



# The Visual Cultures of Classical Greece

Prof. Dimitris Plantzos

# The Visual Cultures of Classical Greece

- Introduction [3/10]
- What is “Greek” about Greek art [17/10]
- **Nemea – Olympia – Delphi field trip [20-21/10]**
- Narrativity and story-telling [24/10]
- Monumentality [25/10]
- The visual cultures of Greek pottery [31/10]
- **National Museum class [10/11]**
- **Midterms [14/11]**
- Materiality [21/11]
- Agency [28/11]
- *Mimesis* [5/12]
- Realism [12/12]
- **Acropolis Museum class [15/12; 15:00-17:00]**

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# Lifelikeness:

- Cicero, Pliny, Quintilian: lifelikeness a prerequisite of excellence in art (and especially painting)
- Verisimilitude art's ultimate goal after mid-5<sup>th</sup> c. BC
- Representation and its potential: *mimesis*
- *Mimesis*: an elemental artistic faculty (representational rather than mimetic)
- Philostratos the Elder (c. AD 190-230): *mimesis* in art is equivalent to the pursuit of the truth
- Plato (*Republic* 10): art produces only “the appearance of things, but not the reality and the truth”; “good” art must be more than mere imitation and good art happens only when verisimilitude ceases to be an end in itself



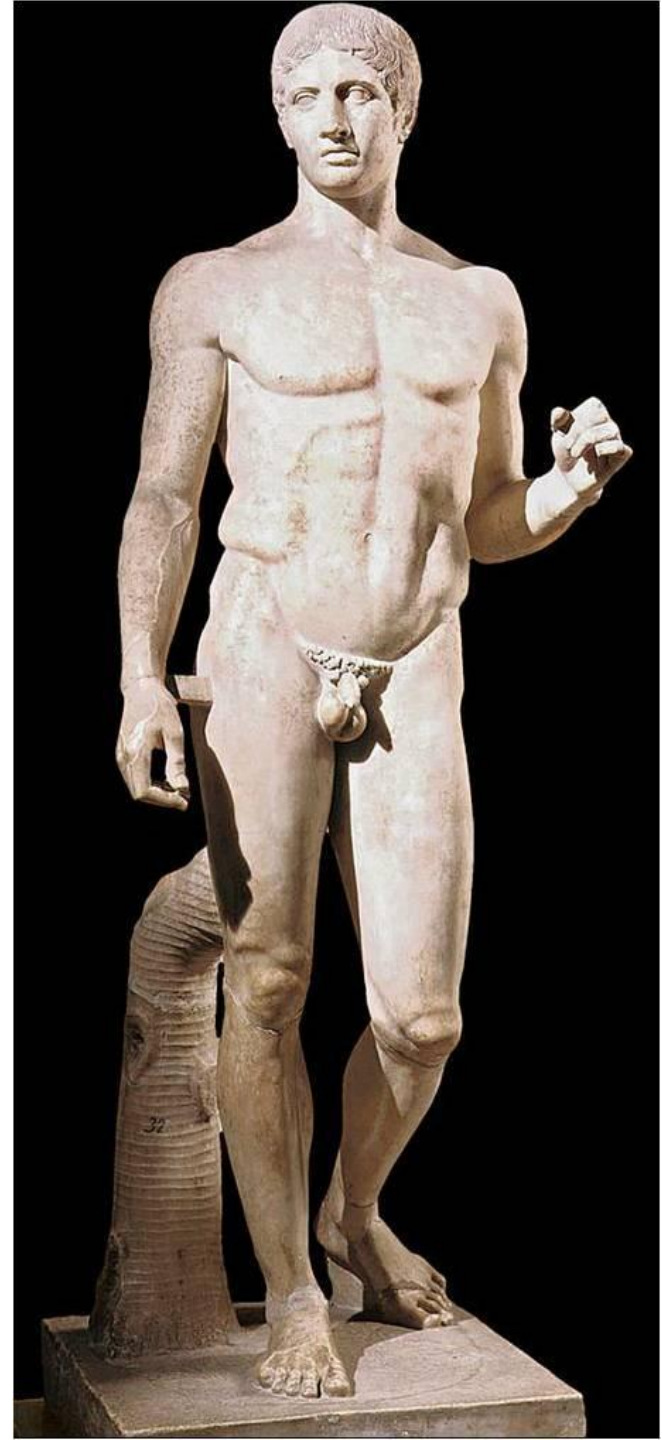
# “Greek revolution”:

- the reason why the Greeks turned to naturalism was none other than the narrative qualities inherent in their art – or rather their own audience’s expectation of an art that would be able to sustain narrativity.



# Greek nudity

- Thucydides: for the Greeks nudity was an achievement of civilization





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- Excellence in warfare and sports was what made you a Greek *man*



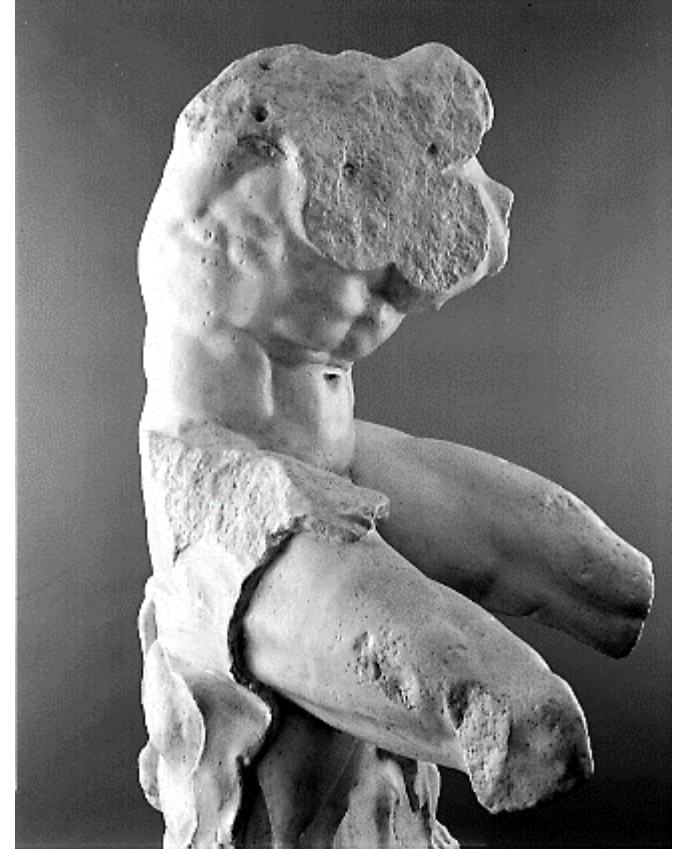
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- Classical nudity has enforced itself onto modernity as a universal symbol of humanity



