



Ancient Greek art: an overview.

Dimitris Plantzos

dkplantzos@arch.uoa.gr

Course structure

1. *Techne*: what is 'Greek' about Greek art? (6/3)

Section 1: Early Greece, ca. 1200-480 BCE

1. ***Sema*: commemorating the dead in Early Greece. (Dr Harokopos)**
2. ***Anathema*: gifts to the gods in Greek sanctuaries. (Dr Harokopos)**
3. ***Kerameus*: the art of Greek pottery. (Dr Harokopos)**
4. *Agalma*: pleasing immortals and mortals alike. (3/4)

Section 2: Classical Greece, ca. 480-336 BCE

1. *Mimesis*: nature as aesthetic ideal. (10/4)
2. *Skiagraphia*: painting with shadows. (8/5)
3. *Hieron*: visiting a Greek sanctuary. (15/5)


Section 2: Art in the Hellenistic World, ca. 336-30 BCE

1. *Pathos*: sculpture in the Hellenistic period. (22/5)
2. *Eikon*: immortalising the mortals. (29/5)


Important dates:

- Beginning of semester: February 24
- Olympia – Delphi trip: May 3-4
- Classes end: June 7
- Written exams: June 16-30

<https://eclass.uoa.gr/courses/BAAG107/>



Εθνικόν και Καποδιστριακόν
Πανεπιστήμιον Ἀθηνῶν
ΙΔΡΥΘΕΝ ΤΟ 1837




Search... 

Active modules

- Announcements
- Documents
- Links
- Messages

Inactive modules


Course administration


 dkplantzos 





Portfolio / Ancient Greek art: an overview


Ancient Greek art: an overview (75202)

