ART OF THE WESTERN WORLD

OPENING TITLES

CAPTION: THE LEGACY OF GREECE

EXT. GROUNDS OF STOURHEAD
SPECIALY SHOT ON LOCATION
AT HOLKHAM HALL, BATHERS,
Claude, detail of temple
EXT. GROUNDS OF STOURHEAD,
TEMPLE OF APOLLO

SPECIALY SHOT ON LOCATION
AT HOLKHAM HALL, SHEPHERD
AND COWS, Claude, MCU
landscape and trees

SPECIALY SHOT ON LOCATION
AT HOLKHAM HALL, STATUE
GALLERY, MARSYAS' HEAD

MICHAEL WOOD VOICE-OVER
Architecture, sculpture,
painting, even the landscape
create a vision of the
perfect place, a place of
fantasy and myth where gods
might walk with men.

Somewhere of course which has
never existed in history.
It is imagined. Yet it has been created out of fragments of the half dreamt, half remembered ancient Greece and Rome. The poet Shelley wrote at the beginning of the 19th century, "we are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, all have their roots in Greece. But for Greece we might still have been savages and idolaters."

The human form and the human mind attain to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and which can never cease to delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Europeans surrounded themselves with the images of Greece and Rome. They created for themselves personal museums which displayed their wealth,
More than two hundred years ago when the founding fathers of the United States were...

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. AIRCRAFT FLYING OVER JEFFERSON MEMORIAL BUILDING.

Time and learning and idealised the virtues of reason, liberty and justice. In this way they elevated and even masked their mundane ownership and manufacture, trade and empire. And they exported these ideals and the visual language which expressed them all over the world, to the Americas, the Indies and beyond. It is appropriate then, that these are the first pictures we see in a series on the tradition of Western art. We could have started in the caves of Lascaux or the temples of Luxor, but if there is a beginning, a source to which ancient Greece and Rome, A Greece and Rome that are forever fantasised and idealised but which are with us wherever we look.
building their new capital here in Washington they searched for a visual style which would embody their democratic ideals and they found it in Greece and Rome in a style which for them, and still for us, embodies harmony, order and freedom. And from that day to this the West has built its temples to liberty and justice and to money and power in the Greek and Roman style. You can see it in Trafalgar Square in London and in Leningrad in the Soviet Union. At the root of the Western tradition, in architecture, in painting and in sculpture is the classical legacy. Its so ingrained in our way of seeing things that most of the time we don't notice when we use it in TV, in commercials, in magazines, in the coins in our pocket, even in a classical head on our credit card. And many of the uses to which we put it no doubt would astonish people from the ancient world. But if an ancient Greek could time travel down to our time and be here now he would recognise this around us, he
EXT. SOUNION, GREECE

TEMPLE OF POSEIDON,
SOUNION, DAWN. MW walks into shot

WS TEMPLE A/B

WS TEMPLE, DAY

MS PILLARS OF TEMPLE A/B

would surely feel that in some sense the West is heir to his civilisation.

The power of this tradition and its hold over our imagination make it difficult for us to see the Greeks and Romans as they really were. The Athenians of the 5th century BC, the builders of the temple at Sounion are often portrayed as superheroes, the creators of democracy and a perfect society.

We must be careful, though, not to idealise them. Like all societies their's was imperfect, it was based on slavery, women had no rights, they were imperialists and in their darkest moments as in the bitter Peleponnesian war with Sparta the Athenians fell prey to irrationality mass hysteria, strange religious cults, pornography, urban violence and murderous and unjust acts of foreign policy against smaller
states. Things we're all too familiar with in the modern west.

But Greek artists and poets understood these things about human nature and they made their art about those contradictions, about the tragedies and the failures as well as the achievements.

The sculptures of the altar of Zeus from Pergamon portray those contradictions in the dramatic manner of the second century BC. But like so much Greek art, the originals have been dismembered and fragmented - scattered around the museums of the world or buried deep and forgotten.