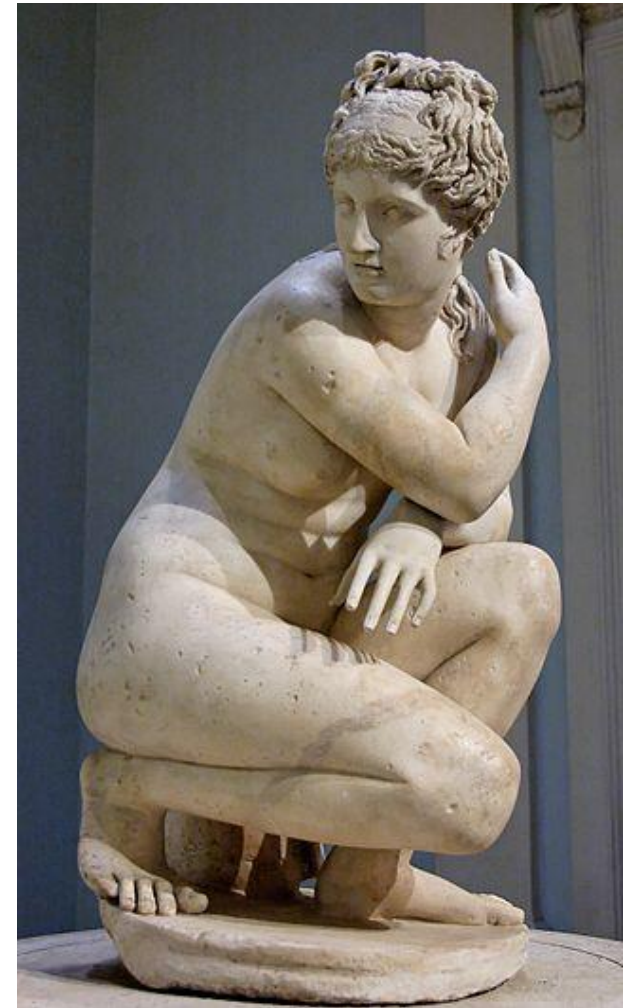
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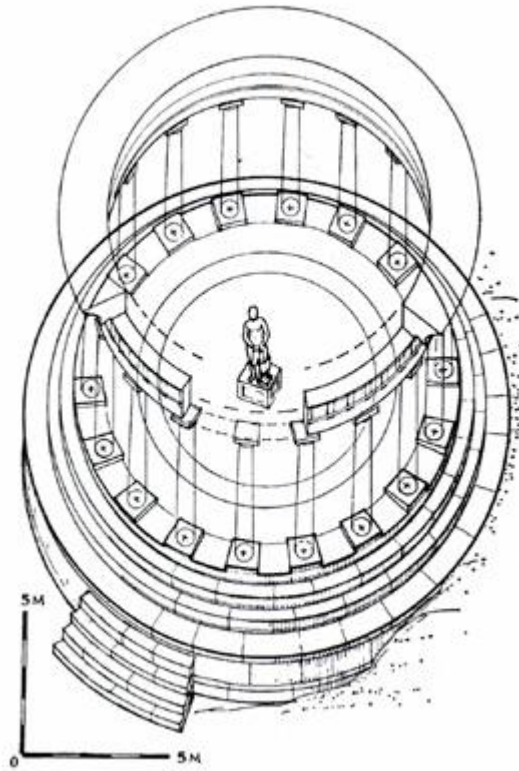
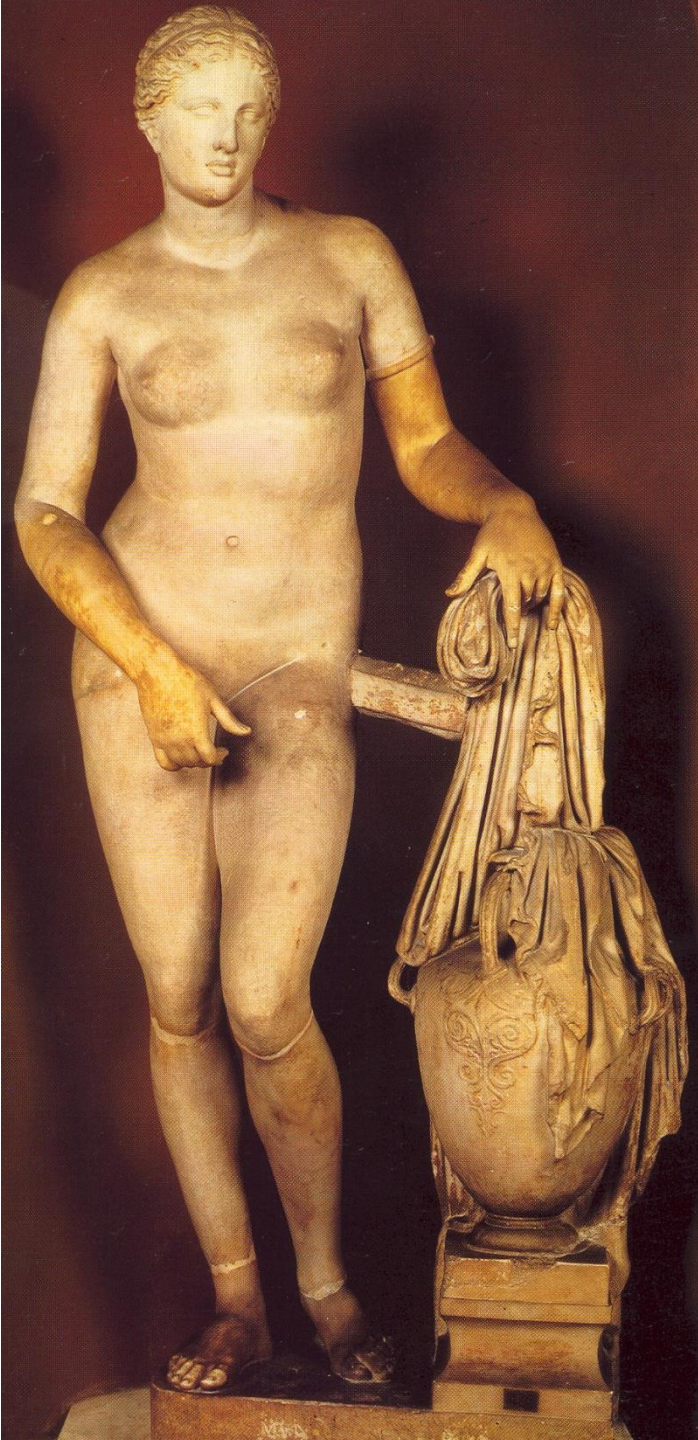
# Greek nudity