Professor Dimitris Plantzos




Description 

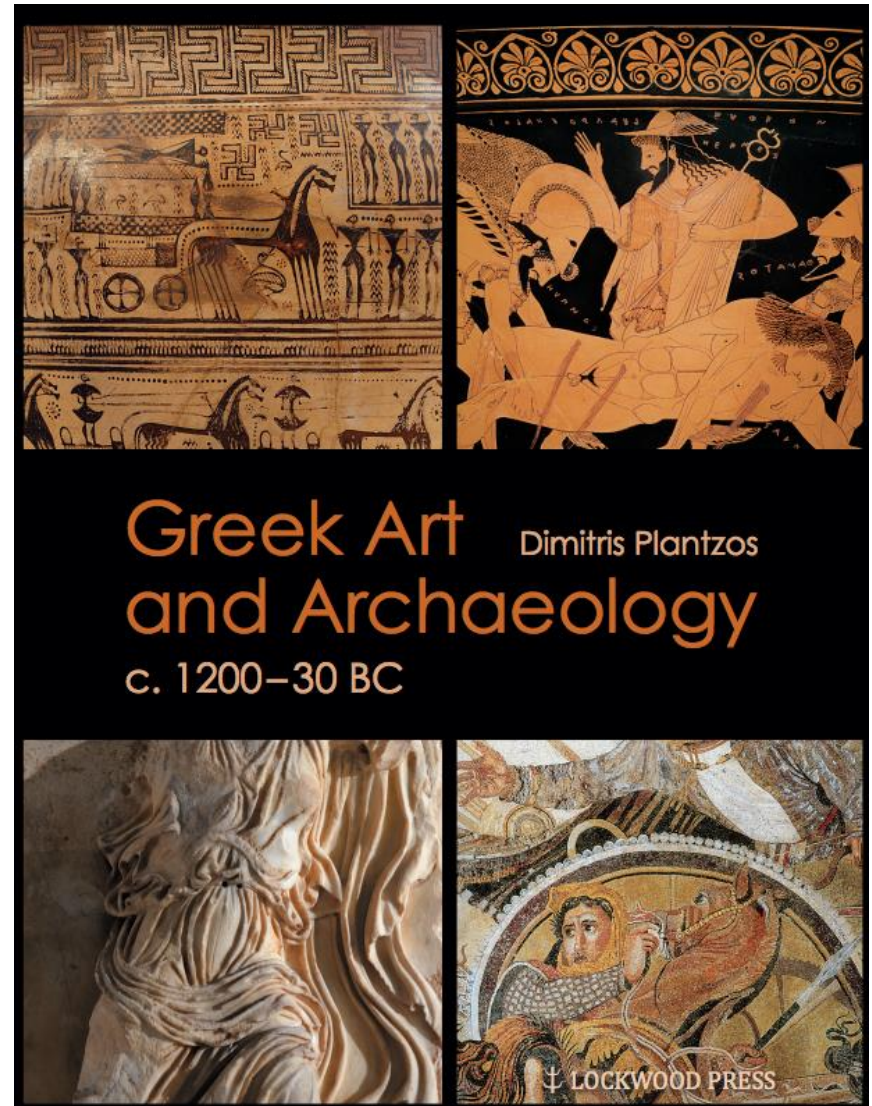


From the Trojan War and its aftermath in the 12th c. BC, to the onset of Alexander's campaign in the late 4th, this course explores Ancient Greece through its art and archaeology: sculpture, pottery and vase-painting, architecture and city-planning are systematically assessed through carefully chosen examples and case studies in order to provide an informative survey of Greek art and its development during its most crucial phase. The course also offers a discussion of sources and methodology, matters of chronology, informative accounts on techniques, styles, and subject matter, and terminology.

Course Description 

Course textbook:

- D. Plantzos, [*Greek Art and Archaeology c. 1200-30 BC*](#).
Athens and Atlanta GA: Kapon
Editions and Lockwood Editions
2016.



<https://www.latsis-foundation.org/eng/e-library>



ΕΛΛ



— THE MUSEUMS CYCLE

Since 1997, with financing by the Latsis Group and Eurobank Banking Group and then with financing by the John S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation, a volume dedicated to an archaeological museum of the country is published each year, aiming to create a series of albums which, with their scientific validity and their aesthetic approach, contribute to the deeper knowledge and understanding of the individual pages of the history of Greek culture.



Prehistoric Thera
2016



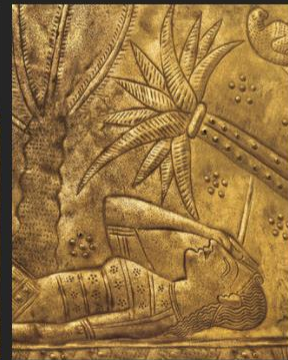
Mycenae
2015



Kerameikos
2014



Aigai: The royal
metropolis of the
Macedonians
2013



Samos: The
archaeological
museums
2012

[τέχνη] *techne*

Lecture 1

What is 'Greek' about Greek art?

1. Ancient Greece - the place and the time.
2. The fundamental principles of Greek art.









Geography and climate:

- Approx. 75% covered by mountains
- Landscape rough and uninviting
- About 30% cultivated at all
- About 20% counted as truly fertile land, suitable for agriculture.
- Overland travel very difficult in antiquity, owing to the mountainous terrain.
- Easiest way to travel was by sea, where the nearest coast is never more than 40 miles away.
- Greek climate is quite pleasant: long, hot and rather dry summers lead to quite short, fresh, and rainy winters.
- Western Greece higher rainfall rate; Aegean islands often suffer from drought.









Bronze Age (3200-1100 BCE)

- **Early Bronze Age (3200-2000 BCE)**
- **Middle Bronze Age (2000-1600 BCE)**
- **Late Bronze Age “Mycenaean” (1600-1100 BCE)**

Mycenae





**Mycenae,
The Lion Gate (13th c. BCE)**



Mycenae,
Bronze dagger with hunting scene (16th c. BCE)

**Mycenae,
Tomb of Atreus (13th c. BCE)**





**Pylos,
Linear B tablet (13th c. BCE)**

The “coming of the Greeks”

- Population movements and the destruction of settlements a little before 2000 BCE
- New racial groups gradually settling in Greece having come over land from the north
- Changes in the culture of the period include:
 - apsidal rather than rectangular buildings
 - new burial structures
 - new styles of pottery
 - the use of horses
 - an early form of the Greek language
- A new cultural amalgam: gods old and new, ‘pre-Hellenic’ place names (such as Corinth, Hymettus, Parnassus and so on), new myths and a new social order.



