

STATUARY

If the statue is defined as a complete figure in full relief, [Coptic art](#) did not cultivate the technique. On this point, it conformed to the taste of the time. The carving of statues had diminished considerably from the beginning of the second century of the [Roman](#) empire. As generals who no longer belonged to the Roman aristocracy acceded to the throne, they were influenced by the simplified perspective of the middle and popular levels of society.

Later, by the end of the second century A.D., the Neoplatonic philosophy of sacrificing form for idea spread throughout the Mediterranean basin. Two-dimensional [arts](#) were to be prevalent for centuries in Egypt as in the rest of the empire.

Thus, the only known works in stone in [Coptic art](#) are: the statuette of an Egyptian soldier of the [Roman](#) army (18 inches [45cm], Louvre); an eagle perched on a *crux immissa* (Staatliches Museum, Berlin, 6th century); and, frequently enough, mouthpieces of WATER JUGS (*zirs*) in the form of lions in high relief which are more akin to statuary.

Wood, ivory, and bone have yielded chiefly magic dolls.

In modeling [clay](#) there is a statuette, designed as a magical charm, executed in the Alexandrian style (Louvre).

Ceramics can count a fairly large number of terracotta statuettes of pharaonic gods and goddesses. These belong more to Alexandrian than to [Coptic art](#) and are chiefly objects of the transition from one style to the other. An example from the ninth century, originating from Middle Egypt in painted clay, is a woman in the posture of an orant (Museum of Icons, Recklinghausen) (see CHRISTIAN SUBJECTS IN COPTIC ART).

There are a few statuettes in bronze, among them one of a dancer with

sistra (Louvre).

One may suggest that, in the domain of contemporary art, statuary, already extremely rare in Coptic art, practically disappeared in the course of the fourth century.

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