Some works are wonderfully preserved on the site of their origin, but most have been broken and bleached by time. It takes imagination and study to piece together these fragments and try to see them again in the context
of the society in which they were produced. Who made these images and objects? For whom and why? What was in the artist's mind and in the patron's, and how were they seen by the surrounding society? We shall be helped in answering these questions by art historians like John Boardman, of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

This is the way we're used to looking at Greek art, in museums. In this case in a cast gallery in the University of Cambridge, where they've assembled these rather gaunt white figures, plaster casts of the more important Greek and Roman statues which are present in many different museums in the world. Now, the job of the art historian and archaeologist is to try to work out what the original settings for these figures was, what was in the mind of the artist when he made them the way he did, and what the impact would have been on the society for which they were made. There are a number of
examples here which make the point rather easily of the difficulty that we have in trying to make this adjustment. This little figure, for instance, which was probably made in Crete about the middle of the 7th century BC, isn't all that unlike figures which might have been made in a number of other cultures in antiquity, in Syria or Egypt. At least, only an expert would know the difference, it's not distinctively and obviously Greek. There's another problem about it too which we have to adjust for. There were traces of colour on it, and in this museum a duplicate cast has been coloured up with what they think to be more or less the colours of its original appearance, and you can see it's really quite a striking difference to the way in which we're used to seeing figures of this sort. If we move on about 100 years to another figure, and one of the important characteristics of Greek art is the extremely rapid development of style,
we find something which is considerably more realistic, still very formal, rather stiff, but quite unmistakably Greek. And this figure too can tell us a little bit more about her original appearance because she was found with traces of colour on her dress and on her face, and again a duplicate cast here has been restored and painted up to give us an idea of what she looked like in antiquity. The colours would probably have been muted somewhat by the bright Athenian sun. But what we've got to do is to try to make these adjustments to allow for these figures in their original setting, their original appearance, try to understand their original function. Because if we can't do this, we can't understand what Greek art's really about.

MICHAEL WOOD VOICE OVER
The art we recognise as Greek was produced in the
millennium between two and three thousand years ago. The temple at Sounion was built in the great classical period of Athenian triumph but centuries before Greek society was already recognisably different from the other cultures of the ancient Near East. Persia and Egypt were mighty empires, ruled by dynasties that gave themselves the status of gods. The Greeks lived in small city states under the rule of petty kings. The scale of these small Greek communities, clinging to a rocky landscape, never far from the sea, made them vulnerable to attack from larger forces but also threw them back on their resources of fitness, strength, intelligence, calculation, and above all individual heroism. The idea of the individual, standing proudly independent, is one of the most powerful and resilient ideas in human history. The figure of the kouros shows this idea taking the centre of the stage. Andrew Stewart teaches at the University of California at Berkeley.
It's often said that statues like this are emblematic of early Greek culture. I think they are, and I think they are for four reasons. The sculptor has taken the statue's clothes off. Convinced that man is the measure of all things, he allows him to stand free and proud, allows your eyes to roam unobstructed across his body. He's autonomous, the sculptor has stripped away the back pillar and the screen between the legs of the Egyptian statues that were his predecessors, and has allowed him to walk forward in three dimensional space. He's beautiful. He's also youthful. The sculptor has chosen that period between eighteen and twenty-one that the Greeks believed was the prime of one's life, the acme of one's existence on this earth. As a result, the statue could serve one of two main functions. It could be offered to the gods, particularly to Apollo, the epitome of this youthful ideal projected upon the heavens, or it could stand.
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above the grave of a man of any age, reminding his descendants of that time when he was in the prime of his life, standing youthful, proud, autonomous, beholden to no-one, the measure of all things.

MICHAEL WOOD VOICE OVER
The male figure, naked, proud, idealised, did have a female equivalent in the Kore. She too is beautiful, but she is serene rather than heroic. She's clothed and static, not boldly striding forward like the male.

The turn of the 6th century to the 5th century BC saw one of the most dramatic transitions in history, political and social. It coincided with an equally dramatic transition in art. The Critian boy of the early 5th century BC, is the Kouros come to life. He has relaxed his body and come closer to the appearance of nature. We can only speculate about and imagine the relationship between the development of
ZEUS, c. 460 BC, pan L-R from spear to head
democracy and the Greek city states and the development of an unprecedented realism in art, but both, in their quite separate ways, reveal a new excitement in the idea that individual human beings can take charge of their own destiny, even though they do so under the capricious gaze of man-like gods. The Zeus recovered from the wreck of Artemisium, shows the new freedom and confidence of sculptors modelling clay rather than carving stone and translating the clay model by casting it in bronze.