**Mycenae,
Gold burial mask (16th c. BCE)**

**Mycenae,
Gold signet ring (15th c. BCE)**



**Mycenae,
Goddess fresco (13th c. BCE)**

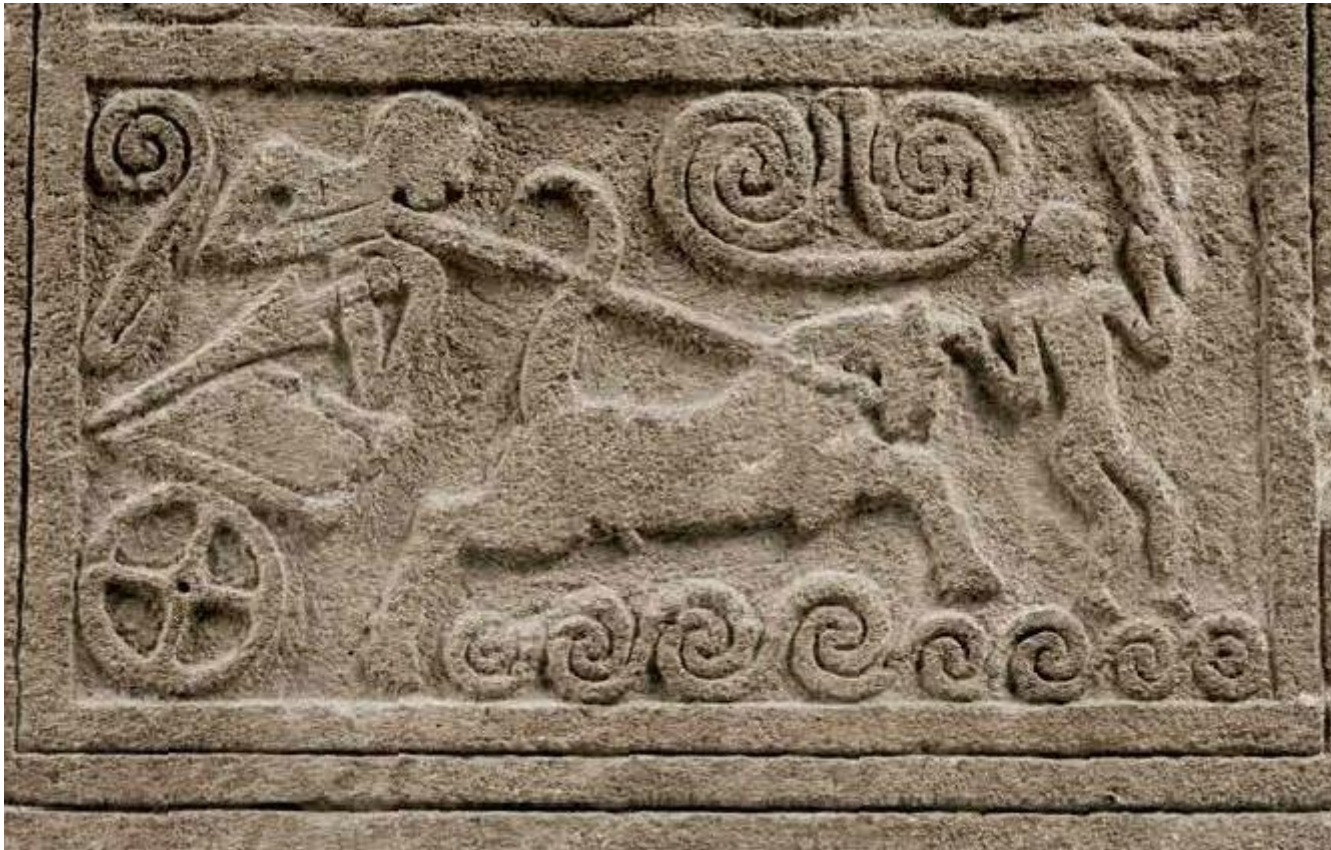




**Mycenae,
Plaster head of a woman
(13th c. BCE)**



**Mycenae,
Ivory head of a soldier
(14th-13th c. BCE)**



**Mycenae,
Stone slab with chariot scene (16th c. BCE)**

Submycenaean Period (1100-1050 BCE)

- 1200 BCE: the Mycenaean palace centres collapsed and were never again rebuilt.
- Crafts forgotten, including writing.
- Late Helladic followed by a period of political and social decline called “Submycenaean”
- Economic downturn.
- “Dark Ages” (1200-700 BCE).



● HATTUSA



Why did Mycenae fall?

- “Dorian invasion”
- Widespread drought and famine
- Earthquake or other natural disasters
- Attacks by hostile tribes
- Rebellion
- “Systems collapse”



