

TITLE: Temple of Minerva _____ **LOCATION:** Veii (Near Rome, Italy) _____ **DATE:** 510-500 BCE _____

Ancient Mediterranean/

ARTIST: Master Sculptor, Vulca _____ **PERIOD/STYLE:** Archaic _____ **PATRON:** _____

MATERIAL/TECHNIQUE: Original temple of wood, mud brick, or tufa (volcanic rock); terra cotta sculpture

FORM:

The temple is divided into two parts—the front and back portions, both of which featured widely spaced Tuscan columns.

FUNCTION:

CONTENT:

The back portion housed three separate rooms known as a triple cella. The triple cella symbolizes the divine triad of Minerva, Tinia, and Uni, deities who later became known as their Roman counterparts: Minerva, Jupiter, and Juno. The back chambers housed the Aplu of Veii, a statue of Apollo who, in his diaphanous long gown, symbolizes strength and all-around awesomeness.

CONTEXT:

INNOVATION/CONVENTION:

The Etruscans influenced ancient Mediterranean art in many ways. Their temple structures, for example, would later influence Renaissance architecture. Etruscan, or Tuscan, columns were another lasting architectural element. These columns are basically just Doric columns with bases, but they appear in buildings throughout the Renaissance and later Italy.

ARTISTIC DECISIONS:

The Etruscans didn't worship their gods in grand temples like the Acropolis or the Parthenon. Instead, they built smaller, simpler temples out of simpler materials. The Temple of Minerva represents one such temple. The Etruscans preferred to build temples in natural alcoves because they believed that semi-open wall and roof structures allowed for better contact with the gods.

INTERPRETATION:

Etruscan art is considered a single cultural unit, even though Etruria was comprised of separate city-states. Etruscan artists creatively adapted Greek objects and architecture that appealed to their eclectic, hippie-ish tastes.

DETAILS/TERMS/DEFINITIONS:

Vitruvius wrote a treatise on Architecture in the 1st century which is used as a reference for Etruscan temples for historians.

TITLE: Sarcophagus of the Spouses **LOCATION:** Etruscan city of Caere (now Cerveteri, Italy) **DATE:** . 530 BCE

ARTIST: _____ **PERIOD/STYLE:** Etruscan **PATRON:** _____

MATERIAL/TECHNIQUE:

FORM:

Similar to the Greek kouroi/korai, their faces appear friendly as they gaze outward rather than towards each other. However, their arms are wrapped around each other in an embrace. Both figures have stylized hair; the artist paid special attention to detail when creating the plaited hairstyles. Both figures wear loose, chiffon-like clothing. The bodies of the male and female appear elongated, as if to fit the folds of the couch.

FUNCTION:

CONTENT:

The Sarcophagus of the Spouses was created from terra cotta and originally housed the remains of two individuals. Presumably these individuals are represented by the two figures reclining on the couch-like structure, lounging on cushions as if they were dining at a lavish banquet.

CONTEXT:

In actuality, the two figures appear to be attending a banquet, which makes sense since banquet scenes became more common in Roman art during this time. During this time, banquets represented wealth and prosperity. Etruscans could enjoy drinks and feasts during times of stability and prosperity, so they used banquet scenes on sarcophagi to ensure the deceased could have continued joy and merriment in their afterlives. Women enjoyed a different and more privileged status in Etruscan society than did their Greek and Roman counterparts.

INNOVATION/CONVENTION:

Typically, ancient Greek art can be identified by its idealized proportions and spatial relationships, which express the important societal values of harmony and order. In contrast, art from the Etruscan and Roman periods displays stylistic and iconographical eclecticism and portraiture. The composition of the reclining figures shows awareness of Mediterranean stylistic norms in that their physiognomy reflects an Ionian influence (Ionia was a region in present-day Turkey, that was a Greek colony)—the rounded, serene faces and the treatment of hairstyles would have fit in with contemporary Greek styles. However, the posing of the figures, the angular joints of the limbs, and their extended fingers and toes reflect local practice in Etruria.