A/B WS statue in room

A/B MCU Zeus facing us, pan R-L and zoom into head

ANDREW STEWART VOICE OVER
The Zeus describes his power by reaching his hand far out over his realm, brandishing his thunderbolt, gazing unwaveringly towards the horizon. He stands like an icon of divine power. It tells us that Zeus is king of the universe, that his power is infinite, that he is a supremely poised being by comparison with the hubbub and turmoil of man's life on earth. The fact that his physique is no different from

A/B MCU 90 track around base

1.13
that of an athlete or a hero of the same time is simply a continuation of the standard Greek notion that the gods were made in human form, that you project your own notions of male beauty onto the heavens.

MICHAEL WOOD VOICE OVER
The triumph of democracy, a more restricted matter than the mass democracies of today, but nevertheless a dramatic change from tyranny, coincided with the triumph of the Athens of Pericles.

Pericles was not a tyrant but a leader chosen by the Athenian citizens as their representative. He led Athens through a period of reconstruction after the wars with the Persians, wars which had left Athens in ruins but finally rid of its great enemy and at the head of a league of Greek city states. The mid-5th century BC was the period of Athens' greatest influence, not only
on the Greek world of that time but on subsequent history. The most impressive and evocative monument to that influence is the Acropolis, the citadel which still dominates Athens. Pericles used the resources, or some contemporaries argued, abused them, to rebuild the Acropolis and crown it with the Parthenon. The bold simplicity of its building - with its strictly harmonised repetition of the most basic geometric shapes - has had an unparalleled influence on the architecture of the world.

The creators of the Parthenon - including the sculptor Phidias and the architect Iktinos - adapted the traditional temple form but refined it. They created an impression of subtlety and lightness despite the scale of the building and the massiveness of its marble surface. The sculptural decorations employed the skills of hundreds of craftsmen - and set a new standard in art.
And that was a statue of Athena nearly 40 feet high. That's only five feet below the ceiling as we look at it today. A statue armed, covered with gold, in all its dress from head to foot, the skin ivory, with monsters on its helmet and a great serpent by its side. To us, that would seem garish, grandiose and unrestrained, but that was the core of the building. And if you put yourself in the position of an ancient Athenian, perhaps coming from the Panathanean procession, in the broad daylight, the blue skies and dazzling light of an Attic August, and then going inside that building, we can imagine what it felt like to see that statue, as the eyes became accustomed to the gloom and saw the glitter of the gold, the jewelled eyes reflected in the pool below the statue, the effect must have been overwhelming.

We can only imagine the impact created by the goddess and her surroundings. Our attempts to reconstruct the
statue's appearance, like this one from the nineteenth century, can merely hint at the experience of seeing it in its dramatic context. But is does remind us how vivid, how colourful, Greek art must have been in classical times.

INT. BRITISH MUSEUM,
LONDON THE ELGIN MARBLES,
West Section
A/B MCU horse and man

A/B MCU feet of horses and men

A/B MCU two heads

A/B MCU soldier

Bleached by the centuries, and sterilised by the surroundings of the museum, the reliefs of the Parthenon frieze appear cool and restrained. But originally they would have been brightly coloured, and even more lifelike than they are now. Their depiction of the Panathenaic procession would have been still more convincing - art and nature coming closer together than ever before.

A/B JB to camera

The frieze is generally regarded as representing the high point in the classical style. Composition is still rather formal, almost mechanical, but it's enlivened by a great many realistic details of gesture and posture. The figures are
perhaps rather unemotional but highly idealised. The whole thing seems to represent a balance between that Greek preoccupation with composition, proportion and a growing sense of realism.

MICHAEL WOOD VOICE OVER
The illusion of reality is created even more impressively in the massive sculptures of the pediments - the gables at each end of the building.