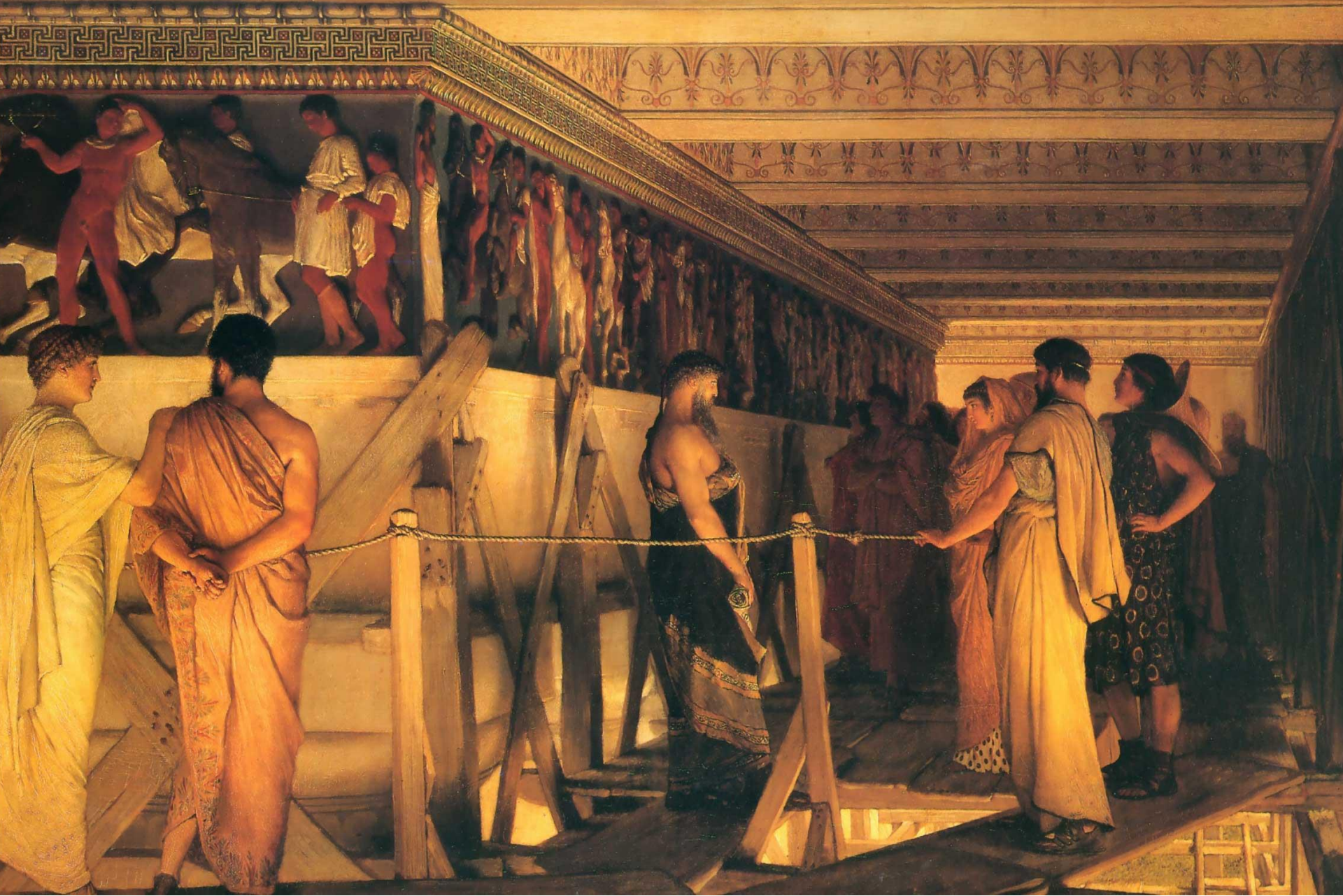
**Mycenae,
Pot with scene of soldiers marching (12th c. BCE)**

[τέχνη] *techne*

Lecture 1

What is 'Greek' about Greek art?

1. Ancient Greece - the place and the time.
2. The fundamental principles of Greek art.



Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *Phidias Showing the Frieze of the Parthenon to his Friends* (1868)

