

Augustus of Prima porta

NAME:



Reading and research

Please make sure you read/watch and take notes from the following:

<http://web.mit.edu/21h.402/www/primaporta/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustus_of_Prima_Porta

http://mv.vatican.va/4_ES/pages/z-Patrons/MV_Patrons_04_03.html

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ancient-art-civilizations/roman/early-empire/v/augustus-of-primaporta-1st-century-c-e-vatican-museums>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yoJhEhkwBY>

Honour & Fleming 'A World History of Art' pp196-197

Summary of Key Facts

Date:	
Who is this a portrait of?	
Style	
Size	
Material	
Who commissioned it?	
Where was it found?	

Art historical terms and concepts

To which genre does this work belong?

Who is it a portrait of?

When did he rule Rome?

Where does he look? (gaze)

Describe his pose?

What is the name given to his raised arm?

What is the effect of this gesture?

Why does he wear a senator's robe as well as a military breastplate?

Who is the small figure at his ankle?

Why is this significant?

Why is he bare foot?

Describe his hair and facial features? Why is this significant?

Some parts of this figure are idealised and others realistic. Make sure you know which and why?

How big is this figure compared to you? What is the effect of this?



Form and Style



Doryphorus (The Spear Bearer) c440BCE

To which style does this work belong?

What are the aims of this style?

What characteristics of this style can you see in this work? (Name at least 4)

What earlier style has been influential here?

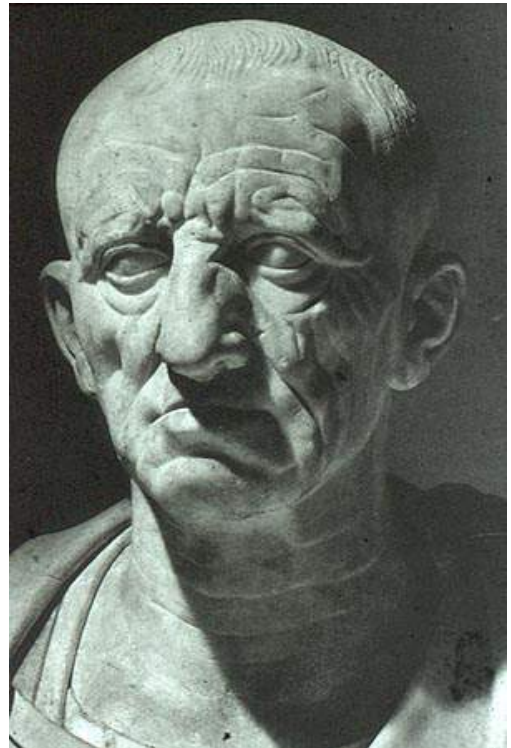
Where can you see this influence most prominently? (Name at least 2 different places)

Why do you think the artist has been keen to borrow from this style?

What else has influenced the way this work looks?



Classical Greek



Classical Roman

Materials, techniques and processes

What material is this work made of?

What tensile strength does this material have?

What are the advantages of this material? (list 4)

What are the problems associated with this material? Explain how the artist has compensated for these issues?

Which elements of the work are surprising given the material?

Which elements of the work are ideally suited to the material?

Cultural, social and political factors

Research the rule of Augustus.

Whose nephew was he?

What were his major achievements – and how/where can you find reference to them here?

What were the major challenges he faced during (and just before) his reign?

And how does he try to minimise these concerns here?

Who took over from Augustus? When?

What was the Pax Romana?

How far did the Roman Empire extend when Augustus was Emperor?

What other things would also have featured the face of Augustus?

What events in the reign of Augustus are referred to in this work?

When did he reclaim the Roman standard and from whom? How has this been depicted here?

What values does this work promote? How and why?





Identify the elements on the cuirass (breastplate)

Ways in which art has been used and interpreted by past and present societies

Patronage

There is much discussion over who commissioned this sculpture. It is thought that an original version in bronze was requested by the Senate in 20BC and set up in a public place to honour Augustus. This marble version was found in the villa of his wife, Livia, and may have been presented to her by her son, Tiberius, who went on to become Emperor of Rome after his death. This would account for the decision to put the scene of reclaiming the standard on the centre of the cuirass, as Tiberius was present at this event as a young man. It also explains the repeated motif of divine lineage for the human emperor.

Explain why Tiberius might have wanted to commission this work for his widowed mother?

How might the purpose of the original bronze version in a public space have differed?

Augustus of Prima Porta: thinking about Identity

To summarise then:

This is a 3D PORTRAIT. Comment on how it shows likeness, status, values and evaluate to what extent it might be realistic?

This is also a representation of GENDER IDENTITY, showing a heroic male in confident pose, demonstrating both physical and intellectual power. Explain the ways in which this message is conveyed?