

Art History

Art of the Roman Republic

Name:

Section:

Score: ____/5

Directions: Use the readings below to fill out the temple below about art of the Roman Republic. In the similarities column record any major similarities that Roman art had to any other societies (specifically Greek or Egyptian). In the differences column record how it was different than the Greek's style.

Art of the Roman Republic		
	Similarities	Differences
Mosaics		
Sculptures		
Pottery		
Architecture		

Early Roman Republic art (500-200 B.C)

Art of the early Republic was profoundly influenced by the Greek art of Magna Graecia. This was the name given to the Greek colonies in Southern Italy, such as Cumae. These colonies were prosperous during the period of Etruscan domination of central Italy. In about 400 B.C., threatened by Sicilians and the newly-powerful Romans, the Greek settlements went into a period of disunity and poverty.

Mosaics

One such influence of the Greeks was the use of tiles to create a mosaic on floors. The first of these were from about the Sixth Century B.C. in Magna Graecia in Southern Italy. For floor mosaics, each tesserae (piece of the mosaic) was stone (typically limestone or marble), and they to be completely flat. Wall mosaics were considered the more difficult craft. The documentary evidence of the early Roman Republic suggests wall mosaicists (musearii) were paid more than those who worked on floors. Colored stones began to be used in wall mosaics in about the Second Century B.C.

Pottery

The earliest Italian pottery dates from about the Eighth Century B.C. It is of the dark indigenous clay of the Mediterranean. The Etruscans were the first to use the pottery wheel somewhere between 700 and 500 B.C. As with mosaics, the Greeks (particularly Athens) deeply influenced ancient Roman pottery types and decoration. Red-figure vases began to be produced in about 450 B.C. During the Fourth Century B.C. several dominant, independent workshops appear in the following areas: Apulia, Campania, Sicily, Lucca and Paesta.

The Italian pottery of this period tended to be slightly larger than the Greek prototypes and much more ornate. The red glazes were similar to those used on the Greek mainland rather than in the Eastern Mediterranean, where more experimentation in glazes was going on.

Sculptures

The Etruscan sculptors took their techniques and subject matter from the Archaic Greeks. Most sculpture was votive and found in tombs. The later Roman sculptors, like their Etruscan progenitors, worked mostly in terracotta, clay, or bronze. Marble was not widely used until the late Republic.

During the Second Century B.C. Greek sculptors migrated to Rome, the new powerhouse of the Mediterranean region. The recipe for bronze had been known from Minoan times (ca. 3000-1000 B.C.)—one part tin to nine parts of copper. The main sources of copper in Italy were Etruria, Bruttium and Elba. During the period of Roman domination, Spain was also an important source of copper. Spain was also a major source of tin, as were Brittany and Cornwall. In the ancient literature, bronze from Syracuse and Campania were particularly valued. But archaeologists have not been able to distinguish these from bronzes originating in other parts of Italy. Like the Greeks, the Romans used the same word for copper and bronze: in Latin *aes*, in Greek χαλκός.

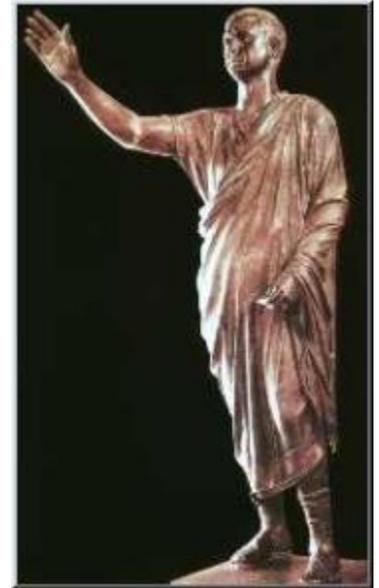
Following the Greek model, sculptors of the early Roman Republic used wooden models for marble sculpture. The increased realism of late Greek sculpture is reflected in Roman sculpture of the Third and Second Centuries B.C. Particularly in the depiction of hair, natural looking locks prevail over the formal perfection of previous Roman and Etruscan sculpture. As with the Greeks, the marble was carved in pieces and folds of drapery were often used to hide the spots where they were joined. The spot where a head was attached to the bust was often covered with the top of a toga or a breastplate.

"Early Roman Republic Art (500-200 B.C)." (Excerpts) Antiquities Experts, 2014. Web. 05 Oct. 2014.

Art of the Roman Republic

First we need to know a little history. A group of Roman Aristocrats overthrew the last Tarquin king in 509 BC . For the next 450 year a small group of men, the senate, would rule Rome. By 275 BC Rome would control the entire Italian peninsula. For more than a century the Punic wars would rage finally coming to their conclusion in 146 BC. With the end of the Punic wars and the defeat of Carthage, Rome gained control of the entire western Mediterranean. By the mid second century BC Rome had conquered Greece, and by 44 BC they had acquired most of Gaul. (modern day France.)

The sculpture of the Roman Republic period was influenced by the art they found in Greece but with their own twist. The Romans practiced ancestor worship. They venerated their deceased relatives and had death masks and sculptures made of them allowing the past generations to continue to participate in some ceremonies. This led to a desire to render realistic portraits. This bronze of Aulus Metellus is life-sized. We know his name because it is inscribed on the hem of his clothing. The statue has been known since ancient times as 'The Orator' and the man stands as if addressing a crowd. He wears sturdy leather boots, an interesting thing to note...gods and goddesses were depicted barefoot and later on we will see that Augustus was sculpted barefoot, perhaps hinting at his deification.



Aulus Metellus Bronze

The Romans were well aware of the propaganda value of portraits. This is why they used them on coins. This relief sculpture of Julius Caesar on a Denarius accurately shows his careworn face and receding hairline. Roman coins are actually one of the ways we have accurate pictures or portraits of their many rulers.



Denarius with portrait of Julius Caesar

The Romans developed the use of concrete to aid them in their massive building projects. Their use of concrete was a huge breakthrough that we probably take for granted. They were able to make massive building for less money and effort by building out of concrete and then applying a veneer of stone or marble over the concrete. This gave them greater

freedom in the forms they could use, they didn't have to transport as many heavy stones, and they could stretch their resources. Here we see a picture of how the concrete was used. There was a fill in the center, then often a layer of brick, and then a stone veneer. So while Greek buildings revealed their building materials, the Romans covered their up.

Another architectural feature of the Romans is the use of the round arch and vault. While other civilizations had used these, none to the degree that the Romans did. Here we can see the remains of the Sanctuary of the Fortuna Primigenia dedicated to the goddess of fate and chance. The sanctuary was not discovered until after World War II when the area was being cleared of debris caused by bombings. It is a fine example of Republican architecture. It is built of concrete and is covered with a veneer of stucco and limestone.

There are seven terraces that ascend with long ramps and stairways connecting them. You can see the use of arches



Model of the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia

and colonnades. As you reach the upper levels there is a large semi-circle staircase leading to the actual temple of Fortuna. The temple is a rock cut cave where the actual acts of divination occurred. More common temple structures were smaller urban temples built in the cities commercial centers. This temple sits on a raised platform next to the Tiber River. While unsure, historians think it may have been dedicated to Portunus, the god of harbors and ports. It has a porch, a single set of steps, and a rectangular cella. It echoes the Greek temple plans that we have already looked at. There are Ionic columns and two engaged columns...meaning part of the column is set into the wall. There is a frieze going around the entablature. This combining of designs and orders from the Greeks is typical of Roman buildings.



Roman temple

"Art of the Roman Republic." Substantive Education. N.p., 20 Mar. 2009. Web. 05 Oct. 2014.