ARTISTIC DECISIONS:

The Sarcophagus of the Spouses is a masterwork of terracotta sculpture. Painted terracotta sculpture played a key role in the visual culture of archaic Etruria. Terracotta artwork was the standard for decorating the superstructure of Etruscan temples and the coroplastic (terracotta) workshops producing these sculptures often displayed a high level of technical achievement.

INTERPRETATION:

The Sarcophagus of the Spouses has been interpreted as belonging to a banqueting scene, with the couple reclining together on a single dining couch while eating and drinking. This situates the inspiration for the sarcophagus squarely in the convivial (social) sphere and, as we are often reminded, conviviality was central to Etruscan mortuary rituals. Etruscan funerary art—including painted tombs—often depicts scenes of revelry, perhaps as a reminder of the funeral banquet that would send the deceased off to the afterlife. Whatever the case, banquets provide a great deal of iconographic fodder for Etruscan artists.

DETAILS/TERMS/DEFINITIONS:

The body of the sarcophagus is styled so as to resemble a kline (dining couch).

TITLE: Tomb of the Triclinium **LOCATION:** Tarquinia, Italy **DATE:** 480-470 BCE

ARTIST: _____ **PERIOD/STYLE:** Etruscan **PATRON:** _____

MATERIAL/TECHNIQUE: Tufa and fresco

FORM:

Archaeologists discovered this tomb in the Monterozzi necropolis (or city of the dead) in Tarquinia, Italy, in 1830. This particular chamber of the tomb is built into the rock, which conceals the tomb itself.

FUNCTION:

Its walls are covered with brightly painted frescoes featuring illustrations of banquets, dancing, and what appear to be a couple of big cats. The central hall, usually squared or rectangular, hosted the dead bodies lying on stone beds, while the peripheral rooms hosted the dead's belongings. The tumuli are usually family tombs where the deceased were buried near many goods of their property, mostly precious objects and everyday tools. These constructions can be found isolated or grouped, forming city-like ensembles called "Necropolis". This type of tombs belongs to the first period of the Etruscan civilization at the end of the VIII-VI cent. B.C.

CONTENT:

The Tomb of the Triclinium housed bodies of the deceased, as well as grave goods. Vivid scenes on two of the walls feature female dancers and male musicians. The artist of the frescoes used several conventions to differentiate gender. The most obvious is that the females are rendered with lighter skin than the males.

CONTEXT:

From this site, we can be fairly certain that Etruscan funerary rites were pretty different from our present-day notion of a funeral. Instead of being a time for sorrow and mourning, Etruscan funerals were celebratory in nature—they even played games during them! The fresco scenes at the Tomb of the Triclinium illustrate some of these funerary games and festivities. However, the banquet, which is also depicted, served several purposes. Etruscans considered the banquet to be the last meal shared with the deceased. The banquet also reinforced the social status of the dead: the grander the banquet, the wealthier and elite-er the dead person.

INNOVATION/CONVENTION:

Many of the Etruscan tombs in Italy are housed in round burial mounds (tumuli) built in earth and stones with several rock-carved interiors reproducing the original house of the deceased's family. The tumuli are generally formed by a circular base called "tamburo" built in blocks of sandstone. A pseudo-dome sitting over is built in slabs of limestone arranged in concentric circles with decreasing diameter in order to form a shell dome. The dome is then covered with compacted earth in order to be insulated and is surrounded by a containment ring of small blocks of stone. A paved limestone sidewalk is built around the base to drain rainwater. The interior tombs include a corridor, called dromos, a central hall and several rooms on the two sides. The interiors are sometimes painted with frescos representing everyday life scenes.

ARTISTIC DECISIONS:

INTERPRETATION:

Historians and scholars know about Etruscan culture primarily from the modern archaeological record and from descriptions made by contemporary external observers.

DETAILS/TERMS/DEFINITIONS:

TITLE:Head of a Roman patrician **LOCATION:** Rome **DATE:** 75-50 B.C.E.

ARTIST: **PERIOD/STYLE:** Republican Roman **PATRON:**

MATERIAL/TECHNIQUE: Marble.

FORM:

This bust is a typical artistic representation of a late Roman Republic aristocrat who likely occupied some political office. He gazes ahead with a fixed, contemplative expression that further suggests this "old man" was really an important political mind in the Roman Republic.

