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Античность (Тысячелетие до Рождества Христова). Базис европейской культуры

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Аннотация. Эссе посвящено сводному обзору основных явлений мировой художественной культуры в период Античности (тысячелетие до Рождества Христова). В работе обеспечивается целостное видение художественных феноменов. Автор последовательно рассматривает достижения античных мастеров в различных видах творчества: словесности (созидание духовного фундамента античной культуры в религиозных сводах и национальных эпосах), архитектуре (появление ордера в древнегреческой классике), скульптуре (как ведущем жанре Античности), изобразительном искусстве (по сохранившимся фрескам и мозаикам), театральном искусстве (трагедии древнегреческих драматургов), поэзии (римского классицизма). Также внимание уделяется развитию искусства в русле эллинизма и параллелям к греко-римской Античности на территориях Востока. Кроме того, дается обзор последнего этапа Античности – римского (расцвет римской архитектуры и скульптуры). В заключение автор приходит к выводу о важнейшей роли художественных явлений периода Античности как базиса европейской культуры.

EN

Antiquity: A millennium before the Birth of Christ. The basis of European culture

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Abstract. The essay is devoted to a summary review of the main phenomena of global artistic culture in the Antiquity period (a millennium before the Birth of Christ). The work provides a holistic vision of artistic phenomena. The author consistently examines the achievements of ancient masters in various art forms: literature (the creation of the spiritual foundation of ancient culture in religious canons and national epic), architecture (the appearance of the order in ancient Greek classics), sculpture (as the leading genre of Antiquity), fine art (based on preserved frescoes and mosaics), theatrical art (tragedies of ancient Greek playwrights), poetry (Roman classicism). Attention is also paid to the development of art in line with Hellenism and to the parallels to Greco-Roman Antiquity in the territories of the East. In addition, an overview of the last stage of Antiquity, the Roman stage (the heyday of Roman architecture and sculpture), is given. In conclusion, the author finds that the art phenomena of the period of Antiquity played the most important role as the basis of European culture.

The chronological framework of Antiquity is from the last centuries of the 2nd millennium BC until the first centuries of the 1st millennium AD. In general, it is a millennium before the birth of Christ. Geographically this term refers to the art of Ancient Greece and Rome. However, it was only a part of great artistic culture that extensively developed outside these territories.

Just before Antiquity, one can clearly observe the following phenomenon that would be repeated at times in the future – every new round of historical development has a catastrophe as a starting point or at least the decline of the former civilization.

For example, during the consideration of the Ancient World culture, the achievements of Aegean civilization that had developed on the islands of the Aegean Sea (the main territory of Greece) were noted. In the 12th century BC (that can be considered the starting point of Antiquity), the Dorian (North Greek) tribes, which were at a much lower level of development, destroyed it.

The Dorian conquest led to a decline in all spheres of life. In the history of Greece, there came a period that was called *the Dark Ages*. It lasted almost five centuries (approximately until the appearance of Homer's poems).

Of course, it was not total destruction. The “barbarians” of the Antiquity took some part of the former civilization. Nevertheless, the world was being built from the beginning.

This “building” was largely carried out through the creation of *the spiritual foundation* of Antiquity and it was laid mainly in *literature* and consisted of *religious canons* and *national epic*.

There appeared two religious canons in India.

Vedas (translated as “*knowledge*”, or to be exact, “*spiritual knowledge*”) are the sacred books of Hinduism as the main religion of India.

Tripitaka (translated as *Three Baskets of Teachings*, this canon consists of *three* collections of texts) is a Buddhist canon. Buddhism appeared in the middle of the 1st millennium BC. It was the earliest of three *world religions* (along with Christianity and Islam) and then received circulation in many countries of Asia.

In ancient India, two great epics were created – the poems “Mahabharata” and “Ramayana”. The word “*Mahabharata*” (the great Bharata) arose as the result of the reduction of the full name (the great tale of the Bharata Dynasty). Bharata is an ancient Indian tribe that actually existed (the official name of modern India is Bharata). *Ramayana* translates to “*The Acts of Rama*”. Rama is a legendary hero of Indian tales.

In the time of Antiquity, the Jewish people created the religious work that meant so much to mankind – *the Holy Bible* (from the Greek word “*books*”), to be exact, its pre-Christian part, *the Old Testament*, a collection of sacred books of Judaism as the religion of the Jews. Later, along with the New Testament it comprised the Bible – Christian Scriptures.

The beliefs of the ancient Jews recorded in **the Old Testament** became the first *monotheistic religion*. It was a fundamentally important breakthrough into the future when monotheistic religions (Christianity, Islam) replaced pagan cults.

In Ancient Greece, the religious canon as such did not arise (it was replaced by numerous myths), but it was compensated by the creation of the national epic.

In **Homer’s** poems (a semi-mythical person), **The Iliad** and **The Odyssey** and especially in **Hesiod’s Theogony** (“The Origin of Gods”), the final myth revision was carried out bringing them into a coherent and integral system. The essence of these changes that occurred to man on his way from the Ancient world to Antiquity found here its metaphorical expression in the replacement of old gods with new ones.

The former gods (the Titans) embodied dark elemental forces of the Earth – a world dominated by terror and disharmony. The young gods (the Olympic Pantheon headed by Zeus) having subdued the Titans and thrown them into the abyss in the lower world (Tartarus – hell), established the power of the law in the world and created a new beauty based on order and harmony.