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- Social politics: Greek nudity enforces specific social hierarchies, deploy strict gender asymmetries



Aristotle: only men possess the right body heat; women are mentally and bodily imbalanced creatures, inferior to men

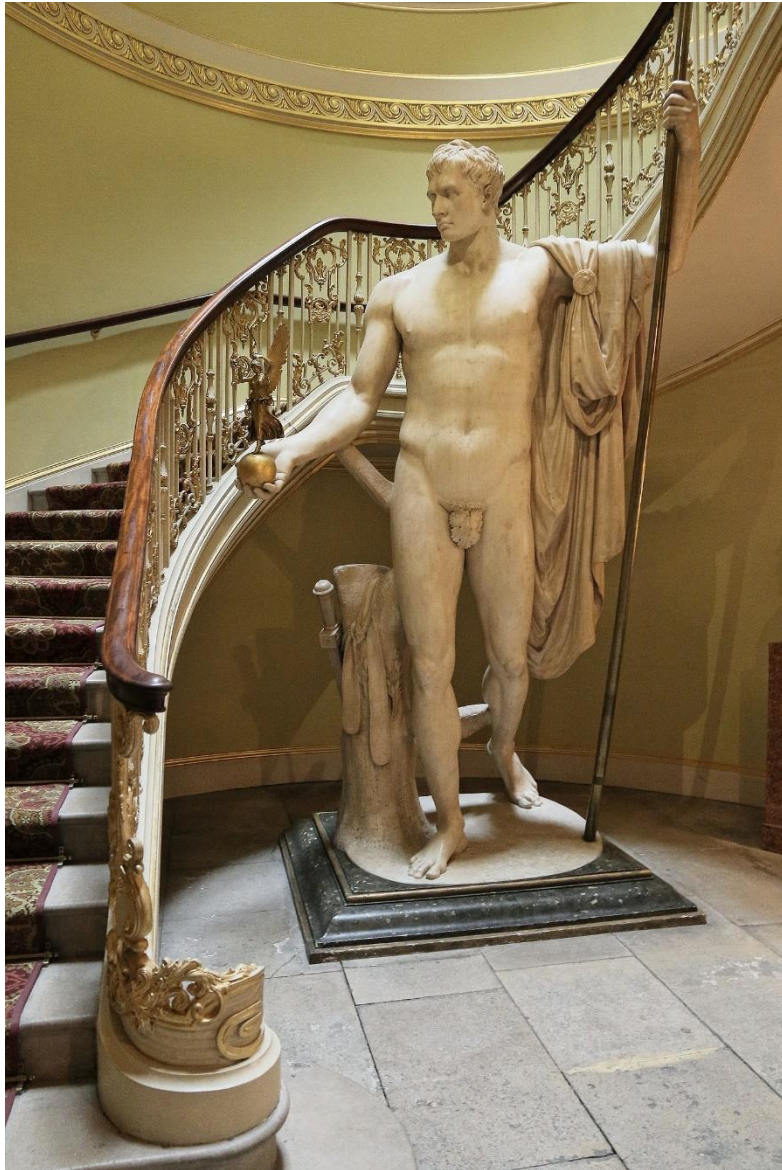




**330 BC**



Hellenistic ruler. 3<sup>rd</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE.



London, *Napoleon as Mars the Peacemaker*  
(Antonio Canova, 1806).



Washington, *George Washington as Zeus*  
(Horatio Greenough, 1832).

