

The Influence of Greek and Egyptian cultures: Art & Architecture

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A note about this particular dot point:

- It is important to know details about the influence of both Greek and Egyptian culture but it is just as important that you can *identify what the influences look like*
- What this means: try to *familiarise yourself with images* as you may have to discuss/ identify particular images in sources

How the influences came about

- Greek influences came about as a result of:
 - The Greek colonies in southern Italy which were established in the 7th Century
 - Trade with Greece
 - It is said that Romans generally had a fascination with the Greeks as a result of their developed culture
- Egyptian influences came about as a result of:
 - After Rome gained control of Egypt under the reign of Augustus
 - Egyptian craftsmen residing in Italy (all things Egyptian became a bit of a “trend”)

Greek- Art

- Statues: many were copies of Greek originals
 - Statue of Doryphoros
 - Statue of Polyclete
- Mosaics:
 - Alexander the Great Mosaic in the House of the Faun
 - Inscription of “achilles being recognised by Ulysses” from the House of Apollo
 - Floor mosaics with Greek flowers and fruit
- Murals: many depicted characters and scenes from Greek mythology
- Carvings
 - A table stand designed as a sphinx in the House of the Faun
 - A brazier with in the shape of a sphinx at the Forum Baths in Pompeii

Greek - Architecture

- Theatres: many theatres reflected a Hellenistic design
 - Horseshoe shaped terraces
 - Colonnaded quadriporticus
- Palaestrae (gymnasium): the space often reflected a Greek design
 - Large open colonnaded spaces reflecting Hellenistic style
- Wall decorations
 - Greek architectural motifs within walls
- Gardens
 - Greek peristyle gardens in houses
- Houses
 - Large houses laid out similar to Hellenistic palaces
- Columns
 - 3 types of columns from Greece: Doric, Ionic and Corinthian

Greek - Religion

- Herculaneum: likely named after the Greek hero Herakles
- Images of Hercules were often found in Pompeii
 - Statuette of Hercules in the temple of Isis
- Images of Hercules were often found in Herculaneum
 - Public fountain
 - House
 - Wineshop
- Evidence of worship of Greek Gods
 - Demeter
 - Apollo
 - Cult of Dionysus
 - Representation of Venus in the Seashell in many houses

Egyptian - Art

- Various Egyptian art has been found within Pompeii and Herculaneum reflecting the popularity of trade between Alexandria (Egypt) and the Campania region

Evidence:

- Mosaics
 - Threshold mosaic from the House of the Faun shows the River Nile with crocodiles, hippopotamus and ibis
 - Battle of Isis depicted in a Mosaic in the House of the Faun - also indicates contact with Egyptians as it was done by a skilled craftsman in Alexandria
- Wall paintings with Egyptian motifs
 - The Temple of Isis has Egyptian style landscape and scenes from Egyptian mythology
- Frescoes
 - Fresco found within the Temple of Isis depicting Egyptian mythology, religious rites and landscapes
- Statues
 - Statue of Isis found in the Temple of Isis combined typical archaic Greek art and Egyptian art

Egyptian - Architecture

- Egyptian architecture was evident within Pompeii and Herculaneum however, it should be noted that Greek and Hellenic architecture was far more popular.

Evidence:

- Garden Art
 - Water feature in the Praedia of Julia Felix represents a Delta branch in the Nile
- Mosaics
 - Mosaic of a Nile Scene
- Incrustation Style
 - When walls were veneered to a particular height and textural finish with different marbles → this practice links to trade to Egypt as this construction practice began in Alexandria, Egypt

Egyptian - Religion

- Egyptian religion was practiced both publicly and privately (in temples and in the home)

Evidence:

- Egyptian Cults
 - The cult of Isis attracted many women within the Campania region who were superstitious about the afterlife
- Worship within the home
 - Shrines to Isis
 - Egyptian statues found within the Villa of Julia Felix
- Relics
 - Devoted to Anubis (Egyptian of mummification and the after life)
- Statuettes
 - Statuettes and amulets representing the Egyptian God Bes, protector of women and children who supposedly warded off evil spirits

Sample Questions

1. Outline the evidence for Egyptian influences at Pompeii and Herculaneum (5 marks)
2. Outline the evidence for Greek influences at Pompeii and Herculaneum (5 marks)
3. Explain the influence of the Greek culture on art, architecture and religion in Pompeii and Herculaneum (8 marks)