These poems are written in hexameter – the standard epic meter in classical Greek literature (a metrical line of verses consisting of six feet). It is characterized by the heroic style, declamation and sets the tone of “the hoar of innumerable ages”.

Vedas, *Tripitaka*, *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, the *Old Testament*, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, *Theogony* are the most famous of many literary works in which the original principles of the spiritual existence of Antiquity were established.

The notion “*literary works*” rightly belongs to religious canons too because they are collections of texts of different origin and purpose. In addition to cult texts (hymns to gods, prayers, preaching, ritual instructions, spells of magic), they contain historical chronicles, heroic legends, fairy tales, folk songs, fables, parables etc. It turned the religious canon into an anthology of man’s life of that time.

Moreover, cult texts can be considered as artistic works due to their artistic expression. For example, **Psalms** of the Old Testament. The Bible tradition ascribes them to the legendary king of Israel **David**. The religious hymns from the Indian *Vedas* are also remarkable in this aspect.

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Religious instructions could take the form of a narrative. Thus, there appeared many ecclesiastical stories. One of the brightest examples is found in the Old Testament – it is **the Book of Job**. It is a drama of a man’s life full of sufferings.

Job is a righteous and blameless man pleasing to the Lord. It seems that the evil could not enter into his life but the impossible happens and this is the Lord’s wish because the Satan is not the Lord’s enemy in this case but the Adversary of man, his tempter and accuser. He insists that Job honors the Lord not unmercenary and his sanctity arises from his prosperity.

To get the answer to this question that confused him, Yahweh gives Job to the accuser for torture. Job endures terrible trials, proves man’s ability to be faithful and is rewarded for it.

The Book of Job shows the ambiguity of the Bible postulates and poses the problem concerning the omniscience of the Lord. The All-knowing did not know if Job was god-fearing and how he would behave in trials. However, this ecclesiastical story is instructive and its point can be interpreted as follows: the Lord may doubt and, moreover, make a mistake but a person must believe in him and sooner or later they will be rewarded.

The imagination of those who created *religious stories* was truly inexhaustible. Let us consider for example, the original plotline with the help of which religious reclusion is glorified in one of the books of the Buddhist scriptures **Tripitaka** – the so-called **Verses of the Elder Nuns**.

The plot is as follows: a nun going to the sacred grove meets a young philanderer who has fallen in love with her and tries to seduce her speaking about the delight of worldly life.

The nun wants to know what has attracted him in her. He speaks about her beautiful eyes. The hermit finds the way to damp his ardor and breaks a spell in a completely unexpected way – ripping her eye out. The philanderer implores her forgiveness; the nun comes back to her shelter where her eye miraculously recovers.

At its core, the literary works of Antiquity are intended to teach people the best, to assert the ideas of the good, truth and justice. It corresponds with the Ten Commandments, which form the foundation stone of the moral potential of the Bible. The Old Testament also contains the Books of Prophets. Every prophet is a striking personality with intense spiritual searches, with his own understanding of life, which is often opposed to the powers that be.

When speaking about the basic literary works of Antiquity, it must be admitted that they contained *a true fount of wisdom*. They were full of high thoughts about life, nature, gods, man and the relation of these phenomena. These reflections are often presented in the form of instructive parables.

Even in those distant times, man's knowledge had a certain limit in the comprehension of the world. That is why there appeared numerous maxims about the illusory success and the frailty of life, right up to the full skepticism.

One of the examples is **the Book of Ecclesiastes** from the Old Testament (in translation it means *preacher*); according to the tradition, its author is the king Solomon. He speaks like a poet – in a truly artistic style, brightly, impressively. The refrain of his reflections about whirligig of life is the word *vanity* (*vanity of vanities, all is vanity!*).

The epic essence of the fundamental works of ancient literature begins with that fact that all of them, as a rule, represent monumental collections of texts of extremely large volume. The longest epic poem ever written is the Mahabharata: it includes approximately 100 000 verses and it is ten times the length of the Iliad and the Odyssey combined.

Such volumes grew due to a huge number of characters, exceptional detailed narration and due to detailed descriptions and many digressions from the main plotline, which is complemented by an inexhaustible curiosity to details.

The epic of the Antiquity is usually called "*heroic*". And it is really so. The heroic epic is defined by the fact that the reality is infused with incredible adventures and extraordinary exploits of heroes. In addition, the described world is inhabited not only by people but also by gods, spirits, demons of great power.

But the most important thing is that the heroic epic of Antiquity is almost always a *war* epic. It usually corresponds with the events of some commemorative war in the distant past.

Of course, the heroic epic had various options that differed from the main plotline. One of such examples is the poem **Ramayana**. It deals mainly with Rama exploits but it contains many *lyrical* digressions including sublime poetry of nature descriptions that are extremely detailed.

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Thus, the spiritual foundation of Antiquity was laid mainly in religious canons and national epics and chiefly in the initial stages. It was a pure classic in its best and most significant manifestation. For example, Homer's poems began to be esteemed as an artistic ideal immediately after their appearance.