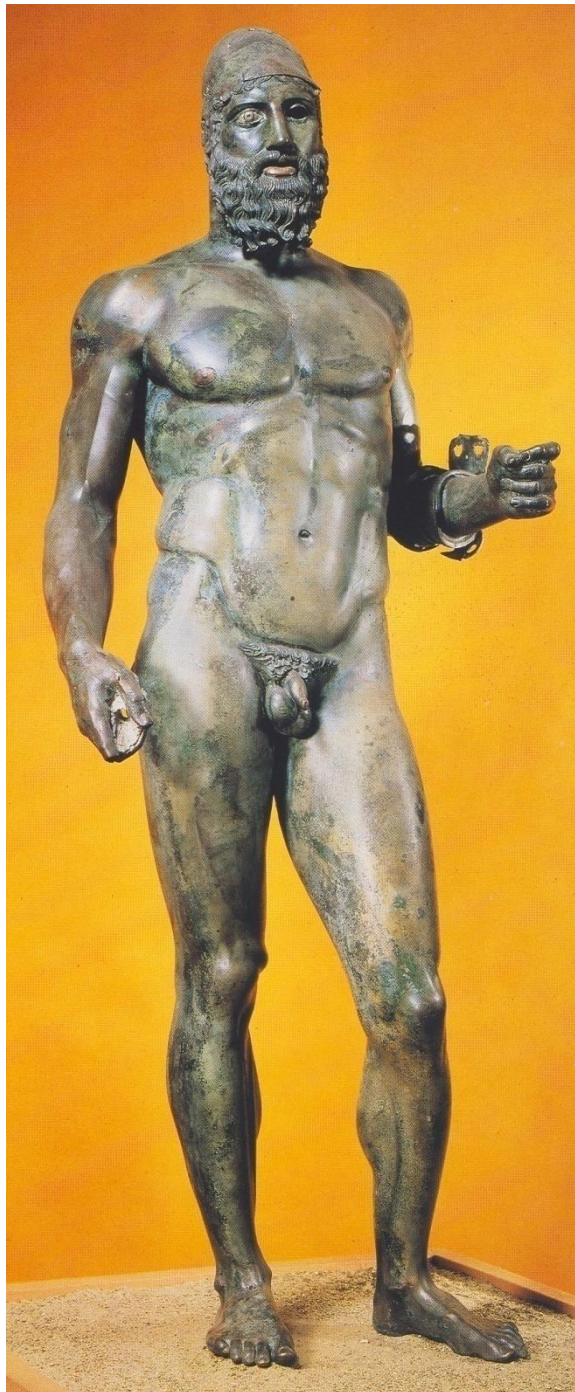


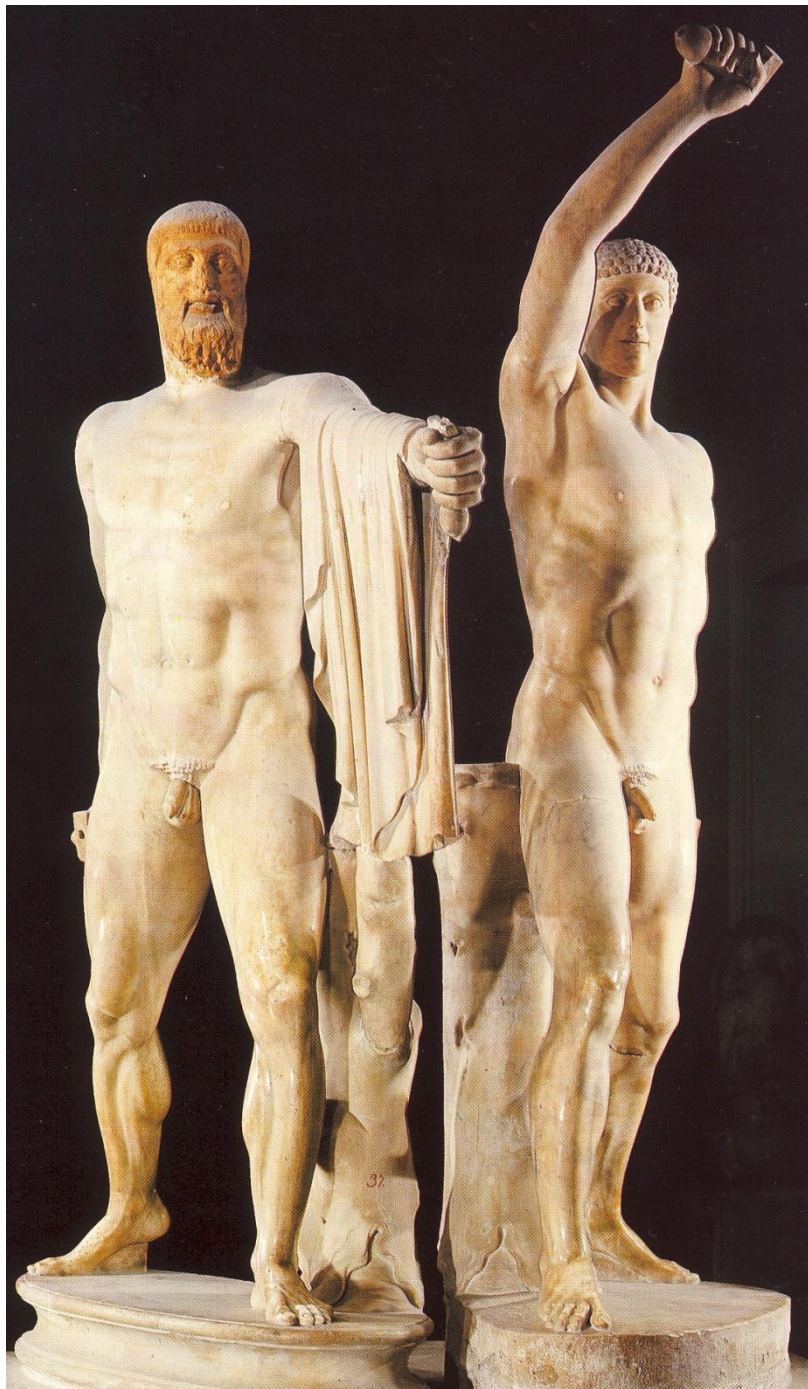




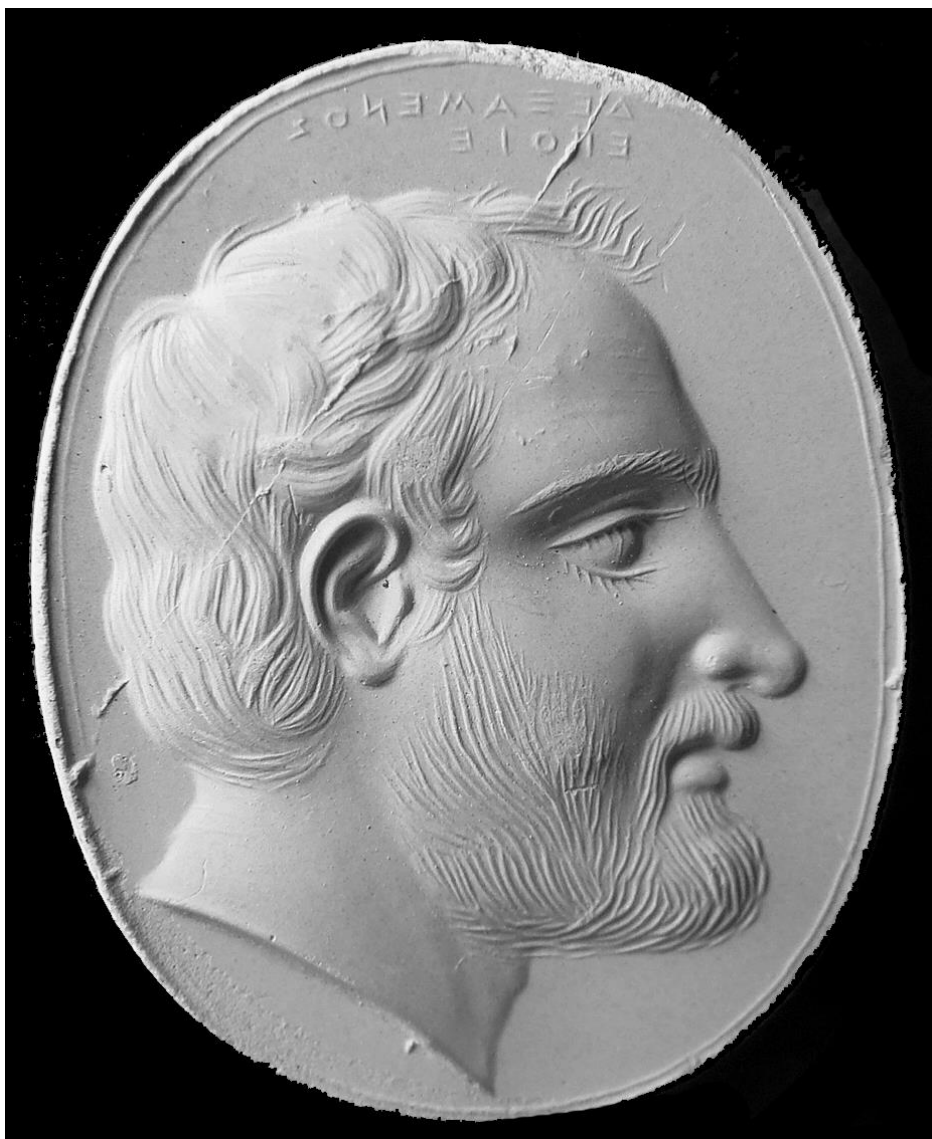
- *physiognomics*
- *kingship theory*