JOHN BOARDMAN VOICE OVER
What seems to happen is that they were creating so far as they could more successful images of man by varying the representation of details. There was, as it were, a sort of natural selection of forms and the forms that were eventually adopted naturally tended to be the more realistic ones. Add to it, remember, the colouring of the hair and the eyes, which would add to this realistic effect. And as soon as they succeeded in understanding how the human figure worked,
that it was not simply an assemblage of patterns and volumes, they moved very rapidly to the point at which they could create a human figure in two dimensions or in three dimensions which realistically portrayed quite subtle poses, postures and actions. This was the major breakthrough, this is the thing which marked out Greek art from that of all contemporary cultures. This, at least in sculpture, was the point at which Greek art took off in a totally new direction and informed the whole Western tradition.

The Athenian ascendancy did not survive the 5th century BC. Athenian democracy itself was always vulnerable. But Athenian culture - its philosophy, literature and drama, as much as its architecture, sculpture and painting - maintained a hold over the Greek and the western imagination. 5th century Athens created a classical ideal against which all subsequent art could be
Here the sculptor has refocused the youthful ideal of the Kouros and the Parthenon frieze and the Getty bronze behind me onto the person of one man: Alexander the Great. What he's doing here is to appropriate the ideals of Periclean Athens and to show Alexander as the logical successor of those young men who fought in the Peloponnesian war for Athens' greater glory and who tried to establish her empire ever further and wider.

**ANDREW STEWART VOICE OVER**

No individual had ever achieved so much in the history of mankind, at least as far as the Greeks remembered it. No individual had incorporated within himself qualities which were so conspicuously heroic. So we have here an image that derives its authority from the past, the human, the heroic, the divine, but at the same time looks very
MICHAEL WOOD VOICE OVER
The future that Alexander promised was an empire that would spread across two million square miles. Greek towns and Greek language and culture were established deep into Asia, some as far from their source as India. Alexander died when he was only 33, and his monumental project could not sustain itself, but the model for the Greek state he exported, of a civilised city in a barbarian landscape, became the model of the Greek city states for the next three hundred years. One such city was Pergamon, built in what is now Turkey in the 2nd century BC.

The Pergamine rulers were neither democratic nor especially heroic, but they borrowed the heroic forms of Alexander's time and of classical Athens to express their ideals and values. But in their art, like the carvings on the great altar of Zeus, the Pergamines
depicted the struggle between the gods, heroes and giants, between the rational and the irrational, with a violence and passion that the classical Athenian never permitted themselves.

ANDREW STEWART VOICE OVER
You can feel the drill ripping into that stone to create that writhing hair of the giants, you can feel the chisel cutting away to create feathers or skin or scales or muscles or drapery or whatever. You can feel the rasp making those immense range of surface textures together with the polish. So here the sculptor is foregrounding his own technique. There's a notion of creativity going on here which is quite different from anything that we've seen in the past. The technique of the Parthenon frieze is self effacement. Here the emphasis is on artistic creation.

A/B CU head of figure with snake
A/B MCU figure with snake
A/B MS figure with snake
A/B MS Athena
A/B MCU figure cam R of Athena
A/B CU detail
The creative force of Greek art after Alexander has been reproduced ever since, in the direct copies of the Roman period, in the rediscoveries and recreations of the Renaissance, and in heroic art up to today.

The great altar of Pergamon is one of the most impressive and characteristic monuments from ancient Greek culture, and yet at the time it was finished, about 170 BC, the age of these independent Greek city states and kingdoms like Pergamon was nearing its end. As a new power pushed its order across the Mediterranean: Rome. The Romans conquered Greece in the middle of the second century BC. They would surpass the Greeks in political power, in military might, in technological innovation. But the Romans would be forever in Greece's debt in the fields of philosophy, science, literature and the arts. As
the Roman poet said, "captive Greece made Rome captive". The visual language devised by the Greeks would be adopted by the Romans and subsequently by the entire Western tradition. Indeed, it would become the preeminent means of portraying order, rationality, harmony and power, whether in dictatorships, despotisms or democracies. Ironically, though, the lesson which the Greeks understood and which their artists expressed in great works like this and in the Parthenon sculptures, namely that the disruptive and frightening forces of the irrational will always threaten to burst out in human history, that lesson would have to be learned again and again.

A few hundred yards from the Pergamon Museum in East Berlin is a telling reminder of those forces which can lead cultures to tear themselves apart or to subjugate others in the name
INT. TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER, EAST BERLIN, flame
GDR FLAG

LS HORSES ON TOP OF THE BRANDENBURG GATE FROM THE EAST

BRANDENBURG GATE FROM EAST BERLIN

A/B CHARIOT ON FRIEZE

WS BRANDENBURG GATE FROM EAST BERLIN

The style of the Greeks and their inheritors has been used to stand for harmony and order and yet at the same time to legitimise violence and absolute power. It is the face of enlightenment and of empire.