FUNCTION:

Members of the *Patrician* class would parade the *imagines* of their ancestors to illustrate their pedigree. The *imagines* were essentially death masks of notable ancestors that were kept and displayed by the family. In the case of aristocratic families these wax masks were used at subsequent funerals so that an actor might portray the deceased ancestors in a sort of familial parade.

CONTENT:

This veristic head sculpture is the likeness of a particular Roman patrician. The wrinkles are supposed to illustrate his wisdom and gravitas (mind) and virtues (virtus).

CONTEXT:

Verism can be defined as a sort of hyperrealism in sculpture where the naturally occurring features of the subject are exaggerated, often to the point of absurdity. In the case of Roman Republican portraiture, middle age males adopt veristic tendencies in their portraiture to such an extent that they appear to be extremely aged and care worn. This stylistic tendency is influenced both by the tradition of ancestral *imagines* as well as a deep-seated respect for family, tradition, and ancestry. The ancestor cult, in turn, influenced a deep connection to family. For Late Republican politicians without any famous ancestors (a group famously known as 'new men' or 'hominēs novi') the need was even more acute—and verism rode to the rescue. The adoption of such an austere and wizened visage was a tactic to lend familial gravitas to families who had none—and thus (hopefully) increase the chances of the aristocrat's success in both politics and business.

INNOVATION/CONVENTION:

Roman artists creatively adapted Greek objects and forms. During the Greek Hellenistic period, artists captured the details of excitement, movement, and passion in their art. The bust of the head of a Roman patrician highlights the individuality of the subject. In fact, detail obviously takes precedence over beauty. Rulers often commissioned artists to create sculptures illustrating the power and wealth of an individual, such as a statesman or military leader.

ARTISTIC DECISIONS:

The artist wants to convey the gravitas (gravity) and virtus (virtue) of the subject by showing how his hard work and deep commitment to public office has affected his physical appearance. Rather than glossing over the subject's imperfections, the artist accentuates them. This contrasts sharply with the more god-like, idealized representations of the imperial period.

INTERPRETATION:

Though the face appears wrinkled, saggy, and emotionless the subject may not have been old at all. Age was an important indication of social stature and political power in Rome, so this old man's wrinkled features suggest wisdom and influence.

DETAILS/TERMS/DEFINITIONS:

This exaggeration of flaws is known as verism, and it was common in Roman art of this period.

TITLE: House of the Vetti **LOCATION:** Pompeii, Italy **DATE:** . 62-79 C.E

ARTIST: _____ **PERIOD/STYLE:** Imperial Roman **PATRON:** The Vettii Brothers

MATERIAL/TECHNIQUE: Cut stones and fresco.

FORM:

The House of Vettii is one of the remaining structures in Pompeii. The house offers a glimpse into domestic (and luxurious) life in the city. The house is spacious and includes two atriums. The owners and their visitors would have lived in one atrium, while the other was reserved for servants. Art historians consider the wall paintings in the Ixion room in the House of Vettii one of the best representations of Roman Fourth Style art, a more complex but less ostentatious form of art that emerged in the latter half of the first century C.E.

FUNCTION:

Since Republican society operated on the basis of this patron-client relationship, the domus played a key part in the reinforcement of social hierarchy as the patron (patronus) would receive his clients (clientes) in the atrium of his domus each business day. While visiting with the patron, each client would get an eyeful of the patron's household wealth, thus applying implicit pressure on the patron to ensure that his house was tasteful and fashionable.

CONTENT:

The House of the Vettii or Casa dei Vettii (VI xv,1) is a Roman townhouse (domus) located within the ruined ancient city of Pompeii, Italy. A volcanic eruption destroyed Pompeii in the year 79 C.E., thus preserving extraordinary archaeological remains of the Roman town as it was at the time of its cataclysmic destruction.

CONTEXT:

Despite the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, the House of Vettii remains largely intact. It is named for its two owners—two successful freedmen—who had risen from slavery to become wealthy merchants. Historians believe the Vettii brothers earned their living by selling wine, which was no easy task for Roman slaves. The House of Vettii also speaks to the decline of traditional morals during this era: art and graffiti found on the Vettii house suggests gambling and prostitution were pervasive.