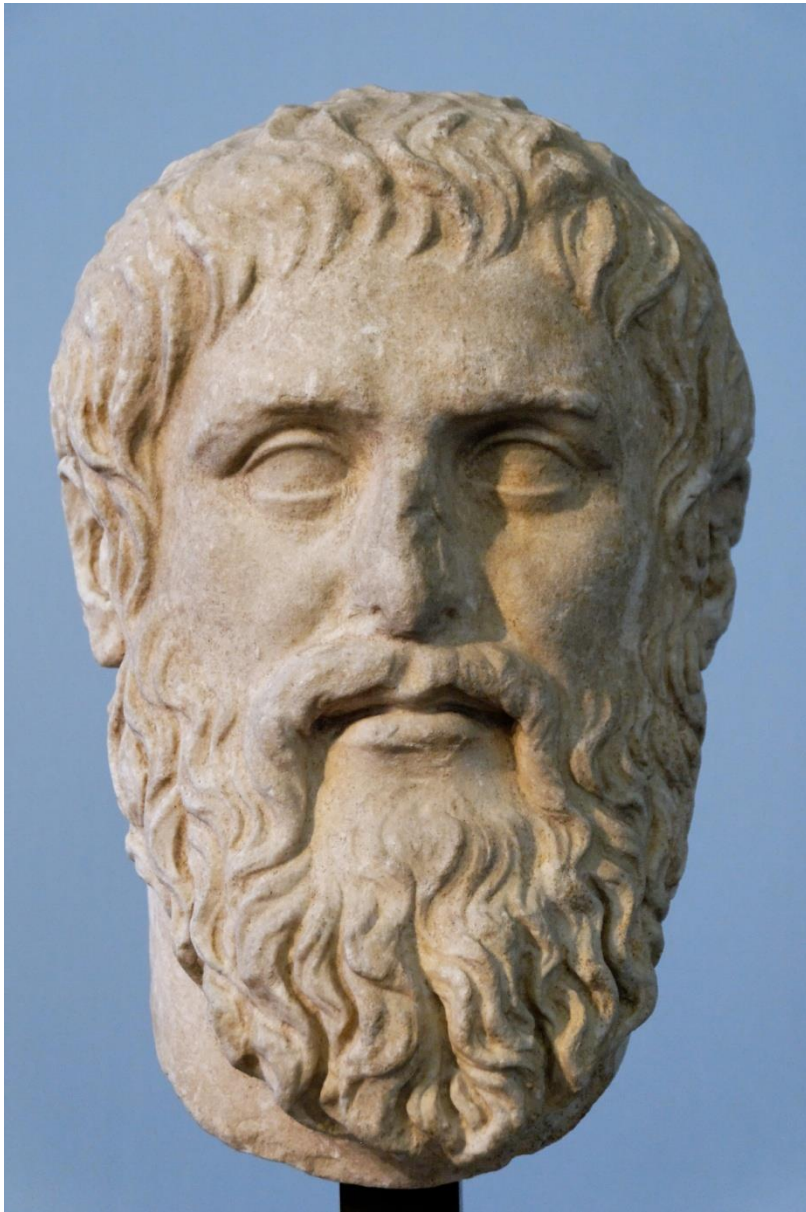




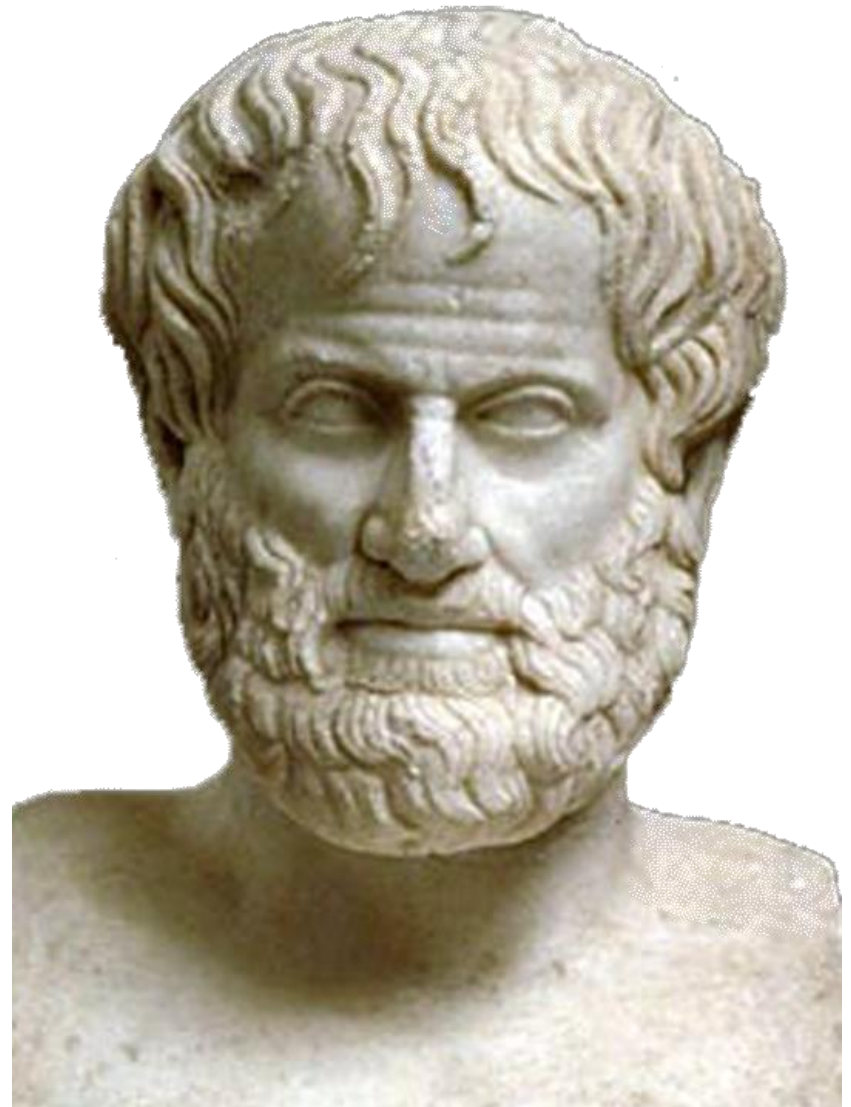
Male head on a jasper sealstone, signed by Dexamenos. c. 450-420 BCE.



