

# Analysis of an artwork



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Bronze Statuette of a Veiled and Masked Dancer Hellenistic art depicted a wide range of matters which ranges from images of gods and goddesses to representations of untraditional subjects like children, the elderly people and other common people. The “ Bronze Statuette of a Veiled and Masked Dancer” falls under the latter subject matter which as the name imparts is a representation of a dancer whose face is concealed in the folds of her veil. The said statuette is displayed at the Greek section of the Metropolitan Museum of the Art. \*please put detailed location here\*

The statuette has a height of 8 1/16 inches and is said to be from the 3rd-2nd century B. C. Alexandria, a Greek cosmopolitan city wherein dance and mime professions were prevalent during the ancient times<sup>1</sup>. The dancer is wearing a traditional Grecian dress called peplos with a woolen undergarment called chiton, and a cloak called himation<sup>2</sup>. Due to the pressure applied by her upper and lower limbs, the himation was drawn taut over her head and body causing the fabric to be draped in realistic folds and pleats imparting a feeling of softness and sheerness of fabrics, which also further enhanced the dancer’s figure which seems to be captured in an exotic and provocative pose. However, the face which was concealed in a veil seems to depict modesty with a hint of mystery. The contrasting emotions made the statuette unique and highly artsy.

The dancer’s laced slipper also denotes daintiness and further magnified the femininity of the dancer. In addition, the statuette’s dimensions further established its function as a decorative element or a figurine probably commissioned by a rich patron of the arts. Details of the patron or the one who commissioned the bronze statuette was not disclosed though, but the Greek affluent populace at the time were quite known to appreciate beauty

and were quite eager to enhance their homes with luxurious items made of bronze and other expensive materials<sup>3</sup>.

In a comparison with a sculpture mentioned in Kleiner's book, the "Peplos Kore" is an example of an Archaic style circa 530-525 B. C. and is made entirely of white marble with blue-grey streaks<sup>4</sup>. Like the Hellenistic bronze statuette, the material used is expensive. The sculpture also depicts a woman wearing the traditional Grecian dress called a peplos worn over a chiton, but without the himation as seen in the Hellenistic bronze statuette. The woman stands in the typical Archaic style of upright and frontal stance with the dress hanging in rigid and simple lines. The symmetrical patterning with the shoulders, hips, and knees on parallel lines are influenced by the ancient Egyptian canon of human proportions<sup>5</sup>. Unlike the Hellenistic bronze statuette, the "Peplos Kore" is presented in a modest manner which downplays on the dress and body and emphasizes more on the texture of the seashell-like curls of the hair, a typical representation of women in art during this period<sup>6</sup>.

With the realistic pose, asymmetrical representation, choice of material with a smooth and polished finish, the Hellenistic bronze statuette imparts a timeless feel that an unlearned eye may take as modern art. It is over 2000 years old but the technique on how it was made is seen time and time again in other cultures and in later historical periods. The 9th century A. D. bronze sculptures found in Igbo-Ukbu in Nigeria are examples of sculptures done in bronze casting<sup>7</sup>, using a similar technique as the one used in the Hellenistic bronze statuette but is done in a much later period.

In conclusion, the "Bronze Statuette of a Veiled and Masked Dancer" has captured the colorful culture of the ancient Greeks through its subject matter

and the way it was presented. The statuette has also given an insight on how advanced the ancient Greek civilizations were in terms of metalworking and craftsmanship. Thus, sculptures, like in any forms of art, is a reflection of the attitudes, lifestyles and culture based from either the place they originated from, or the person who made it, or the person who commissioned it.

#### Works Cited

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