The story of Western Art then is complex and rich in irony. An art which has served lofty spiritual ideals and grossly material ones, which has expressed the politics of closed societies and the workings of the free
individual conscience. The themes bequeathed us by the Greeks can be followed over two thousand years, open to outside influences, changes of direction and style. But despite many turnings still the same common stream which is the west's way of seeing.
The first heirs of Greece were the Romans.
1.22 COLOUR STILL: TORSO OF THE CENTAURESS, Rodin
1.23 COLOUR STILL: GERTI SCHIELE NUDE, Schiele
1.24 COLOUR STILL: LES DEMOISELLES D'AVIGNON, Picasso
1.25 COLOUR STILL: NUDE DESCENDING THE STAIRCASE, Duchamp
1.26 COLOUR STILL: WOODCUTTER, Marc
1.27 COLOUR STILL: THE RAPE, Magritte
1.28 COLOUR STILL: VENUS DE MILO AMB CALAIXOS, Dali
1.29 COLOUR STILL: TWO WOMEN WITH STILL LIFE, de Kooning
1.30 COLOUR STILL: BATHTUB COLLAGE NO. 3, Wesselman
1.31 COLOUR STILL: NU DE PROFIL, Balthus
1.32 COLOUR STILL: WOMAN STANDING IN BLUE DOORWAY, Segal
1.33 COLOUR STILL: PAINTER WITH SAILING BOAT - MUNCH, Baselitz
1.34 COLOUR STILL: STANDART, A.R Penck

ROLLER CAPTION
"ART OF THE WESTERN WORLD"

Program I, Part II

"THE IMPERIAL STONES OF ROME"

Script by Bayley Silleck
Roman Forum at dawn

(Original footage)

PAN Palatine to
Michael Wood on
camera (original footage)

MUSIC ONLY

MICHAEL WOOD (SYNCH)

Rome began here, a cluster of little villages strung over these hills above the marshy valley of the River Tiber. Founded according to legend in the 8th Century, B.C., at its heyday in the 2nd Century, A.D., it ruled an empire whose soldiers stood guard from the windy hills of Hadrian's Wall in Scotland to the Persian Gulf and whose merchants travelled as far afield as India and China. The culmination and the unifying of the old cultures of the Mediterranean world and Western Europe. From that day to this, Rome would be the greatest single influence on the Western cultural tradition. Indeed, it could be said that Rome is the tradition. It's not merely that Rome gave the West the Latin language, Roman law, Roman ideas on statecraft and on society. It was Rome which passed on to the West the artistic, spiritual legacy of Ancient Greece which Rome had conquered, looted, and then learned from. And it was Rome which was the agency of transmission to the West of an obscure Near Eastern religious cult which became the dynamic motive force in Western society and spiritual life. Christianity. But Rome also gave the West a practical legacy. It's a legacy which Western people see every day of their lives from Washington Square to Trafalgar Square and that legacy lies in the realm of architecture, civil engineering building, town planning. These were the Roman arts par excellence. And Roman thinkers came to view the goal
of their empire as providing a peace in which those arts could flourish.

MICHAEL WOOD (V/O)

It was Caesar Augustus who brought the first real peace to a Rome weary of continual war and internal strife.

In 13 B.C., the Senate celebrated his triumphant return from Spain by dedicating to him an Altar of Augustan Peace.

On the outer walls, is a sculpted representation of that dedication ceremony -- a procession of priests, officials, and members of the imperial family. This is to Roman art what the Parthenon frieze is to Greek art. A sense of order and serenity pervades the scene.

At the head of the procession, between his two consuls, is the damaged but recognizable image of Augustus himself, dignified though not yet deified.

All the other figures are portraits as well such as Augustus's daughter Julia (later banished for immoral conduct)... and her first husband, Augustus's minister, Marcus Agrippa.

Other reliefs celebrate the joy and fertility of nature in this time of peace. The universal harmony of the natural world is represented by the full-breasted, reassuring figure of Mother Earth herself.