Tissaphernes on a silver coin. 412-411 BCE.

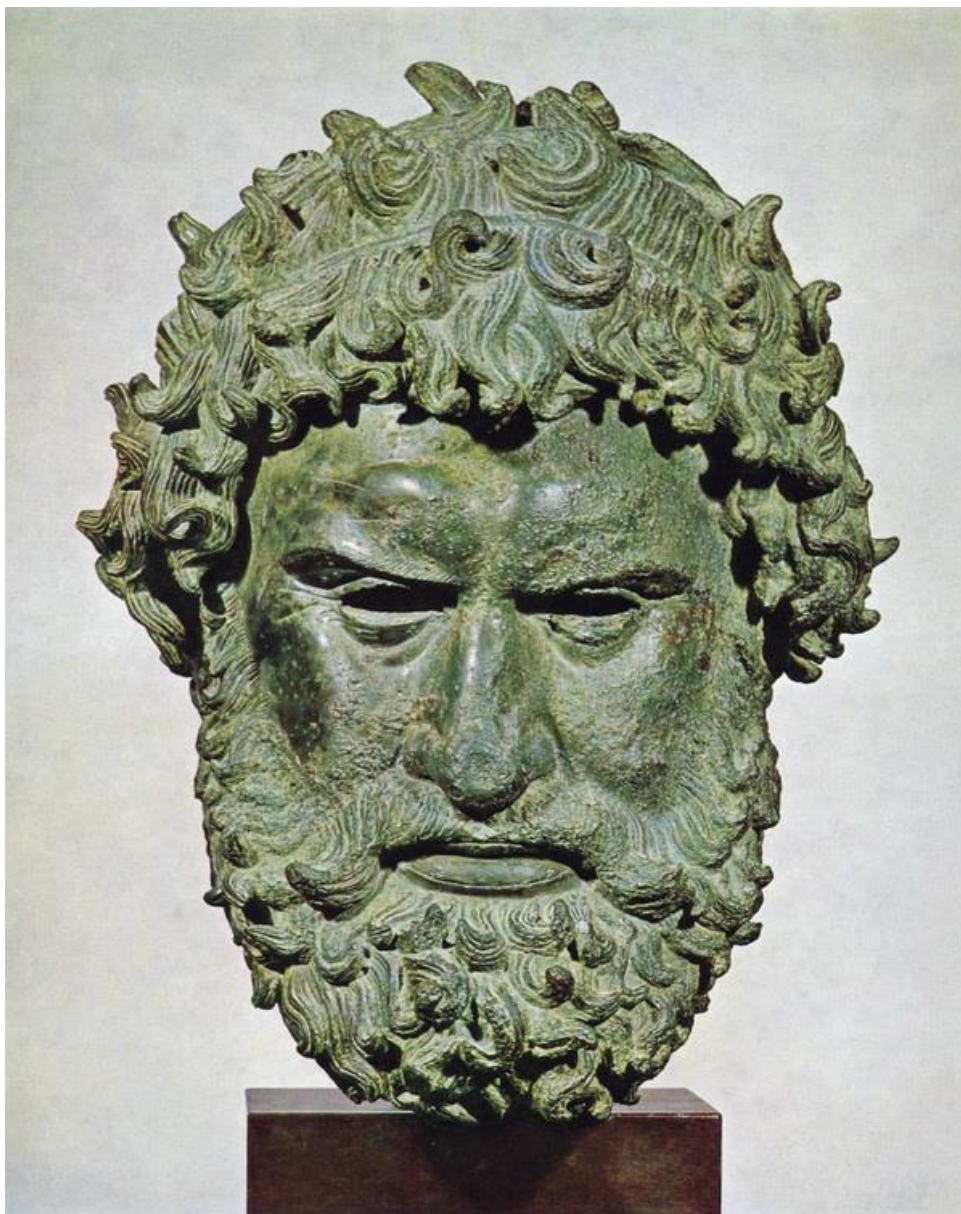


**Plato. 4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE.**



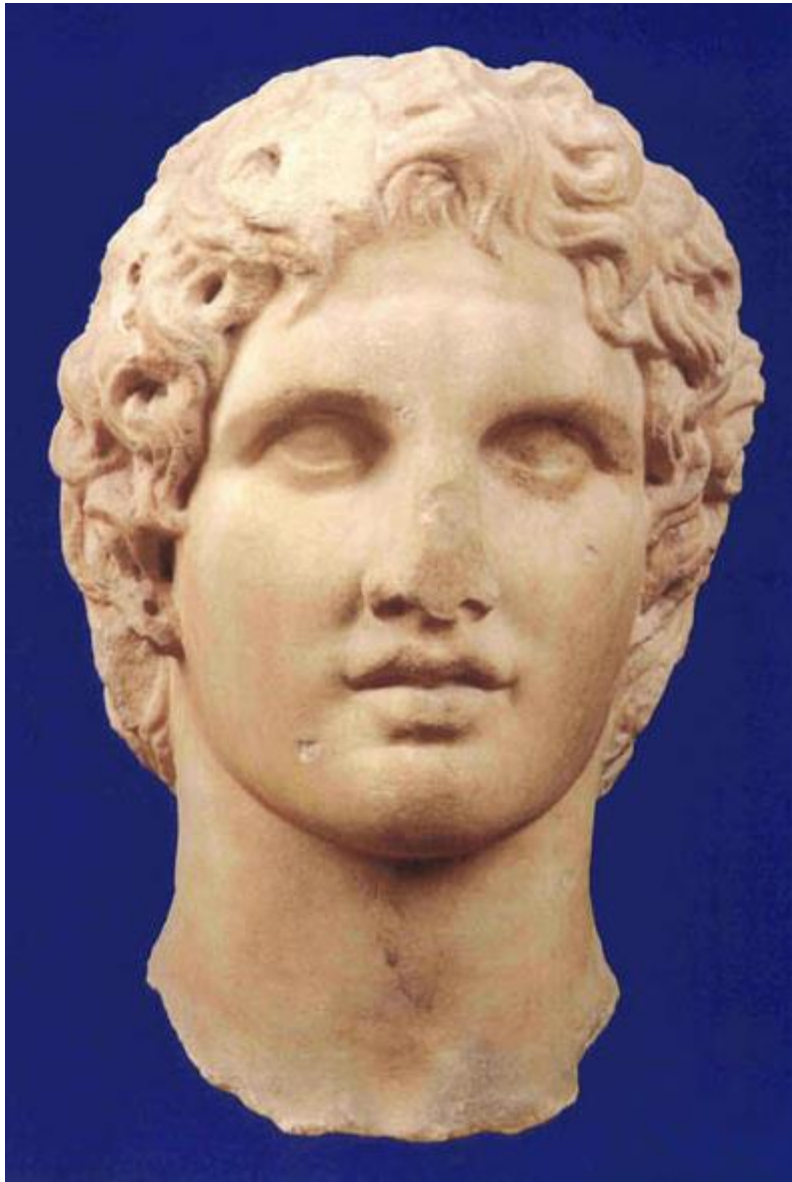