INNOVATION/CONVENTION:

Roman architecture is also characterized by borrowed Greek and Etruscan elements with a Roman spin—for example, the entrance is flanked with Greek Doric columns, which are squat and smooth. Although the plan of the Roman domus does reflect the canonical aspects described by Vitruvius, we also see enormous variation with modifications and remodeling undertaken over time. The standard house (domus) plan has several key architectural elements. Generally entered from the street via a narrow doorway (fauces), the large centralized reception hall (atrium) is flanked by wings (alae) and often bounded by bedrooms (cubicula). The office of the head of household (paterfamilias), known as the tablinum, links the public part of the house (pars urbana) to the private part of the house (pars rustica). This latter area often focuses on an open, colonnaded courtyard (peristylum) and serves as the center of family life, with the kitchen (culina), dining room(s) (triclinium or oecus), and often a small garden (hortus). Many houses also had a second level that may have contained additional sleeping spaces and perhaps storage.

ARTISTIC DECISIONS:

Most art historians point to the house's decorative schema as being representative of a key transitional phase, between the Third and Fourth styles of Pompeian wall painting.

INTERPRETATION:

Ancient Roman art typically expresses republican and imperial values, power, and a preference for conspicuous display, and the House of the Vettii in Pompeii displays aspects of the Romans' penchant for luxury. For example, the foyer features an almost life-size statue of Priapus, a minor god, weighing his phallus against a bag of gold.

DETAILS/TERMS/DEFINITIONS:

The House of the Vettii was excavated between late 1894 and early 1896. The artifacts that were recovered allowed for the identification of the house's putative owners, Aulus Vettius Conviva and his brother, Aulus Vettius Restitutus. Both men have been identified as former slaves or freedmen (liberti). The Vettii had risen to some prominence; Conviva was an augustalis—the top civic office for which a freedman would be eligible.

TITLE: Augustus of Prima Porta _____ **LOCATION:** Prima Porta, Italy _____ **DATE:** 20 BCE _____

ARTIST: _____ **PERIOD/STYLE:** Imperial Roman _____ **PATRON:** _____

MATERIAL/TECHNIQUE: Marble.

FORM:

This six-foot marble statue represents Octavian Augustus Cesar, the first Roman emperor. Archaeologists discovered the statue in the villa Octavian's wife retreated to after his death.

FUNCTION:

During the Roman Empire, sculptures were intended to demonstrate an individual's power. Members of the senate or well-known military leaders, among others, were highly regarded and depicted with respect. The Augustus of Prima Porta is one of the ways that the ancients used art for propagandistic purposes. Overall, this statue is not simply a portrait of the emperor, it expresses Augustus' connection to the past, his role as a military victor, his connection to the gods, and his role as the bringer of the Roman Peace.

CONTENT:

The artist replicates an original bronze statue that the Senate commissioned in Octavian's honor. He depicts the subject in the military attire of Imperator, the commander of the army. Octavian wears his battle armor and addresses the troops—or maybe just his wife—with a raised right arm. The armor is artwork in itself, depicting the gods and personifications of the lands Octavian conquered: Spain, Gaul, Germany, and Parthia.

CONTEXT:

The author depicts Octavian barefoot, in the same fashion as mythological heroes and gods. This idealization, typical of Hellenistic art, contrasts with the verism (or the artistic preference for everyday subject matter) of the Republican period and is a consequence of the sharp changes Roman political structures had undergone.

After Octavian defeated Mark Anthony, ending 100 years of civil war, the Senate gave him the title of Augustus and special executive powers, effectively turning the Roman republic into a kingdom or empire. Here, Octavian Augustus is depicted like a god, not unlike the Hellenistic kings.

INNOVATION/CONVENTION:

Delving further into the composition of the Prima Porta statue, a distinct resemblance to Polykleitos' Doryphoros, a Classical Greek sculpture of the fifth century B.C.E., is apparent. Both have a similar contrapposto stance and both are idealized.