Besides the literature considered above, the principles of the classical antiquity appeared most clearly in the works of *the Athenian artistic school* (as far as is known, Athens played the leading role in Ancient Greek art at the time of its flourishing). The essence of these principles was as follows:

- firstly, to assert the beauty and the dignity of man as a beautiful and perfect creation of nature, to correlate everything with him and his proportions (at that time, there appeared an aesthetic formula: man is the measure of all things);
- secondly, to assert such qualities as clarity, naturalness, harmony, nobility and majestic character.

The abovementioned principles are most clearly expressed in the three main phenomena of Ancient Greek classics: architecture, sculpture, tragedy.

The ponderosity inherent to the constructions of Early Antiquity is overpassed in the course of formation of Ancient Greek *architecture*. The buildings become more delicate and graceful.

As is known, the leading component of the antique architecture is **the order**. It is an architecture system of the rack and beam construction (support and ceiling). It was conceptualized in those times and became almost an obligatory foundation for the later architecture.

The most important part of this system are the types of columns: Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian. The presented sequence reflects the increasing degree of complexity of their configuration and decoration.

The dominant role in Ancient Greek architecture belongs to the temple. It was not only the holy place (there was a statue of the god, the patron of the city, in the temple); it performed other important functions: the state treasury and works of art were kept here. The square before the temple was the place of meetings and celebrations.

The principal difference between the antique temple and future Christian churches is that cult ceremonies were held before the temple, while its inner space was a kind of giant chest for the god's statue and temple treasures. That is why the most important part in the antique temple was its *exterior*. The colonnade girding the temple around, upstairs decorated by patterns and sculpture decorations emphasized it.

One of the first classical examples is **the temple of Poseidon in Paestum** (a Greek colony in southern Italy). Here the imprint of early antiquity structures is still seen: the massive colonnades and very wide capitals, a wider column size and smaller intervals between columns. However, constructively it is a completed type of a Greek temple. A similar example of such an early classical building in Greece is **the temple of Hephaestus in Athens**.

In that time, Greek architects began to deal with the matters of the order of urban development and a holistic approach in urban planning. This is illustrative of **the complex of public buildings in Olympia**, which was the center of the Zeus cult and the venue for Olympic Games.

This complex gives an idea of high skills of building of an architectural ensemble that is notable for rational but at the same time rather free and picturesque layout (characteristic of the antique culture synthesis of *ratio* and *emotio*).

The famous **Parthenon** became the emblem of architectural classics (447-438 BC, the architects are **Ictinus** and **Callicrates**). Its exterior is similar to the temple of Poseidon of Paestum (the same type of monumental construction, the same symmetry); however, with all the similarities, it contrasts with gracefulness, ease, upwardly directed, maintaining majesty. This is the ideal of Greek architects: the austerity and crystal clarity of proportions, the sense of limits, harmony, calm and majestic beauty.

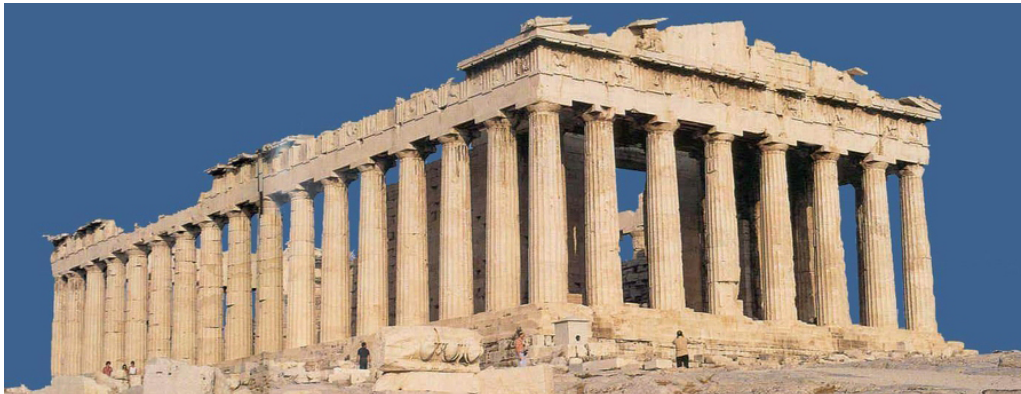


Illustration 01. Parthenon (Greece)

The Parthenon is the main building of the Athenian Acropolis. It rises above the Acropolis like the Acropolis rises above the city and its outskirts.

Acropolises existed in other Greek cities – their fortified part usually located on the hill was called so (*acropolis* means “the upper city” in Greek). The Acropolis served as a shelter in case of war, there was a sanctuary with a temple to the patron deity of the city.

The Acropolis in Athens (the first half of the 5th century BC) is the most famous among Greek acropolises. This is an ensemble of temples and statues that is situated on a steep rock with a flat top like on a pedestal. The planning and construction of Acropolis were made according to a plan under the management of Phidias.

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Phidias (the early 5th century – circa 432-431 BC) is considered the greatest Greek sculptor. *Sculpture* (as the main genre of the art of Antiquity) reached its climax in his works.

The idea of *pure classics* is associated with the name of Phidias: the sublime human images are full of vitality, the calm greatness of spirit, the glorification of the beautiful human body from which moral beauty is inseparable.