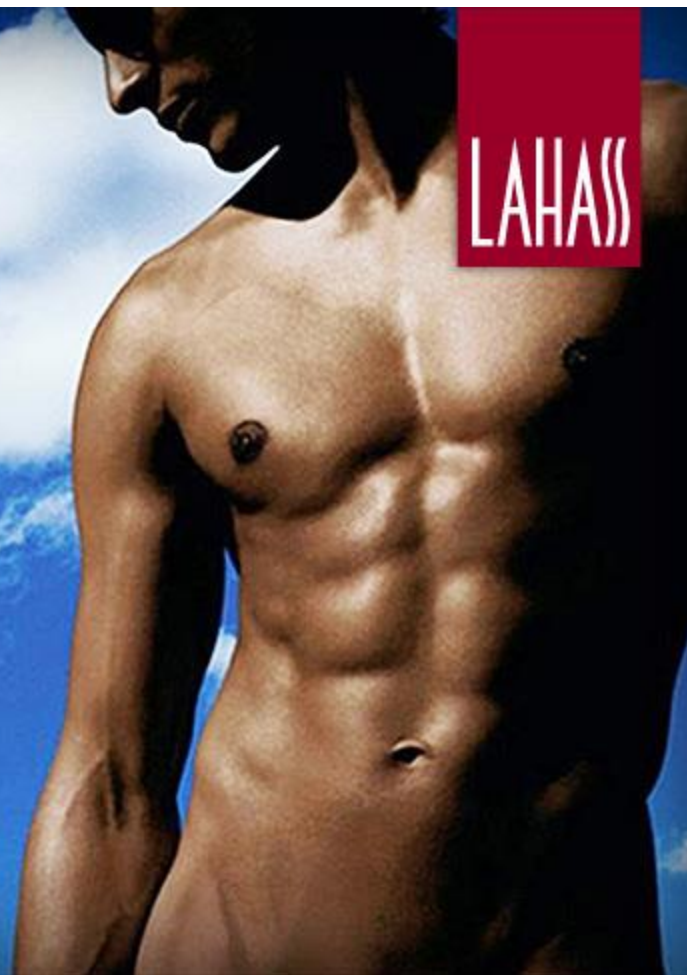


Giovanni Panini, *Ancient Rome* (1757)

KOUROS
YVES SAINT LAURENT



LAHASS







Raphael, *The School of Athens* (1509-11)

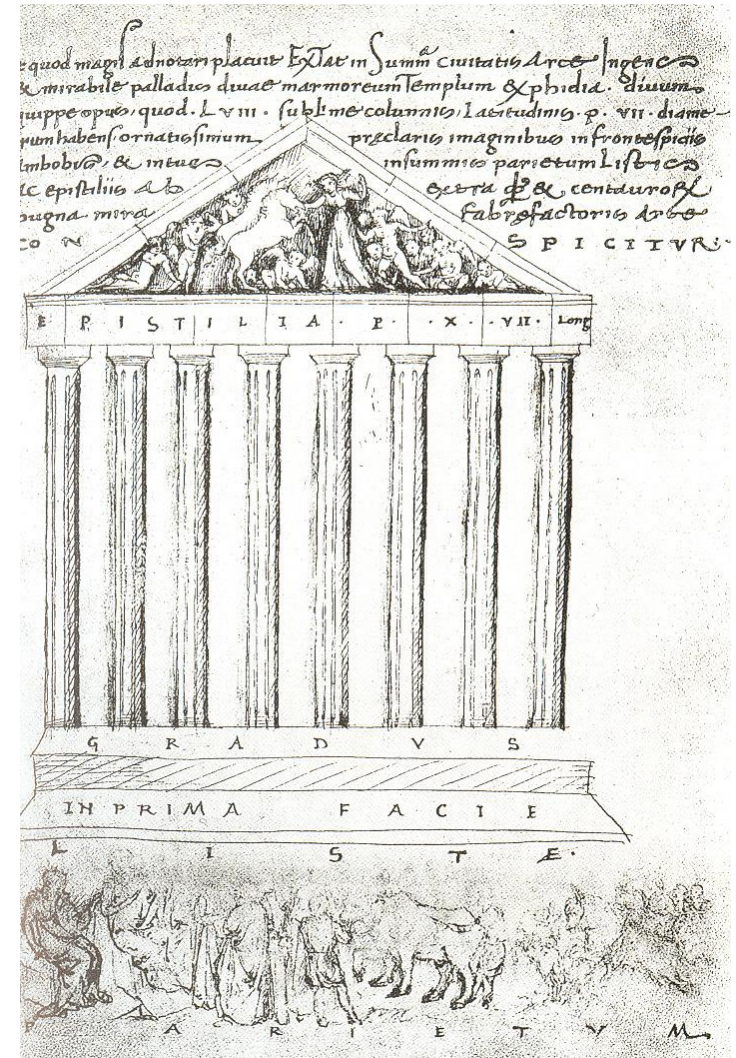
Cyriac of Ancona (1391-1453)

- Learned archaeophile combining love of antiquity with the practice of recording classical monuments and the collection of artefacts.
- Merchant-venturer with self-taught knowledge of Latin and ancient Greek.
- Departed from the philological approach and turned to the systematic assessment of material remains from the classical past.
- Antiquarian interest, empirical archaeological knowledge, commercial skills.
- Sketched architecture and copied inscriptions.
- Descriptions and drawings.



