

I. brief overview of different sculpture styles a. egyptian sculpture

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Egyptian sculpture is distinct in their symbolic formality based on an ancient set of rules for three-dimensional works of art and were not meant to capture or memorialize a certain event or point in time. Egyptian sculpture is primarily used for religious purposes, mostly to guard over the dead. It is typically hewn from stone and figures preserve the cubic form of the original slab.

The figures are always deliberately facing the front and much of the detail is hewn to represent characteristics of the frontal image, and is usually painted with vibrant colors.

Later Greco-Roman influence later transformed the detail of the face to more closely approximate a realistic representation of the human face. (“ Egypt”)

B. Greek Sculpture The most important samples of Greek sculpture deal with religious themes, although civic, domestic and sepulchral themes are also common. When dealing with human subjects, realism tempered by idealism is the order of the day. Some were large, others small enough to place on a pedestal. Subjects include iconic figures such as the Greek gods and goddesses, priests, sacred animals and others of votive character.

The most popular type of Greek sculpture is the bas relief and in the round. Greek sculpture was also used to honor civic events such as treaties and national games. These memorials are mythopoetic in character. In general Greek sculptures in marble, stone, terracotta, bronze or wood are distinct in its grace and beauty, its hint of action and value as a record of dress and fashion of the era. Finishing included liberal applications of oil, wax and color for a more life-like sheen except for those made of marble, where color was added only for emphasis.

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(“ Greek sculpture – part I”) C. Roman Sculpture Sculpture as an art form developed late in Roman society because Romans considered all forms of art from a practical point of view and held it in contempt as work only slaves should do. Much of the work done in sculpture in the 2nd and 3rd Century B. C. was likely done by Etruscans. During the reign of Augustus (63 B. C. – 14 A. D.), Romans began drawing away from mostly decorative and utilitarian subjects of sculpture to more mythological themes.

The conquest of the Greeks shifted the material of choice from bronze to marble, and a shift from in the round to relief sculptures. Masses of Greek works of art were transported to Roman strongholds and excited much admiration but no desire to produce their own. Wealthy Romans commissioned copies of the more famous works for display in their homes. With Augustus, there was a dawning approximation to the Greek attitude towards art which did not survive his demise, but which did produce some of the more beautiful pieces of Roman sculpture such as the Altar of Peace (erected c. 12 B. C.).

(“ Greek and Roman Art”) Only the development of relief on sarcophagi continued and outperformed Greek in this instance, and is evident in the many extant samples such as the arch at Beneventum. The distinct Roman robustness and flavor is more evident in larger pieces of work rather than individual pieces. (“ Roman sculpture”) II. Descriptions of the selected works of art A. The Indian Triumph of Dionysus (Late 2nd Century, Marble) This relief was used as one side of a Roman sarcophagus representing the triumphal return of Dionysus, the Greek god of wine after his sojourn in India and the East.

Known as Bacchus in Roman mythology, he is portrayed here in a reclining fashion amidst what appears to be a procession or festival celebrating his return. He is as usual portrayed with grapes about his head, signifying wine. He is surrounded by men, women, children as well as a herald and he is apparently being carried by soldiers. Satyrs are also present, as well as panthers, which are often associated with this mythological figure. There is at least one elephant and a horse. The whole relief is a study in movement, even dancing.

Not one of the figure is in repose, and there is much going on. Each figure contributes to the richness of the representation, from the fruits in the basket, to the two children astride the elephant. All elements are on the move, even the draperies of the women. This is a classic example of the expertise developed by Roman sculptors for this particular form of art, and illustrative of the Greek influence, from the subject of the relief to the style of the dress. B. Portrait Figure of a Ruler (Roman c. A. D. 200—225, Bronze)

This bronze figure is a rare example of the period before marble became the material of choice for sculpture in-the-round. It is speculated that this was in emulation of Augustus, who in turn followed the example of Alexander the Great who declared himself a god. Probably once contained in the temple of an Asia Minor emperor, this is missing the head, the right leg midway to the calf and the left foot. It is a muscular yet graceful figure, striking a pose of some authority and arrogance, as if declaiming to his adoring public or announcing some important news.