ARTISTIC DECISIONS:

In this marble freestanding sculpture, Augustus stands in a contrapposto pose (a relaxed pose where one leg bears weight). The emperor wears military regalia and his right arm is outstretched, demonstrating that the emperor is addressing his troops.

INTERPRETATION:

In the central zone of the cuirass are two figures, a Roman and a Parthian. On the left, the enemy Parthian returns military standards. This is a direct reference to an international diplomatic victory of Augustus in 20 B.C.E., when these standards were finally returned to Rome after a previous battle. Surrounding this central zone are gods and personifications. At the top are Sol and Caelus, the sun and sky gods respectively. On the sides of the breastplate are female personifications of countries conquered by Augustus. These gods and personifications refer to the Pax Romana. The message is that the sun is going to shine on all regions of the Roman Empire, bringing peace and prosperity to all citizens. And of course, Augustus is the one who is responsible for this abundance throughout the Empire.

DETAILS/TERMS/DEFINITIONS:

The dolphin became a symbol of Augustus' great naval victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE, a conquest that made Augustus the sole ruler of the Empire. The cupid astride the dolphin sends another message too: that Augustus is descended from the gods. Cupid is the son of Venus, the Roman goddess of love. Julius Caesar, the adoptive father of Augustus, claimed to be descended from Venus and therefore Augustus also shared this connection to the gods.

TITLE: Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheater) **LOCATION:** Rome, Italy **DATE:** 70-80 C.E.

ARTIST: _____ **PERIOD/STYLE:** Imperial Roman **PATRON:** Vespasian

MATERIAL/TECHNIQUE: Stone and concrete

FORM:

Romans built the Colosseum in an elliptical shape, with a central arena surrounded by two walls. The outer wall is comprised of three rounds of arcades on top of each other, surmounted by an attic, on top of which lay a retractable awning to protect spectators from the rain or sun.

FUNCTION:

Vespasian meant for the Colosseum to be a gift to the Roman people, a way of returning the land Nero had stolen from his citizens. It hosted many kinds of shows: gladiatorial games, hunts (fights between humans and animals), and more traditional plays. The ruling class used these games as a way to keep the masses content and entertained.

CONTENT:

Like a modern sports arena, there were various levels of seating inside, with Senators' seats at the bottom, closest to the action. However, the inclination was calculated to allow even those sitting in the very top rows a good view of the arena. The Colosseum was an advanced architectural feat. Besides the structure's considerable size and capacity, the arena floor itself was impressive. The Romans build trapdoors under the arena so that gladiators and wild beasts alike could suddenly appear

CONTEXT:

Emperor Flavius Vespasianus (known as Vespasian in English), the founder of the Flavian dynasty, began the construction of the Colosseum in 72 A.D. His son Titus completed it after Vespasian's death. The Colosseum surged from the ruins of the Domus Aurea, a villa Emperor Nero built for himself in the center of Rome.

INNOVATION/CONVENTION:

Ancient Greek and Roman art heavily influenced later European and Mediterranean artwork. From the 18th century onwards, European and American observers revered both Greek and Roman ethical and governmental systems, which focused on art and architecture that was associated with political elites and cultural capital.

ARTISTIC DECISIONS:

INTERPRETATION:

DETAILS/TERMS/DEFINITIONS:

TITLE: Forum of Trajan _____ **LOCATION:** Rome, Italy _____ **DATE:** 106-112 C.E. _____

ARTIST: Apollodorus of Damascus _____ **PERIOD/STYLE:** Imperial Rome _____ **PATRON:** Trajan _____

MATERIAL/TECHNIQUE: Brick and concrete

FORM:

The southern part of the forum consisted of a large square with a portico on both sides and an equestrian statue of Trajan in the middle. In the middle of the Forum lay the Basilica Ulpia, where business and legal matters went down. ("Ulpia" comes from Trajan's full name, Marcus Ulpius Trajanus.)

FUNCTION:

Everything about the Forum of Trajan exuded abundance and prosperity. Trajan wanted to send the message to the Roman people that he had established order, wealth, and prosperity in ancient Rome, so he funded the construction of the forum with spoils from the Dacian war. The whole Forum glorified the not-so-humble emperor and his military success. It was used to conduct business, promulgate laws, and distribute favors to the masses, while emperors used the forum to make public appearances.