The hundred-foot-high column commemorating Trajan's victory over the Dacians shows the force required to keep the peace.
The unique spiral frieze tells of the discipline and resourcefulness of the Roman legions...moving by sea, assembling to hear their orders, building fortifications, raiding an enemy town, and crossing the Danube in small boats.

The army is shown to be an awesome fighting machine, but there is no glorification of war itself, which is always brutal and remorseless.

The victory column and triumphal arch through which the returning army marched, dragging slaves and spoils of war, were forceful forms of propaganda for the righteousness of imperial power, guided by the Emperor, the Senate, and the People of Rome.

And it was the arch that was the basis of a revolutionary new architecture.

The post-and-lintel system of the ancient world was limited in the space it could span, and the weight it could bear. The Romans soon recognized the strength and versatility of the arch and elaborated it into an art form of grandeur and utility.

Roman Stone arches, like the ones supporting this bridge built across the Tiber in 62 B.C., were constructed of wedge-shaped blocks. The blocks, wider at the top than at the bottom, are locked in place by a central keystone. The weight of the structure above compresses the stone blocks and is transmitted evenly from one to another on either side down into the ground.

From the arch, came a new conception of interior architecture.
Extending the arch form through space in a straight line creates a tunnel or barrel vault.

Curving the arch through space, Roman engineers created an annular or ring vault.

Two barrel vaults crossing at right angles make a groin vault. These dramatic intersections would find lasting expression in the great Romanesque churches of the Middle Ages.

By rotating the arch around a fixed center-point, they could describe a dome or an apse with a half-domed ceiling.

But the arch was only part of the story. It was an extraordinary new building material that made these fluid designs possible.

Twenty miles from Rome, in the hill town of Palestrina, stand the remains of one of the first great Roman building projects -- the Sanctuary of Fortuna, the Goddess of Fortune. Much of it was hidden until a World War II bombing raid sheared away the later housing, revealing this gigantic conception, a series of seven immense terraces rising 400 feet up from the grotto below where the fortune-telling lots were cast for pilgrims, all the way up to a colonnaded rotunda on top where the 17th Century palace of the Barberini now stands.

And the whole complex was aligned to look out over a breathtaking vista of plain and mountain, and with axial symmetry the sea framed by the foothills of the Appenines.
Here Roman architects began to play with the new curvilinear forms... such as this graceful hemicycle with its colonnade supporting an annular barrel vault inset with coffers that were once richly decorated.

MICHAEL WOOD (SYNCH)
This amazing architecture was made possible by something which to us in the 20th Century seems so commonplace it would hardly deserve comment. Concrete. Concrete had been used before this time. A simple mixture of three parts sand, one part lime, broken stone and water. But among its problems for builders was that it dried very swiftly so it could only really be used for layering courses, never for building entire structures. But in the 1st Century B.C., the Romans discovered the almost magical properties of a reddish volcanic sand called pozzolana which comes from Pozzuoli near Naples. Concrete made with pozzolana has a very different quality. It's very strong, it can be used in wet conditions. It dries slowly so entire structures could be built, bonded from top to bottom as one, even including domes. So this simple discovery marks a revolution in Roman and in Western architecture. It made possible all the greatness which would follow.

MICHAEL WOOD (V/O)
At the height of its imperial power, Rome was a sprawling city, crowded with two million citizens and slaves. To keep them occupied, there were public baths, race courses like the Circus Maximus, and the great amphitheater decreed by the Emperor Vespasian in 75 A.D.
With its massive facade of superimposed arches, the Colosseum seems to express in stone the grandiose dreams of all Empire-builders.

But it was a most functional building, its gates numbered for ticket-holders, its concentric vaulted corridors designed to funnel 50,000 spectators to their seats with maximum efficiency.

Built of stone, brick, and concrete, the Colosseum's huge oval interior offered every Roman an unobstructed view of the slaughter in the arena below -- arena being the Latin word for sand that covered the wood floor and absorbed the blood.

The Colosseum impresses us today more as an extraordinary feat of architecture than as a work of art, though it strongly influenced the design of both Renaissance palaces and modern sports arenas.