Hence the ideal of a comprehensively developed personality (a beautiful and strong man in body and spirit). It is significant that the statues of gods created by Phidias made a strong impression on contemporaries by the expression of humanity.

Such is the monumental and solemn Statue of Zeus at Olympia that was situated inside the temple of Zeus at Olympia. It was made of gold and ivory. This is the most famous of Phidias’s works. Greeks considered it one of *the Seven Wonders of the World*.

The features that were noted in relation to the Phidian Zeus we can find in the preserved sculptural image of Zeus by an unknown master which is called **Zeus from Otricoli** (the 4th century BC).

Here the completeness of life manifestations is created in the fusion of majesty, classical nobility and unconditional reality of appearance. Let us note the sealed wisdom and humanity of the character: his face shines with all understanding and kindness – so is the embodiment of the humanism of Antiquity.

It is possible to find the same tendency toward “humanization” in the sculptural images of other gods. Attributes of the goddess of war and victory (the helmet with the flush plume and the armor in which she was born from the Zeus’ head according to the myth) are represented in the statue of **the Piraeus Athena** (the 4th century BC, Piraeus is a suburb of Athens).

But she is also a goddess of wisdom, knowledge – hence there is a magnificent nobility of her appearance, the gesture of appeal and discourse. Finally, she is just a woman, but a god-woman, which is represented with the beauty of her face and the grace of movements. All this says about the connection of Phidias and Praxiteles traditions.

Concerning **Praxiteles** as a representative of *the late classic* and the Athens school in its best times, we can mention **the Aphrodite from Arles** as an example. The most important thing is represented here that characterized the art of the outstanding sculptor: the perfection of forms, the beauty of proportions, the spirit of clear harmony as well as the lyricism revealed through the softness of light-and-shade modelling. It was Praxiteles who developed the ability of marble to create a soft twinkling play of light and shade.

The lyricism is also in the fact that in the appearance of this goddess of love and beauty, the features of femininity and grace along with the elegance of shape (including the contour of an elongated figure) are presented with the ultimate expression. There is also a feeling that Aphrodite is realizing the power of her charms (the restrained and sensual accent is peculiar to the image).



Illustration 02. Praxiteles's Aphrodite

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Turning to the depiction of man (the difference in depicting of gods and people in the art of Antiquity was quite conventional and external in nature), let us begin with the statement that was the most important and precious for a person – a sound mind in a sound body.

It was embodied by **Polykleitos** (the second half of the 5th century BC). He based his works on an accurate, truly scientific knowledge of anatomy. The most famous one is **Doryphoros** (Spear Bearer) that embodied an idealized image of a young warrior. The musculature of a strong body is excellently portrayed here. The athletic constitution of a young man is emphasized by the juxtaposition of vertical lines of the legs with the horizontal shoulders and muscles of the chest and the abdomen. The sculptural perfection, the naturalness and the ease of the pose highlight the calm feeling of his strength.

The most important task that Greek sculptors had to solve was the representation of the figure in motion. It was achieved due to the embodiment of the dynamics of actions, a natural posture and an expressive gesture. One of the first striking results in this direction is **the statue of Poseidon** (it is believed sometimes that Zeus is depicted here). This bronze sculpture was found in the sea near Cape Artemision and has been associated with **Ageladas** (his works belong to 520-450 BC).

By the way, this work proves that there are no differences in the depiction of gods and humans. The statue depicts a human, of course. But he is a human with perfect proportions. The work is impressive in its modeling of body forms and hard muscles.

The main thing is the skill of motion representation. This sculpture can be named as Poseidon throwing the spear (the spear is not preserved). The muscles of a strong body are in tension, slightly bent legs spread apart make his headlong step springy. Slightly elongated arms are in a great swing. Everything emphasizes the image of an energetic and purposeful action.



Illustration 03. Poseidon (Greece)

Myron completed the strivings of sculptors in representing of motion (the mid-5th century BC). He gave samples of solving this artistic problem through a complex perspective and through the identifying the climax of the depicted action. His most famous work is **the Discobolus** (discus thrower).

The master showed the tensest moment of movement, the state of maximal concentration of forces (transition from a swing to a throw), i.e., the climax point of the action is embodied here. It reveals with the utmost completion the purpose of the depicted figure and the inherent life forces.

In addition to the sculpture of Antiquity as the leading art form of that time, the following works should be noted:

- **The Statue of the King** anticipates numerous figures of athletes, which grew into a widespread genre of ancient Greek sculpture;
- the ideal of Greek athleticism is **Apoxyomenos** by **Lysippus**;
- **Boxer of Quirinal** by **Apollonius** gives an excellent example of perfectly accentuated expressiveness of a strong, muscled male body;
- **The Wrestlers**, a Roman sculpture group, is also devoted to sport. It is characterized by dynamism and aspiration to show motion.

Turning to female images, the following sculptures should be mentioned:

- **Head of Aphrodite** made in soft, lyrical notation shows the desire to embody the feminine beauty ideal;
- **The Venus de Milo** by **Alexandros** of Antioch represents a line of stately and sublime images;
- Works similar to the sculpture **Eirene Bearing the Infant Ploutos** became the source of the motherhood theme in art and preceded the image of Mother of God (Madonna) in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (in such statues, attention is drawn to skillful reproduction of clothes folds in marble behind which the lines of the body are easily guessed).