CONTENT:

Behind the Basilica stands the 125 foot-tall Column of Trajan. A spiral bas-relief depicting the war between Romans and Dacians adorns the column, which is made up of 20 marble drums stacked on top of each other. Coins show that the tower was originally topped by a statue of an eagle. However, in the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church replaced it with a statue of St. Peter. Trajan's successor, Emperor Hadrian, built a temple dedicated to the deified Trajan near the statue. A spiral staircase with 185 steps runs through the middle of the column, ending at the viewing platform on top.

CONTEXT:

Just as the Athenians had their marketplace to stay up-to-date on current affairs, the Romans had the Forum of Trajan.

INNOVATION/CONVENTION:

ARTISTIC DECISIONS:

INTERPRETATION:

Similar to the idea of the Greek agora, the forum was a public marketplace in which citizens could gather and interact with one another. Trajan's construction of the forum demonstrates the commitment that Roman emperors had to monumental works of architecture. Trajan's support of his namesake forum demonstrates his power, authority, and the strength of his empire.

DETAILS/TERMS/DEFINITIONS:

TITLE: Pantheon _____ **LOCATION:** _____ **DATE:** 118-125 C.E. _____

ARTIST: _____ **PERIOD/STYLE:** Imperial Roman _____ **PATRON:** _____

MATERIAL/TECHNIQUE: Concrete with stone facing

FORM:

Two rows of eight Corinthian columns (fluted columns with capitals, or tops, covered in leaves and scrolls) adorn the temple's façade, surmounted by a pediment. Behind the façade lies a circular coffered dome with an opening in the center, called the oculus. The oculus is the only source of light inside the Pantheon.

FUNCTION:

The Pantheon first functioned as a temple to the gods, and later became a civic center.

CONTENT:

The Pantheon was originally built as a temple to the ancient Roman gods. However, when Emperor Phocas handed the Pantheon over to the Roman Church, religious leaders removed the pagan references and dedicated the building to martyrs. The dome was originally covered in bronze, but that was all shipped off to Constantinople. It's speculated that a bronze emblem symbolizing Jupiter was also removed.

CONTEXT:

Marcus Agrippa, one of Emperor Octavian Augustus' BFFs, erected the Pantheon as a temple dedicated to all gods—the Greek word "pan" means "all." After a fire and an unfortunate lightning strike destroyed the first two temples, Emperor Hadrian rebuilt the Pantheon in its present-day form—a century after Agrippa's original construction.

INNOVATION/CONVENTION:

The Pantheon's dome remained the largest dome in the world for more than a millennium—and even to this day, the Pantheon remains the largest unreinforced concrete dome. Its architectural influence can be seen in many other buildings, including the church of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence. Emperor Phocas bequeathed the building to the Roman Church, which removed the pagan references and dedicated it to martyrs. Notably, Emperor Hadrian had a deep passion for Greek culture, as well as an eccentric cosmopolitan character. Like his predecessors, Hadrian contributed to the conspicuous display of impressive Roman architecture.

ARTISTIC DECISIONS:

The dome is a marvel of ancient construction. It was designed such that the arch of each portion of the dome becomes thinner as it approaches the oculus, significantly reducing the stress on the base of the dome because of the reduction in weight. The architects also used some pretty sophisticated techniques, such as using lighter materials closer to the oculus and including hidden, hollow chambers both of which greatly reduce the weight and further reduce the stress on the base of the dome.

INTERPRETATION:

DETAILS/TERMS/DEFINITIONS:

TITLE: Treasury and Great Temple **LOCATION:** Petra, Jordan **DATE:** C. 400 B.C.E.-100 C.E.

Nabataean Ptolemaic and

ARTIST: _____ **PERIOD/STYLE:** Roman **PATRON:** _____

MATERIAL/TECHNIQUE: Cut rock

FORM:

The pinkish color of the stone that makes up most of the site inspired many to also refer to Petra as the "The Rose City." The site is nestled on the slope of a mountain called Jebel al-Madhbah and lays in a basin between mountains that rim the large valley that runs from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba. There are numerous structures that make up the complex of Petra, including the Treasury, the Great Temple, an amphitheater, tombs, and other structures.