It is also incredibly detailed, somewhat embarrassingly so in this instance as the figure is quite large and the details stand out somewhat. The head was <https://assignbuster.com/i-brief-overview-of-different-sculpture-styles-a-egyptian-sculpture/>

probably cast separately from the body as the break looks clean, as if from a joint. It is a magnificent specimen of manhood, and the face was probably as beautiful. It would probably benefit from some cleaning. C. Monumental Statue of the Pharaoh Ramesses II Enthroned (Egypt, New Kingdom, 1386-1349 BC and 1279-1212 BC, Grandiorite) This monument to Ramses II (c. 1290-1224 BCE), who is said to have ruled over Egypt for almost 67 years, are found in Nubia, near the Sudan.

“ There are figures of Ramses II with the prime gods of the New Kingdom, including Ptah, the Memphis creator god, Re-Harakhte, the sun god of Heliopolis and Amun Re, the great god of Thebes”. Together they guard the entrance to the temple dedicated to these figures. The Great Temple of Ramses II is on the left while the Temple of Hathor/Nefertari is on the right. They were cut into natural rock, and at 20 meters high are considered colossi. (Sullivan) There are four figures in all, although the figure on the right of Ramses II is missing a torso. The rock is pinkish in tinge.

The figures are sitting on thrones facing front, all the hands on their laps. The figures are rigid although the expression on the Ramses's face is placid, with even a hint of a smile. The features are well-formed, incredible considering how it has been exposed to wind and sand for all these years. Inscriptions are carved in the arms. At their feet between the legs are smaller figures standing upright, perhaps representing servants or priests. In between each colossi are women figures are dressed finely, and are perhaps royalty. There is much vandalism, names and dates scratched into the stone as far back as 1875.

The podium is inscribed with hieroglyphics and the rightmost figure had lost the beard. There appears to be figures of baboons over the entrance of the temple. III. Comparison of the three sculptures The Roman works of art are good representative examples of the two kinds of sculptures popular during that period: relief in marble and sculpture in the round in bronze. The colossi Ramses II is a typical example of the three-dimensional Egyptian style. There appears to be nothing less similar than the two art types. The composition for one thing is completely different.

In Roman sculptures, the lines are never linear. The single subject appears about to move or speak, so dynamic is the pose. In the relief, there is visible interaction among the elements of the sculpture, and each figure tells a different story. It memorializes a moment and an occasion. The figures themselves are idealistically and naturally constructed, celebrating the Roman idea of beauty of form and structure. In the Egyptian sculpture, the figures are stiff and formally posed. No movement is implied, and the pose is strictly linear and frontal, as traditional for Egyptian sculpture.

The figures themselves are stylized, showing no definition of muscles or other details but with some emphasis on the face and the ornaments such as the headdress and the clothes, which are as stiff and immobile as the body. It memorializes the figures as immovable and permanent, hence the size of the statues and the fact that it was hewn right out of solid rock. The use of hieroglyphics is also prolific, taking the place of visual representation in telling the story of the figures. Yet there are similarities, mostly in the theme, which is divinity.

Ramses is portrayed as side by side the most important gods of the New Kingdom, while the single sculpture deified the emperor and the relief treated the subject of a god celebrated, Dionysus. IV. Conclusion While this paper does not include a specimen of Greek sculpture, it has been discussed earlier that the Romans closely followed the Greek style of sculpture, mostly by using imported sculptures as a basis for copies for their own sculptures. A cursory glance at extant Greek sculpture in the round will immediately reveal how closely the Roman versions mimic the Greek style, from material to posture to subject.

Ancient sculptures are representative of the society in which they were produced. They are lasting monuments to the great civilizations which spawned them, and while each is stylistically different, they provide valuable insights into how the ancient Romans and Egyptians lived and how they chose to be remembered. Works Cited “ Egypt . ” Ancient Arts. n. d. Detroit Institute of Arts. 24 July 2007 . “ Egyptian Sculpture - Part 1. ” Old And Sold. n. d. 24 July 2007 .

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