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For Greek sculptors, the genre of a portrait was on the periphery of their artistic explorations, although they made sculptural portraits of their contemporaries highly expressively. Such is the bust of **Pericles**, a prominent Greek statesman and general of Athens during its golden age (the 5th century BC).

The situation changed in Roman art where such images were highly demanded and were made in abundance. The models were the representatives of the Patricians; to Roman masters' credit, they aspired to actualize the images of nobles.

The above-mentioned was the main direction of Greek sculpture. But there were also variations, which can be illustrated through two sharply contrasting examples:

- on the one hand, the portraits of **Antinous** as the continuation of classical Greek traditions with its characteristic idealization of human appearance (Antinous is an extremely handsome young man at the court of the Roman emperors of the early 2nd century AD, he was portrayed many times);
- on the other hand, the bust of **Caecilius Iucundus** (the 1st century AD, bronze) is indicative of the sculptor's striving to truthfulness. The portrait of the Roman banker is true-to-life with a touch of grotesque (exaggerated face feature and its emphasized asymmetry).

Speaking about the visual arts of Antiquity, painting is not often taken into consideration. It is because very little preserved to this day, although there were many paintings in those times and the best of them were highly appreciated by contemporaries.

Especially it concerns easel painting, because there is not a single canvas left despite the fact that there were the so-called pinacotheks in ancient cities including Athens. The preserved mosaics and frescos compensate for a lack of pictures to some extent.

One of such objects of great rarity is **Lion Hunt**. This mosaic from Pella (Greece) can be considered with reference to the athletic theme that was presented in sculpture. In this case, the valor of the man who is taking up arms against a strong and dangerous animal is shown.

Few extant art objects are indicative of great skills of Greek and Roman artists. The following three samples of fresco painting can give an idea about the multidirectional nature of creative process:

- **family portrait** (the baker with his wife, a fresco from Pompeii) is an example of a truly realistic image;
- **Arcadia's head** (from the fresco *Hercules and Telephos* from Herculaneum, the 60s AD, a Roman copy from the painting by an artist of the Pergamene school of the late 2nd century BC) gives an example of a pure romance;
- **Satyr and Bacchante** (a fresco from Pompeii) is an example of a vivid imagination.



Illustration 04. Satyr and Bacchante

The most impressive illustration of worth of fine arts is *vase painting* that was flourishing in Ancient Greece.

First, it is necessary to note the beauty and variety of ceramic vessels that were skillfully painted. It must be admitted that even at that time, their forms were brought to the highest level of mastery – refined, perfect and truly classical.

Quite often, various subject images were drawn on vases. Here are two typical examples:

- **The Pelike with Swallow** (by *Euphronios* – a prominent vase painter and potter, the 6th century BC), where three figures point upwards to a swallow that heralds the beginning of spring;
- **Dionysos in a Boat** (530 BC) strikes with the elegance and poetic sentiment of a drawing and rich imagination of a master.

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The third most significant phenomenon of the Ancient Greek art classics is tragedy. It was in Greece that theatrical art in its modern sense was created and the first theatrical constructions with decorations, costumes and necessary machinery appeared there.

The performances were held in the open air, in broad daylight. The spectators' seats were arranged stepwise on the hillside. One of such well-preserved constructions is **the ancient theatre of Epidauros** (the mid-4th century, by the architect *Polykleitos the Younger*).

It was built on the side of a mountain. More than fifty stone benches were arranged in a semicircle. The theatre can seat about 10 thousand spectators, which speaks for a very large size.

This was the peculiarity of ancient Greek theatre. It had to house the entire adult population of the city. For example, the largest theatre in Greece was built for 44 thousand people.

The material of the theatrical dramaturgy were myths, interpreted in accordance with the ideas of that time.

The father of tragedy at the time of Antiquity was *Aeschylus* (the first half of the 5th century BC). He was not the first author of tragedies but it was in his works that the classical structure of this genre was formed (one of his characteristic works is *Agamemnon*).

Aeschylus's works are characterized by a severely monumental nature, he believes in the reasonableness of the objective laws ruling in the world, in the final justice of that which is happening to people and gods.

The hero of Aeschylus's tragedies is a common but powerful and strong-willed character. Having realized his aim as the only possible one, he strives to achieve it in full possession of his human capacity. Hence, the impressive integrity and monumentality of the image endowed with few but prominent features.

Aeschylus's characters are strong and integral. In a situation of collision, there appeared their spiritual opposition that generated conflict tension.

The tradition of Aeschylus developed in the works of *Sophocles* (the tragedies **Oedipus, The King, Antigone, Electra**). He retains the monumentality of the composition and integrity of characters (the nature of his characters is also free from all things accidental) achieving the utmost clarity and concentration in the deployment of the conflict.

But in comparison with his predecessor, Sophocles achieves even greater dramatic tension, sophisticates the psychological characterization and introduces the motif of insoluble contradiction, which consists of the following:

- the playwright believes in the greatness of man; his hero is a man of strong spirit, fearlessly going all the way;
- the superiority of the force opposing him may devote him to destruction and kill him but it cannot turn him away from the struggle; he firmly believes in the rectitude of his own way and takes full responsibility for his actions;
- however, there is something unknowable in the world; human capacity is limited in the face of some supreme forces (gods) but much sadder is the limitation of human knowledge, and faults and suffering arise from ignorance above all.

After the ancient Greek classics, the art of Antiquity had to go through another similar phase – *Roman classics*. In literature, it received its expression in the poetry of Virgil and Horace.

The crowning achievement of *Virgil's* works was the poem **The Aeneid**. Homer's epics served as an example for it. In comparison with Homer, Virgil's world became larger and more complicated. The Aeneid was considered the most complete description of Roman culture. The poet revealed the idea of Rome as world power through the narration about the fate and deeds of Aeneas, the legendary ancestor of Romans.

While Vergil taught to perceive and comprehend the world, Horace taught how to behave in the world. His classicism is a cult of a sense of proportion, balance, the golden mean (the expression "the golden mean" belongs to Horace). It meant for him that reason had triumphed over heart; order – over chaos.

His hero is a wise man who knows everything and is surprised at nothing; he takes in stride highs and lows, he refused everything that is beyond his strength and enjoys what he is able to afford; he achieves the quiet of the mind and inner freedom by means of self-improvement.

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Such was the mainstream of artistic culture of Antiquity: from the Classical Greece to Roman classicism.

However, the antique classic had the side branches.

One of them concerns lyrical interpretation of images and lyrics in general. In sculpture, Praxiteles was a great master of such interpretation. In such manner, he created mostly women's images.

Lyricalism clearly declared itself in Greek poetry. Its source is the work of a poet *Sappho*, who for the first time expressed in her poetry the tenderness of feelings and emotions. The free and impetuous verses inherent in her manner anticipated Russian poets – Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Bella Akhmadulina. And unlike the epic hexameter with its extended line, she wrote "stepwise" using short phrases.

Later the lyrical poetry of **Anacreon** stood out. He was a poet of wine, love, fun, pleasure, which caused many imitations that made up the so-called *Anacreontic* (including Russian poets such as Batyushkov and early works by Pushkin).

The poems of Greek poets were very musical. It can be explained by the fact that at that time, versification was inseparable from music. Texts were composed with the melody or recited to an accompaniment of some musical instrument. It is not coincidentally that the term “*lyrics*” comes from the word “*lyre*” (the name of one of the ancient musical instruments).

A little more than a dozen of melodies was left from the time of Antiquity. However, they show that even in those distant times, people had subtle and peculiar musical culture.

Finishing the lyrical theme of the art of Antiquity, at the end of this period there appeared a Greek *novel* the main motif of which was the poetry of the first love (the most famous novel was **Daphnis and Chloe** by **Longus**).

Another branch from classicism was connected with the accent on *expressive-dramatic* forms of artistic expression. This direction originated in the late classics (the 4th century BC), when the sense of anxiety, strong emotional tension began to appear, when psychologism of life contrasts entered art.

In classical tragedy, it began with the works of **Euripides** who revealed the idea of human defenselessness against the blind chance. This could happen even to the best hero like the main character of the tragedy **Heracles**, where Euripides expressed the dynamism of dialogues and the psychological approach in character development.

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Two phenomena of the art of Antiquity were considered above – classical Greece and Roman classicism. Nevertheless, three centuries lay between them during which the art was developing in the direction of *Hellenism*.

In this case, it is useful to recall the terminology: *Hellas* is the name of Greece in the Greek language; *Hellenes* is the self-description of Greek people (Greek is the Roman name); *Hellenic* refers to Greece.

Hellenism and *Hellenistic* are the terms referring to large territories influenced by Greek culture after their conquest by Alexander the Great. Besides Greece itself, this cultural and historical area included Egypt, Western Asia, Northern Black Sea region, Central Asia and some other regions.

The classical art considered in the context of Hellenism was split in two parts. That which had stayed united before (for example, humanism and monumentalism) began to divide into separate ways. Moreover, this process was not only a consequence of historical situation. The art itself made its way to this splitting. The features of Hellenistic artistic thinking were anticipated in late classicism (the 4th century BC) and even earlier.

During the second half of the 4th century BC, **the temple of Artemis** was built in Ephesus (it is worth emphasizing that it is one of the *Greek* cities in the coastal area of *Asia Minor*). While graceful temples, not large and strict in décor, were built in Greece, here, far away from it, very big and luxurious temples were erected under the strong influence of oriental architecture.

The most famous of such buildings was the temple of Artemis in Ephesus. It impressed with its size (more than 100 meters in length), splendor, complex rhythm of columns and it belonged to *the Seven Wonders of the World*.

The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus continued this tradition. It was a tomb for Mausolus, a satrap of one of the territories in Asia Minor. The word “*mausoleum*” originated from his name. This majestic tomb astounded with its monumental scope, magnificent solemnity and rich sculptural decoration. This building also belonged to *the Seven Wonders of the World*.

Such a taste for monumental scope, to the showiness of forms, to the decorative splendor was popular in the Hellenistic period. This was reflected in the construction of new big cities, in the creation of magnificent ceremonial architectural ensembles as well as in the construction of grandiose engineering structures.

Among new cities, **Alexandria** was the largest (it was founded by Alexander the Great in Egypt in 332-331 BC and got his name). It was built in the Nile Delta as the new capital of Egypt and became the center of Hellenistic art (there was a museum and a library where hundreds thousand manuscripts were kept).