FUNCTION:

Petra was established in the fourth century B.C.E. as the capital of the Nabataeans. It has become a symbol of Jordan and is certainly the country's most visited tourist site. In his writings, Pliny the Elder described Petra as the center of the Nabataeans' caravan trade. The city was protected by a natural fortress and also had a water source flowing through it, making it a perfect hub on the trade route from the Persian Gulf in the east through to Gaza in the west and from Damascus in the north to the Red Sea to the south.

CONTENT:

CONTEXT:

The Nabataeans, an ancient Arabic people who lived in northern Arabia and the southern Levant, established Petra in about 312 B.C.E. They created a loosely organized trading network that linked one desert oasis to another. Petra was the major hub of their trading activity. There is plenty of cultural blending visible in the physical structures of Petra, including stylistic evidence of Nabataean, Greco-Roman, and Egyptian architecture all in one place. In a way, Petra was an ancient version of a modern day "hub" city like Chicago, New York, or London. It was a true melting pot where many cultures met and mingled over time.

INNOVATION/CONVENTION:

ARTISTIC DECISIONS:

In the midst of this large expanse that is West and Central Asia, there are a lot of important hub cities, Petra among them. An amazing amount of trade passed through here. As an important stop on the Silk Route, Petra was a part of the "ground zero" that connected China and India (East) with the Greco-Roman/European world (West).

INTERPRETATION:

In 106 C.E., Petra was absorbed into the Roman Empire. The trade center continued to flourish for a period of time, but eventually it fell into decline as other routes were opened and became well-traveled. Petra dwindled and fell into disrepair. The once-bustling trade hub was pretty much forgotten until the 19th century.

The Rose City was "rediscovered" in 1812 by a Swiss traveler named Johann Ludwig Burckhardt.

DETAILS/TERMS/DEFINITIONS:

the word "Petra" actually means "rock" in Greek. Tourists visit Petra by entering from the east, using an entryway that leads into the site through a dark narrow gorge called the Siq, which means "the shaft" in Arabic. This shaft, or cleft, in the rocks is a naturally occurring geological feature formed of sandstone.

TITLE: Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus **LOCATION:** _____ **DATE:** . C. 250 C.E.

ARTIST: _____ **PERIOD/STYLE:** Late Imperial Roman **PATRON:** _____

MATERIAL/TECHNIQUE: Marble.

FORM:

Iconographic eclecticism and portraiture (mashing together a bunch of different styles and techniques in one piece) characterizes Roman art, and the Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus is no exception. The sarcophagus depicts the Romans as ideal figures with noble and heroic facial expressions. But their enemies, the Goths, have puffy features and wild expressions—considerably "less attractive" qualities.

FUNCTION:

CONTENT:

Relief panels depicting battle scenes between Romans and Goths completely fill the four sides of the Ludovisi Sarcophagus, leaving no space for the background. The tangle of bodies could be mistaken for a tangle of snakes at first glance, as limbs aren't separated and blend from one body to the next.

CONTEXT:

INNOVATION/CONVENTION:

Ancient Romans borrowed many conventions of relief sculpting from the ancient Greeks. However, during this time, ancient Romans were asserting themselves as a dominant force in the ancient Mediterranean world. This sarcophagus contains unique, unprecedented stylistic elements, featuring a large tomb comprised of a huge piece of marble. It departs from earlier Roman art. Before this time, ancient Romans cremated their deceased. Once they learned that the Greeks and Egyptians were burying their dead in sarcophagi, though, the Romans had to be part of the trend.

ARTISTIC DECISIONS:

The artist depicted the Romans, who are at the top of the panel, as climbing on over the Goths and subjugating them to agony and pain, as one does to one's enemies. In the center-top stands the figure of a young Roman commander, likely the deceased, extending his right arm. The artist drilled the Sarcophagus in "high relief," meaning most of the figures are cut free of the marble, accentuating the drama of the battle scene.

INTERPRETATION:

DETAILS/TERMS/DEFINITIONS: