 and Vasco de Gama (d. 1524) sailing around Africa to India in 1498. The combined Spanish monarchies of Castile and Aragon sponsored Christopher Columbus' (d. 1506) voyage of exploration in 1492 that discovered the Americas. The English crown under King Henry VII (r. 1485–1509) sponsored the voyage of John Cabot (d. 1498) in 1497, which landed on Cape Breton Island. (101)

Technological and Military Developments



Figure 8-36: Battle of crecy froissart by Jean Froissart is licensed under Public Domain

One of the major developments in the military sphere during the Late Middle Ages was the increasing use of infantry and light cavalry. The English also employed longbowmen, but other countries were unable to create similar forces that enjoyed the same military success. Armor continued to advance, spurred on by the increasing power of crossbows, and plate armor was developed to help protect against the threat from crossbows as well as the hand-held guns that were developed. Pole-arms reached new prominence with the development of the Flemish and Swiss infantry armed with pikes and other long spears. (101)

Late Medieval Art and Architecture

The Late Middle Ages in Europe as a whole correspond to the Trecento and Early Renaissance in Italy, while Northern Europe and Spain continued to use Gothic styles, increasingly elaborate in the 15 th century, until almost the end of the period. International Gothic was a courtly style that reached much of Europe in the decades around 1400, producing masterpieces such as the Trcs Riches Heures du Duc de Berry. All over Europe secular art continued to increase in quantity and quality, and in the 15 th century the mercantile classes of Italy and Flanders became important patrons, commissioning small portraits of themselves in oils as well as a growing range of luxury items such as jewellery, ivory caskets, cassone chests and maiolica pottery. These objects also included the Hispano-Moresque ware produced by mostly MudÃ©jar potters in Spain. Although royalty owned huge collections of plate, little survives except for the Royal Gold Cup. Italian silk manufacture developed, so that Western churches and elites no longer needed to rely on imports from Byzantium or the Islamic world. In France and Flanders tapestry weaving of sets like The Lady and the Unicorn became a major luxury industry.

The large external sculptural schemes of Early Gothic churches gave way to more sculpture inside the building, as tombs became more elaborate and other features such as pulpits were sometimes lavishly carved, as in the Pulpit by Giovanni Pisano in Sant'Andrea. Painted or carved wooden relief altarpieces became common, especially as churches created many side-chapels. Early Netherlandish painting with artists such as Jan van Eyck (d. 1441) and Rogier van der Weyden (d. 1464) rivalled that of Italy, as did northern illuminated manuscripts, which in the 15 thcentury began to be collected on a large scale by secular elites, who also commissioned secular books, especially histories. From about 1450 printed books rapidly became popular, though still expensive, and there were around 30,000 different editions of incunabula printed by 1500, and by then illuminated manuscripts were only commissioned by royalty and a few others. Very small woodcuts, nearly all religious, were affordable even by peasants in parts of Northern Europe from the middle of the 15 th century, with more expensive engravings supplying a wealthier market with a variety of images. (101)

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Index

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Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

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    - 3.5: The First and Second Intermediate Period - *Undeclared*
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    - 4.1: About This Module- Greek Culture - *Undeclared*
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    - 5.3: The Roman Republic - *Undeclared*
    - 5.4: Transition to Empire and Rome Under Augustus - *Undeclared*
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    - 5.6: Rome’s Imperial Crisis and the Rise of Constantine - *Undeclared*
  - 6: Roman and Christian Religious Culture - *Undeclared*
    - 6.1: About This Module- Roman and Christian Religious Culture - *Undeclared*
    - 6.2: Early Beliefs and the Roman Pantheon - *Undeclared*
    - 6.3: Cults - *Undeclared*
    - 6.4: Early Christian Religion and Culture - *Undeclared*
  - 7: Byzantine and Muslim Culture - *Undeclared*
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    - 7.2: The Byzantine Empire - *Undeclared*
    - 7.3: Islamic Civilization - *Undeclared*
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    - 8.1: About This Module- Western European Civilization During the Middle Ages - *Undeclared*
    - 8.2: Early Middle Ages and Western Society - *Undeclared*

- 8.3: The Rise of Islam, Carolingian Europe, New Kingdoms, and a Revived Byzantium - *Undeclared*
- 8.4: Art, Architecture, and Military and Technological Developments - *Undeclared*
- 8.5: High Middle Ages - *Undeclared*
- 8.6: The Late Middle Ages and Collapse of Byzantium - *Undeclared*

- Back Matter - *Undeclared*
  - Index - *Undeclared*
  - Glossary - *Undeclared*
  - 9.1: Footnote Attribution List - *Undeclared*
  - Detailed Licensing - *Undeclared*