The most famous engineering construction of the Hellenistic period, **Pharos of Alexandria**, was erected in this city. It was situated on the island Pharos that was connected with the city by the mole. It was a grandiose and monumental structure and at the same time, thin, very solid, crowned by the statue of Poseidon.

It consisted of towers placed one on top of another and reduced successively. The lighthouse was 140 meters tall (only the pyramid of Khufu was taller), that is why the light was visible at night at a distance of almost 200 kilometers. It was used as a fortress. It was considered one of *the Seven Wonders of the World*.

Sculpture in those days was also monumental. It began in the Classical Period. Its leading representative Phidias created several gigantic sculptures. For example, the abovementioned Statue of Zeus at Olympia was 14 meters tall.

In the Hellenistic period, art acquired the features of hypertrophied monumentality and it found its expression in the so-called colossi. The most famous of them is **the Colossus of Rhodes**.

There were a hundred of colossi on the Greek island Rhodes and among them, a bronze statue of the God of the Sun Helios with a height of over 30 meters. It stood in the harbor of Rhodes and served as a lighthouse striking with its fantastic grandeur. It was considered one of *the Seven Wonders of the World* (the Colossus of Rhodes was destroyed by an earthquake).

The culture of Antiquity began to spread in many Eastern territories with the conquests of Alexander the Great. Let us give two great examples in this respect:

- **the temple** in Armenia (a pagan temple in Garni fortress, Yerevan, the 1st century BC) – a strict beauty is congruent with the samples of antique classical architecture;

- a **sanctuary** in Khorasm (Koi Krylgan Kala in the Kyzylkum desert, Central Asia, the 4th-3rd centuries BC). Presented in reconstruction, it impresses with its proportion and harmony of the composition.

Along with the Greco-Roman Antiquity, it is notable to mention the art of the Heavenly Empire.

The Great Wall of China was being built from the 4th till the 1st century BC on the northern border of China to protect against nomads and to protect fields from desert sand. It was erected on the mountain ranges so it seemed as if it grew out of rocks.

On top of the wall, there was a denticulation with embrasures. The guards lived in square towers, which were built every 100-150 meters, and light signals were given in case of enemy appearance.

In scale, grandeur, cost of materials and labor, the Great Wall of China is comparable to the Egyptian pyramids: its width is up to 8 meters, height – up to 10 meters, length – over 5 000 kilometers. If the ancient Greeks knew about this building, they would undoubtedly rank it among *the wonders of the world*.

Another grandiose construction of Chinese masters is **the Mausoleum** of the First Qin Emperor (the 3rd century AD). The Terracotta Army consisting of six thousand life-size cavalymen made of clay is a monumental and impressive sight. The warriors' faces appear to be different for each individual figure.



Illustration 05. *The Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor*

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Let us turn again to *Roman Antiquity*. Having assimilated the artistic experience of Ancient Greece and Hellenism, Roman art took a dominant position in the ancient world around the middle of the 1st century BC.

The Roman Empire changed from a small peasant community into a global power and created the culture that along with the Greek one formed the basis for European civilization.

In comparison with the poetic worldview of the Greeks, the Romans were more sober-minded and pragmatic, that is why architecture was the leading art form and practical constructions gained the ascendant position – paved roads, bridges, water supply systems, *thermae* (Roman baths), roofed markets and so on.

But this did not suggest some close-mindedness of Roman architects. They draw on the expertise and experience of Greek classics and, for example, erecting cult buildings, they actively updated and sophisticated traditional forms as well as developed their new modifications. An excellent example of such initiative is **the Temple of Hercules Victor** in Rome.

The pragmatism of Romans was seen, on the one hand, in the emphasis on comfort and, on the other hand, in the unification of urban development.

The example of the first case can be a reconstruction of **the house of a rich Roman** in Pompeii, where the emphasis is laid on the arrangement of the interior. It is designed in good style – strict but festive and imposing, it gives a complete idea of aristocratic life.

The example of the second case is **the house in Ostia**, Rome (the harbor of the Ancient Rome), the so-called *insula*. It is a building of a completely definite functional use – a brick multi-story tenement house. There is nothing special or unusual about it (the features of modern typical construction are visible in its standard appearance).

Considering large engineering constructions, it should be noticed that some of them have survived to this day and are still used. For example, **the aqueduct in Nimes**, France (the end of the 1st century BC) is one of the structures of capital type (the height of the bridge is almost 50 meters, its top tier served as a water supply system).

The artistic expressiveness of engineering design in such structures was achieved due to organic interconnection with landscape as well as due to proportions and beautiful masonry of quadrels (square granite blocks).

The talent and the will of Roman builders turned every construction of this type into a real monument. The grand scale of such buildings supported the idea of the glories and power of the Roman Empire.

Triumphal monuments such as arches and columns also served this purpose. They were erected in honor of some outstanding victory of the Roman army and a ceremonial procession went through the arch on the day of the triumph.

The Arch of Titus (circa 70 BC) can illustrate the ponderous ceremonial appearance of such architectural monuments. In the distant future, the tradition of similar monuments would be revived in many countries (including Russia, since the Patriotic War in 1812).

Grandiose public buildings served to glorify the Roman Empire – forums, theatres, circuses. The forum is a large parade square surrounded by public buildings and memorials, a business and political center of the city.