This three-dimensional scale model depicts Rome in the 4th Century, virtually at the end of its spectacular imperial building program. Of all the great constructions throughout the Empire, one stands above all others as the crowning achievement of Roman architecture -- the Pantheon!

Fittingly, it is a work that expresses not the ugliness of our baser instincts, but our sense of wonder about worlds beyond our own.

Who built the Pantheon, and when, was long a mystery.

The Latin dedication tells us that it was built by Marcus Agrippa, Augustus's son-in-law and consul. This, it
turned out, refers to the first Pantheon on this site, a much more conventional temple.

The answer lay hidden for centuries in the brick facing of the Pantheon's 25-foot-thick concrete rotunda. Archaeologists had found that many Roman bricks were stamped with the name of the consul in office when they were made. Almost all the Pantheon's bricks were made around 120 A.D., revealing that its builder was the Emperor Hadrian, a man of passionately artistic sensibility and a particular love for architecture.

The Pantheon's domed roof and classical temple porch have inspired more western architecture than any other building.

Each massive column is carved from a single block of Egyptian granite and topped by the flourishing acanthus leaves of the Corinthian order favored by the Romans.

Impressive though it is, it isn't the exterior that gives this building its lofty place in western art, but what lies behind its great bronze doors.

With its opening to the sky, this was the world's largest dome for more than 18 centuries -- 5000 tons of carefully molded concrete stretching across nearly 150 feet of a space. The Greeks had created exteriors of exquisite harmony. It was the Romans who gave the West the grandly conceived interior.

Now a church, this is the only major Roman building that survives intact. Pantheon means "temple of all the gods" and their statues must have been placed in these temple-like niches where Christian saints now stand,
richly decorated with the colored marble brought by sea from quarries throughout the Empire.

Professor Richard Brilliant of Columbia University.

Prof. BRILLIANT (SYNCH)
In the Fifth Century when the barbarians took Rome they entered this building to despoil it of its treasures. The splendor of the interior stopped them in their tracks and thus preserved this glorious structure, this magnificent space till our time. Space gives content and form to this great building. What we see on the ground level is a great cylinder. The cylinder fuses or merges into the hemispherical dome that lies upon it. That fusion is so complete because the architect has shaped this interior in spreading Roman influence, both vertically and horizontally, in such a way as to suggest that the building interior contains a perfect form, that perfect form known as the sphere. The paradox encountered in this structure is that space so ordinarily thought of as being defined by architecture instead defines architecture. The true substance of the building is space. As you can Pantheon see, the coffers meant solely to organize, to structure our visual experience recede toward the oculus, culminating in that passage not an escape but a kind of communication between the interior space defined by this extraordinary building and the space of the cosmos that lies beyond. That cosmos is perfection, perfection in the form of a sphere. A sphere which has no beginning and no end.

Michael Wood V/O
Pagan temple, Christian church, bold and original work of art, the Pantheon remains a symbol of universal significance for all the ages.
Hadrian’s restless intelligence was also at work in the immense and inspired villa complex he built for himself near Tivoli.

Like other emperors, he used the shaping power of concrete and vaulted architecture to enclose space in dramatic ways, to sculpt interiors that expanded rather than limited human activity... with an echo here and there of his enduring masterwork.

Everywhere in the Villa there were statues, many of them in the Greek tradition he so passionately admired. In this, Hadrian was typical of well-to-do Romans throughout the imperial age.

Prof. BRILLIANT (SYNCH)

Roman sculpture, it’s such a rich subject. The Romans, their artists, Roman patrons delighted in the collection of sculpture in the round, sculpture which they displayed in their public places, sculpture which they used to decorate the fora, palaces, gardens, variety of situations Sculpture, which I may add, they also put into museums because indeed the delight in works of art was something that gave enormous pleasure both to the Romans and also to their friends. Indeed, it has become clear that much of Greek art has in fact survived not in originals but in Roman copies., much like the copies in this room in the Capitoline Museum in Rome.

Such a special work is this statue in marble from Hadrian’s Villa of a tormented centaur. The statue in dark marble, comes close to the bronze original of the Hellenistic period and one can see what effort the sculptors expended in attempting to reproduce as closely as possible the ancient original. Hadrian who we must imagine collected this sculpture and enjoyed it,
could appreciate a certain moral content in the work itself. The centaur is tormented by lust. At one time, now missing unfortunately, there was a Cupid on his back, a Cupid thrusting the arrows of sexual passion into the centaur whose arms are bound behind him. The moral lesson to be learned from this work and not just the enjoyment of it is found in the necessity of imposing reason on passion.