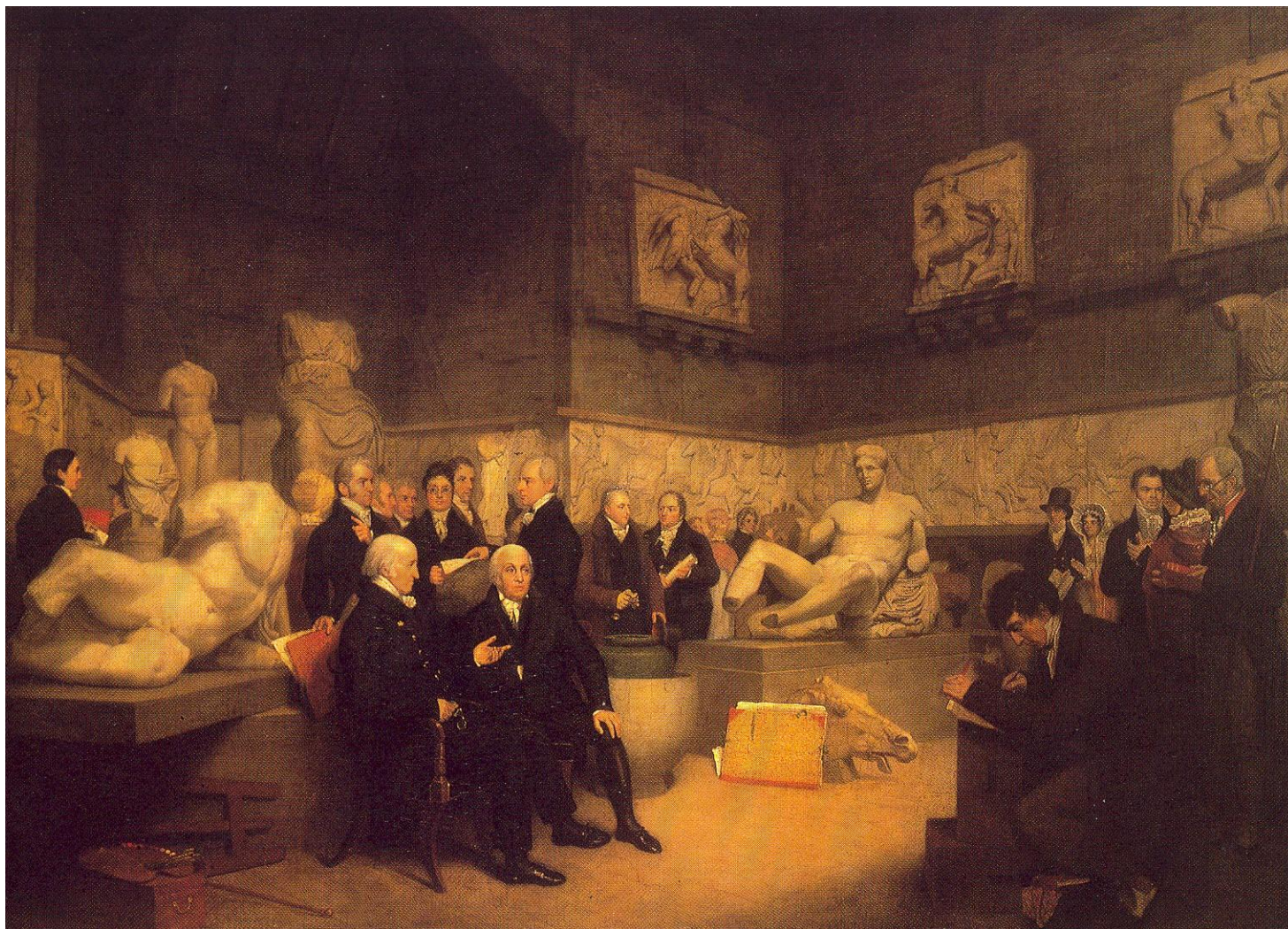
Cyriac of Ancona (1391-1453)

- Learned archaeophile combining love of antiquity with the practice of recording classical monuments and the collection of artefacts.
- Merchant-venturer with self-taught knowledge of Latin and ancient Greek.
- Departed from the philological approach and turned to the systematic assessment of material remains from the classical past.
- Antiquarian interest, empirical archaeological knowledge, commercial skills
- Sketched architecture and copied inscriptions
- Descriptions and drawings.





Thomas Hamilton, *Royal High School, Edinburgh* (1829)



Archibald Archer, *The Trustees in the Temporary Elgin Room* (1819)



John Henning, *The Athenaeum Club Frieze* (1828)



John Henning, *The Hyde Park Gate Frieze* (1827)



Leo von Klenze, *German Pantheon in Bavaria* (1830-42)



Leo von Klenze, *Munich Glyptothek* (1816-30)



Designed & Published by W. B. Woodhead, Engraver. 1828.