**Aristotle. 4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE.**





**Boxer. c. 330-327 BCE.**





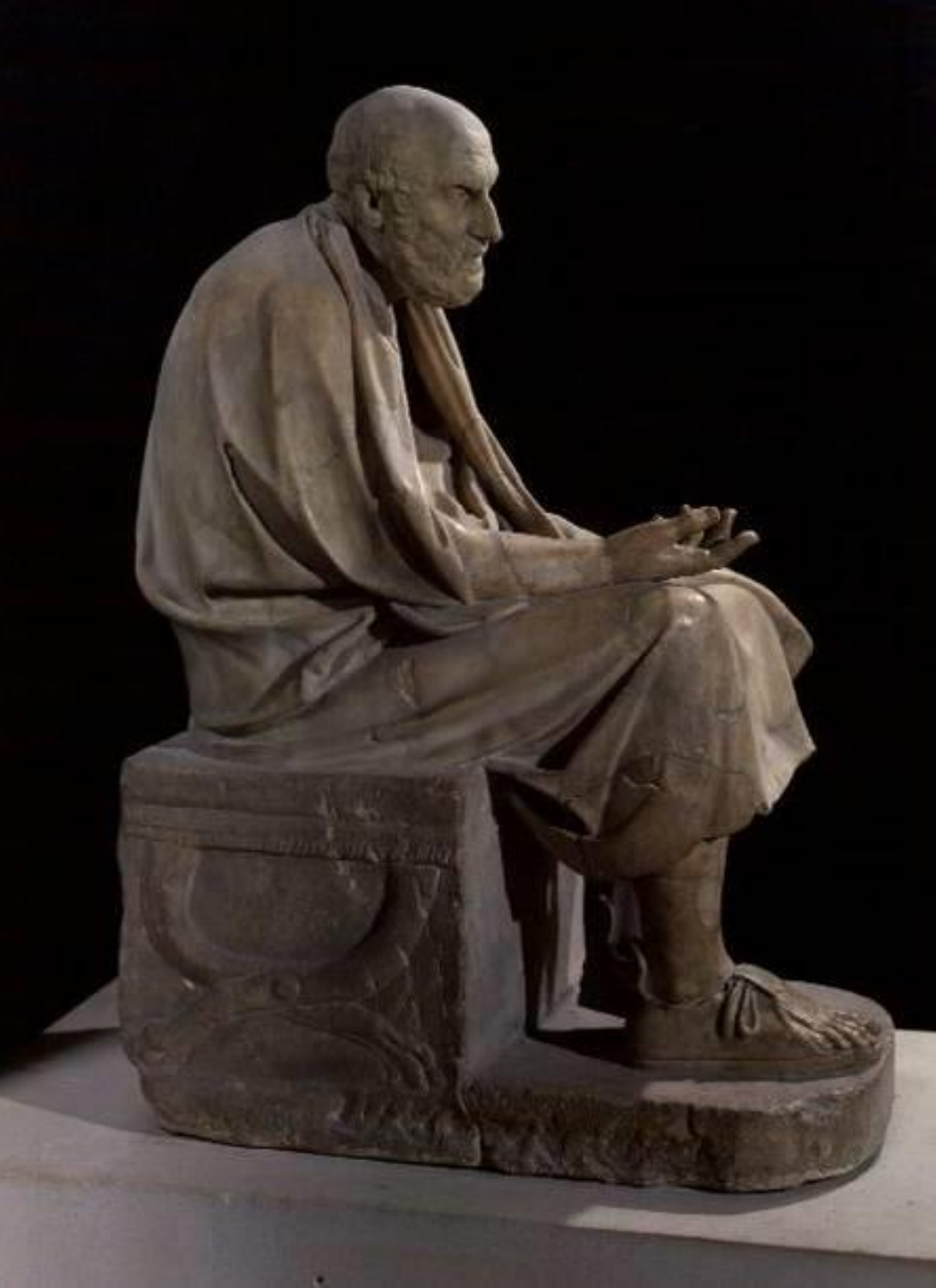
**Alexander the Great.  
Late 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE.**



