



6-12 Note that this figure is free standing. Statue of a Youth, *Kouros*, about 600 BC. Marble, 76" (193 cm) high. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, 1932.

750 BC
First goldworking in
S. America

563 BC
Birth of Buddha,
India

World Cultural Timeline

750 BC
Kingdom of Nubia
founded, Africa

551 BC
Confucius born,
China



Sculpture

The sculpted predecessors of the *Kritios Boy* were limited to rigid standing figures of young men and women. The sculpture of a young man was called a *Kouros* (fig.6-12). The life-size nude youth represented either Apollo or an ideal athlete. The figures were stylized and did not represent real people. The figures face toward the front. In this 600 BC example, the left foot is slightly forward. Both arms are held stiffly at their sides. Kneecaps are slightly curved. The hair is stylized into small ringlets that fall in a blocky mass to the shoulders. The mouth is set in a faint smile. In fact, the smile is so characteristic of the figures sculpted at this time, it has been termed an Archaic smile, after the name given to the period.

Over the course of the next seventy-five years, this stylization changed to a more natural and realistic representation of the human figure. Greek artists began sculpting what they saw and observed rather than creating idealized forms from memory.

The female figure, or *Kore* (fig.6-c), was a freestanding clothed figure of an idealized young girl. The clothing varied, depending upon the regions where the sculptors worked. The *Kore* figures were painted, as were most Greek sculptures, to appear more natural. Notice the folds of cloth, the long braided hair, the traces of color left on the work, and the hint of an Archaic smile.

The Archaic period comes to a close in about 480 BC. The *Kritios Boy* dates from this time and, as we have seen, it marks a change in how the Greeks depict the human form.

The Classic period began after 480 BC, when the Greeks defeated the Persian fleet at Salamis. In the early part of the Classic period, the Greeks enjoyed a period of peace in which the arts flourished. Individualism of ideas, thoughts and artistic representation was honored.

The *Charioteer of Delphi* (fig.6-13) is typical of the changes that took place. The figure is cast in bronze and is the earliest of the few remaining Greek bronzes. The rest were destroyed, lost or melted down for later ammunition or weapons of war. The charioteer was originally



6-13 This figure originally stood on a chariot drawn by four horses. *Charioteer of Delphi*, about 470 BC. Bronze, 71" (180 cm) high. Archaeological Museum, Delphi.



6-14 Sculptors dampened the drapery of their models in order to get every fold just right to portray the form of the model.

Three Goddesses, about 435 BC. Marble, over life-size, east pediment of the Parthenon. British Museum, London.

polished. The eyes were made of glass paste, and lips and eyelashes were made of inlaid copper. In most later bronzes of Greece and Rome, these features are now missing and dark holes remain for the lost eyes. The cloth folds, muscles and facial features are natural. The Archaic smile is replaced by a look of calm and self-control, which symbolizes a classic balance of emotion, personality and physical ability. The features and pose remain a bit rigid and severe.

The Age of Pericles was the culmination of the Classic period in Greek sculpture and architecture. Athens was safe and prosperous, and the arts were admired and loved as never before and seldom since. The Athenians decorated the most prominent building in their city, the Parthenon, in their most ambitious sculptural undertaking. Both the east and west ends of the building were filled with statues that were larger than life. A continuous *frieze* (or sculpted band) ran for 525 feet around the top of the wall of the cella, which contained a huge statue of Athena. All the sculptures were produced in a period of twelve years by a team of sculptors under the direction of Phidias. Many of the works were later destroyed. In 1801,

Lord Elgin collected most of what remained and sent them back to England for safekeeping.

Some of the sculptures were designed to fit exactly into the *pediment*, or flat triangular area, at each end of the Parthenon. The *Three Goddesses* (from the east pediment) have remained as a group (fig.6-14). The fascinating drapery is startling in the way it seems to cling to the bodies. The clothing is no longer stylized or severe, but falls in natural folds and creases. These folds create visual movement. They lead the viewer's eye over the bodies and to the central event in the pediment composition, the birth of Athena.



6-15 The parade of riders is part of a relief that continues around the entire inner wall of the Parthenon. The sculptor makes masterful use of a number of the elements of art and principles of design. Can you name at least three?

Mounted Procession (detail), 432 BC. Marble, 42" (106 cm) high, north frieze of the Parthenon. British