Especially grandiose was **the Forum of Trajan** in Rome, built on the order of the emperor Trajan, who completed the territorial extension of the Roman Empire. It is notable not only for its luxury but for its developed architectural concept.

It consists of the Triumphal arch, the Trajan's column, a vast portico-lined piazza, markets, a smaller piazza with two libraries, one housing Latin documents and the other – Greek documents.

The most significant of the theatrical and circus buildings was **the Coliseum** (the 1st century AD). Now it is dilapidated because after the fall of the Roman Empire, it served as a quarry for other buildings.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that amphitheater is a special type of theatrical building. Its arena is made in the form of an oval bowl above which tiers of seating rise, which was a great place for performances (animal hunting, gladiatorial contests etc.).

The façade comprises three stories of superimposed arcades. Two hundred and forty mast corbels were positioned around the top of the attic. This huge structure (the height of a 16-storey building) could hold about 50 thousand spectators. The size of arena allowed having up to three thousand pairs of gladiators at the same time. It is no coincidence that the name "Coliseum" comes from the Latin word "*colosseus*" that means "*enormous*" and it worthily marked one of the pinnacles of Roman architecture.



Illustration 06. *The Coliseum*

The ceremonial portrait sculpture had the same idea of the greatness of the Roman Empire. The images of the emperor *Augustus* represented the quintessence of the official style in this genre. In the course of time, his name (in Latin it means "*majestic*", "*the increaser*", "*venerable*") gained the meaning of the emperor title.

The time of his reign were the last decades BC and the first decades AD and considered the Golden Age of Roman history and culture. The abovementioned Virgil and Horace created their works at that time.

It is possible to give two examples of two different marble statues of Augustus presented in a highly representative manner (in both cases the findspot is indicated):

- **Augustus of Prima Porta** (the 1st century AD), here he appears in military clothing, he is shown in the role of "Imperator", the commander of the army. The statue is an idealized image of Augustus showing the glories of Ancient Rome;
- **Augustus from Cumae** (the 1st century AD), created in marble, the half-naked figure embodies the image of a wise ruler who makes the law (the emperor is depicted with the appropriate attributes).

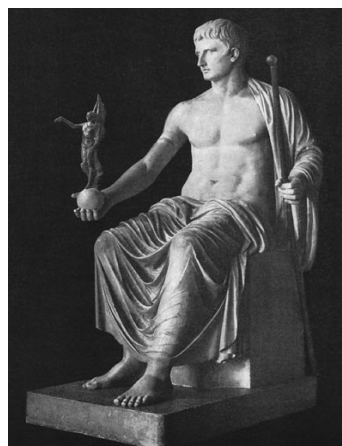


Illustration 07. *Statue of Augustus from Cumae*

The last example of Roman classicism is **the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius** (the second half of the 2nd century AD). This bronze statue is the only known example of an equestrian monument of the antiquity. The emergence of the genre of an equestrian statue was one of the final discoveries of Roman art. Later this genre was revived only in the Renaissance.

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At the final stage of its evolution, the sculpture of Antiquity showed temperamental excessive emotionality, passions and dynamics. Let us consider some different examples of this kind.

The Portrait of the Philosopher (the 3rd-2nd centuries BC) is striking in the extraordinary sharpness in representation of the man's appearance who is past praying for, under stress. The extreme emotional tension and tragic expression are perfectly depicted here.

The Altar of Zeus at Pergamon (180 BC, Pergamon is a city in Asia Minor, one of the centers of the Hellenistic world). The altar is adorned with a marble frieze, which depicts the Gigantomachy (one of the central myths from the history of the Olympic Pantheon). Despite severe damages (in general it is characteristic of ancient sculpture), the image provides the incredibly strong dramatic intensity.

The plot of the famous **statue of Laocoon and His Sons** (the Laocoon Group, circa 50 BC) originated from the myths about the Trojan War. The group shows the Trojan priest Laocoon and his sons being attacked by serpents. They are depicted at the moment of their death: one of the serpents is about to bite the father on the hip, the other serpent has already sunk its fangs into the side of the younger son, who collapses in agony. Their faces are distorted in pain, everything is full of despair. The statue reveals a strong knowledge of anatomical form but there are no classical lines.

The Nike of Samothrace is one of the most remarkable creations of the Hellenistic period with a concentrated embodiment of its qualities such as monumentality, dynamism and pathos. The statue was erected on the island Samothrace in honor of the victory over the enemy fleet. That is why it was placed on a high cliff and on a pedestal in the form of the front of the warship.

The position of the figure and the representation of her clothes is so that it seems that a real wind is blowing on Nike spreading her wings and waving her clothes. Her clothing has figurative and plastic characteristics of great importance – its numerous fluttering folds form a rich picturesque range enhancing the dynamics and the feeling of emotional uplift. The complex helical construction of the statue supports this effect. In general, this figure represents an exceptional verticality and the titanism of the image.



Illustration 08. *The Nike of Samothrace (Greece)*

In conclusion, we can say that it is impossible to overemphasize the historical importance of the art of Antiquity. It laid the basis of European culture, led by example. In some cases, it was and still remains an unattainable ideal from the point of view of artistic perfection (this primarily concerns sculpture).

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