**Alexander figurine.  
3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE.**

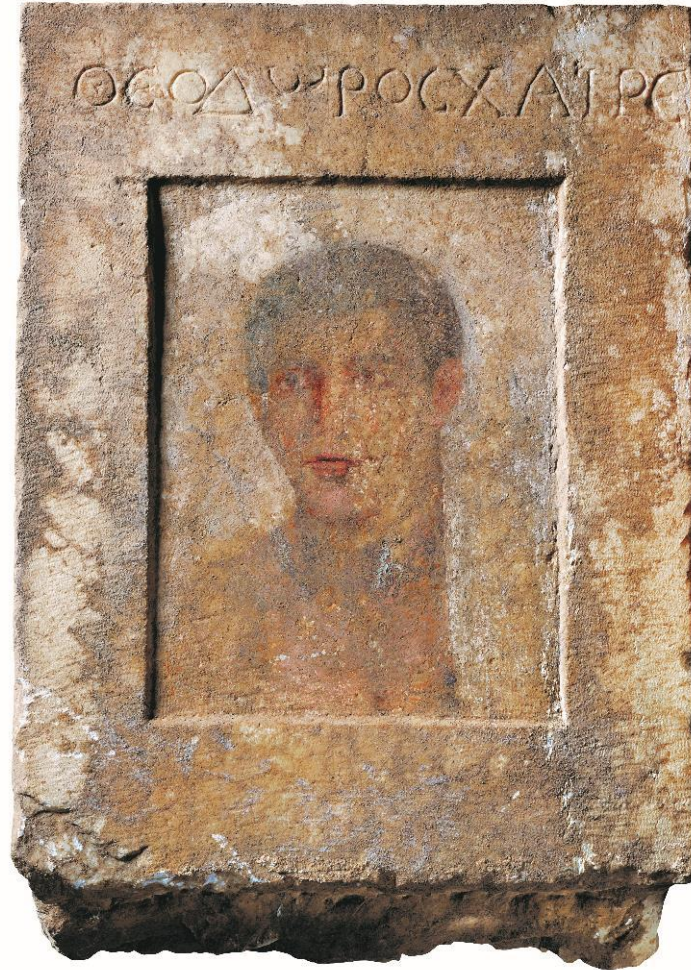






**Chrysippus.**  
**Late 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE.**

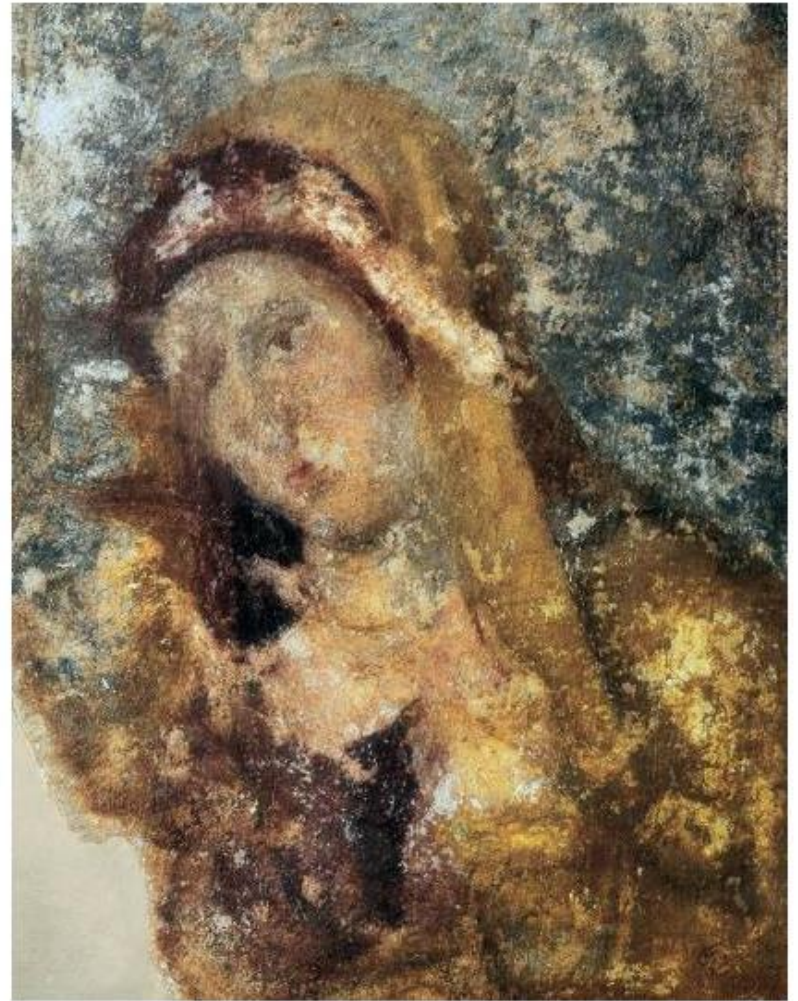
**Thebes (Boeotia). Painted  
grave stele. Portrait of  
young man.  
2<sup>nd</sup>/1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE.**







**Vergina, Macedonia.  
Painted marble stele;  
Portrait of a woman.  
c. 330 BCE.**





**Athlete. 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE.**



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## The Visual Cultures of Classical Greece

### Assignments



### Term paper: The Visual Cultures of Classical Greece

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#### Assignment info

<b>Title:</b>	Term paper: The Visual Cultures of Classical Greece
<b>Description:</b>	Please submit your term paper here in either Word or PDF format.
<b>Max grade:</b>	10
<b>Grade Type:</b>	Number
<b>Start date:</b>	today at 6:24 AM
<b>Submission deadline:</b>	Sunday, February 11, 2024 at 11:55 PM (left 72 days 17 hours 27 minutes)
<b>Assignment type:</b>	Individual submissions
<b>Assign to:</b>	To All Students



Assignment Dashboard

› Term paper: The Visual Cultures of Classical Greece

Upload Submission

# Key dates:

- Beginning of semester: October 2
- Delphi-Olympia field trip: October 20-21
- Midterm test: November 14
- Term-paper topics chosen: by November 24
- **Cut-off date: January 14**
- **Term-paper deadline: February 11**