

(iii) Pericles versus Phillip - 2013

(a) Comment on the differences in style between these two sculptures.

The statue of Pericles, which comes from the time of the great Greek cities, is incredibly generic. Pericles looks, as Wheeler calls it, like a “barbers dummy.” There is a lack of individuality and personality in the sculpture. It feels as though it could be anybody. It is missing that distinctness that would define it as the genuine face of Pericles. The statue is as well as this, not exactly realistic. The Greeks tended to overcompensate or idealize their subjects when it came to sculpture. The Pericles we see in the statue appears to have been “airbrushed.” It is as if all his imperfections were removed, making it seem like less of a sculpture of a real man but rather a fantasized version of him.

The bust of Philip the Arabian on the other hand, it is more individualistic. This bust is not generic and manages to capture Phillips’s personality perfectly, a shifty politician, unlike the Greek “type” statue of Pericles. Phillips’s expression looks nervous whereas Pericles’s expression is unclear. This is clearly a bust of a specific person which is what the Romans tended to focus on. They favoured personality rather than appearance. Phillip the Arabian is also realistic. It has the Roman *veritas* evident in a lot of their sculptures. Phillips’s face is not perfect; it is not symmetrical, and he has defined frown lines that haven’t been removed from the sculpture. He has a clear expression. He is very solemn and serious, unlike Pericles who has no real expression at all. Phillip looks like a real person and less “of stone” than Pericles.

(b) With reference to the portrait sculptures on your course, discuss what Wheeler describes as “the realistic interest of the Romans in the personality.”

The Romans were far more interested in the individuality of their subjects rather than then idealizing them to be perfect. There was also great variety in those they considered worthy to be put in stone as Roman portraiture had Etruscan influences in its development. Storing death masks became popular during this time which was an Etruscan custom.

The aged woman sculptures are a prime example on this variety. The Romans were uninterested in what the women looked like. It did not matter that they were not idealized young beauties. The Romans were interested in the personalities of these old women. Capturing the wisdom and their endurance in the face of adversity was far more important to them and far more compelling than a pretty face.

Similarly, in the bust of Emperor Commodus, preserving the emperor's true nature was more the sculptors aim than to create a propaganda piece. Commodus's crazed obsession with being a Homeric hero or something similar is captured in the props that he's holding and wearing. Him wearing the Nemean lion skin and holding the club all hint to the image of Heracles. However, the sculptor makes it seem as though Commodus is a child playing dress up, attempting, and failing to be Heracles. It captures Commodus's true vain and perverted nature as this is how he views himself. He doesn't look as strong as Heracles however and looks quite perverted in his face, especially his eyes. He's standing slightly strange which again tells us his true nature, which was a crazed, image obsessed, lunatic.

Personality is once more important when it comes to 'the patrician carrying busts.' The figure in the toga is not an idealized man. He is clearly an older patrician, but the focus of the sculpture is to demonstrate *Pietas*. This man is a solemn figure with *gravitas* and importance and someone who respects funeral customs. This patrician was far more interested in seeming to be pious and respectful rather than appearing to be a perfect Greek hero.

Finally, in the Phillip the Arabian bust, his personality was clearly more important than his looks. His likeness is clearly seen through this bust. Phillip was an anxious, shifty, opportunist and that is very clear in his expression. He has a furrowed brow and evident frown lines. He looks slightly uncomfortable, and his eyes are shifting off in another direction. He does not look confident or self-assured but rather as if he's looking over his shoulder. His true personality and the reality of the man he was, carved in stone for future generations.