MICHAEL WOOD V/O

The Romans themselves live on in their vast legacy of portrait sculpture.

We have Marcus Aurelius as an idealistic young man... and as the weary philosopher-emperor who was to die on a lonely frontier.

We have the portrait of this aristocratic beauty of the Flavian period whose slave-girls must have been constantly busy with the curling iron.

And, by contrast, the flaccid hair and careworn expression of a woman in her declining years.

Decius ruled an Empire more and more threatened by barbarians at its borders and civil strife within. Looking for scapegoats, he ordered the first systematic persecution of Christians.

A vision of the Christian cross was said to have inspired the military victory of Constantine over his rival for the imperial crown in the year 312. This colossal head is a portrait not of Constantine the individual but of his divinely inspired power.
The Senate honored him with the last triumphal arch built in Rome. Nervous about Constantine's interest in Christianity, the senators decorated it not only with new reliefs, but also with earlier works of Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius — reminders of the glorious and pagan Roman tradition. They reveal a remarkable change in Roman art.

The dynamic compositions and ideally proportioned human bodies inherited from Greece and so admired by Hadrian — whose head has been replaced by Constantine's — give way in the new reliefs to rows of puppet-like figures, static and without identity. Huddled together as if for security, they seem to express the anxiety and authoritarianism of a troubled Empire.

While his arch was still being built, Constantine legalized the practice of Christianity. Christian art could now rise out of the darkness of the catacombs to celebrate the Son of God and his promise of life everlasting.

Junius Bassus, Prefect of Rome, was baptized on his deathbed and buried in this marble sarcophagus. A masterwork of early Christian art, it depicts the expulsion of Adam and Eve, Jesus's entry into Jerusalem, Daniel in the lions den, the arrest of Saint Paul and other scenes which became icons of the faith.

The central figure is Christ the Giver of Law, seated on the Throne of Heaven, flanked by Peter and Paul. But elements of the pagan past remain. Coelus, the Roman god of the skies, supports the floor of Heaven. Christ wears the robe of a Greek philosopher. And his beardless, youthful face bears more than a passing resemblance to pagan images of Apollo.
The first great churches were variations of the Roman assembly hall known as a basilica, with a central nave often ending in a semi-circular apse... and side aisles screened by colonnades. Santa Sabina, finished in 432, is a particularly fine example of these simple, but elegant early Christian basilicas. The Roman arch appears here in yet another form, springing directly from the column capitals.

The insignia of the new, Christianized Empire -- whose capital is no longer Rome but Constantinople -- is placed (with perhaps unconscious symbolism) atop the Corinthian columns taken from a pagan building. Once reviled and persecuted, Christianity is triumphant.

**MICHAEL WOOD (SYNCH)**

Historians have argued about the causes of the fall of the Roman Empire ever since it happened, when Saint Augustine wrote that the empire had been part of God's divine plan for the furtherance of Christianity through the world and that the empire had now fulfilled its historical purpose. Modern scholars have found political, material, economic and social reasons for the decline but have been most impressed by the great spiritual crisis which swept through all classes of Roman society in the 4th Century and is marked by the breakdown of the social, ethical, and religious concepts which had bound the old classical world view together.

The Roman Empire had brought to its rulers inconceivable wealth, as we can still see today in its vast building projects, but the rights of individual people to moral fulfillment had never been met. So the rise of Christianity, the superceding of the great pagan temples of Rome like this one of Antoninus Pius, by Christian
churches, marks a fundamental shift in the Western story into the inner life, towards personal salvation.

The successors of the Roman Empire would be the barbarians, Angles, Saxons, Franks, Goths, third world immigrants attracted to the fading splendors as to a gold rush. They received the Latin language and the Christian faith from Rome and assimilated Roman ideas of government to their own customary law, and there lies the key to the synthesis which will become the Western tradition. A synthesis, of Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian, and Germanic, and that synthesis would be achieved during the long struggles of the Dark Ages which followed on the fall of the Roman Empire.