BANK OF PENNSYLVANIA, South Second Street PHILADELPHIA.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe, *Bank of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia* (1827-28)



William Stickland, Second Bank of the United States (1824)



Nassau County, NY. Judge Horatio Gates Onderdonk House (1836)

classical art today:

classical art today:

- An intellectual and cultural reference point for the western world.



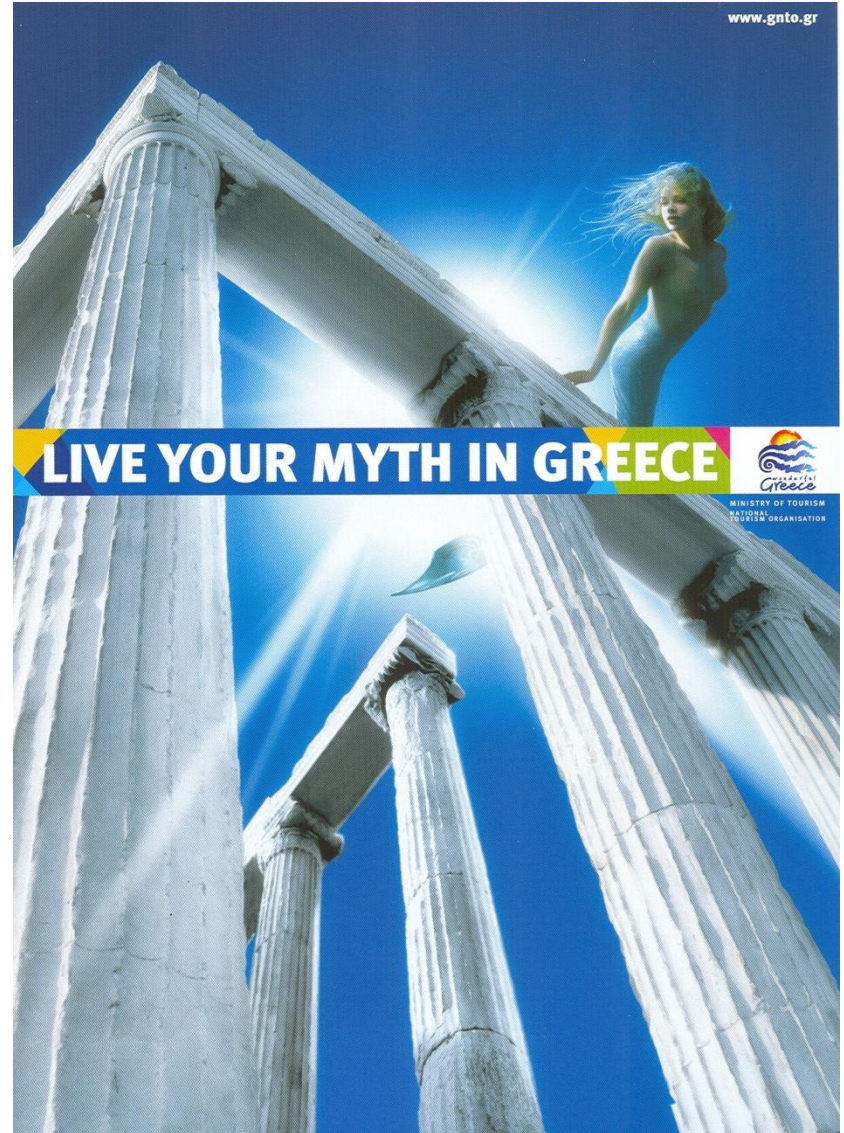
classical art today:

- An intellectual and cultural reference point for the western world.
- Subject of political and social use (and often abuse).



classical art today:

- An intellectual and cultural reference point for the western world.
- Subject of political and social use (and often abuse).
- Component of national and cultural identity.







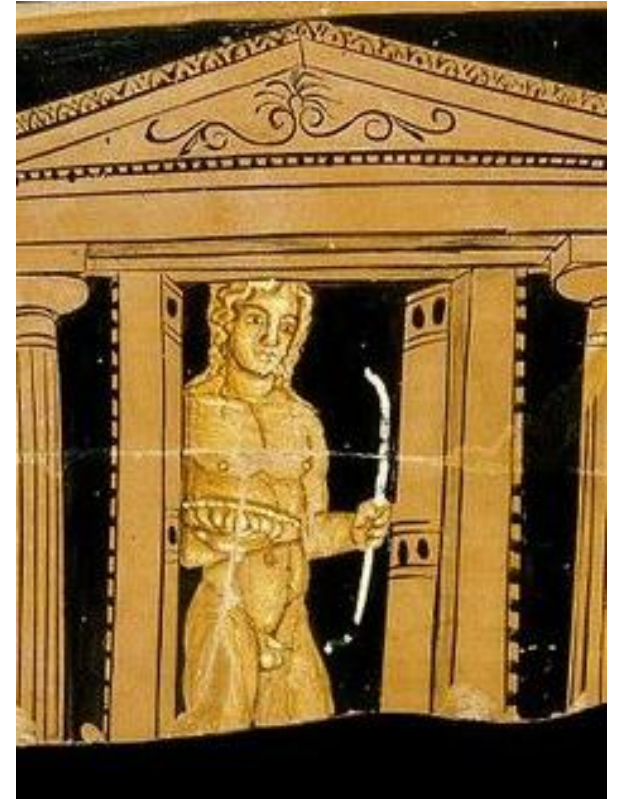
Parton
W. J. G.
I, II & III.



Parton
W. J. G.







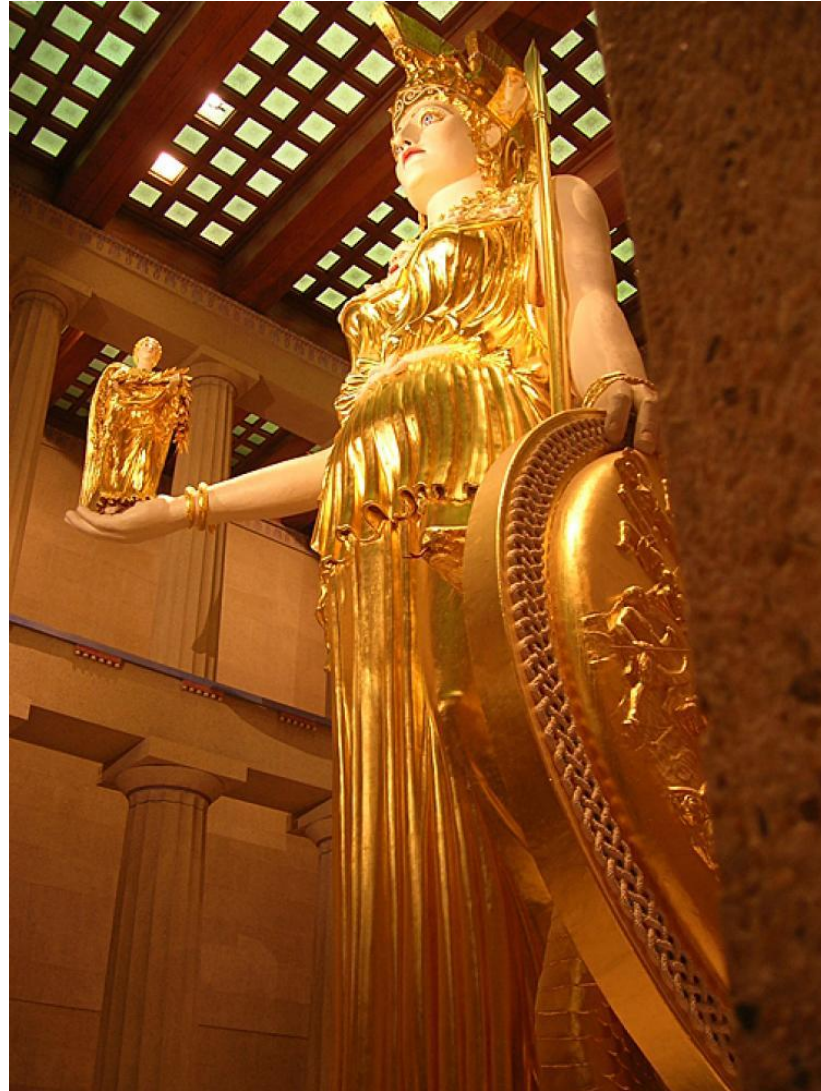
Greek art's inherent qualities:

- **Anthropocentrism:** ancient Greek art shows a primary interest in the human form and its actions. By 'human form' we mean every manifestation, real or imaginary, and every human-like figure, mortal or immortal.
- **Narrativity:** the images in ancient Greek art refer to mythical or historical events and situations in a suggestive and often abstract way.

Greek Art can as social function:

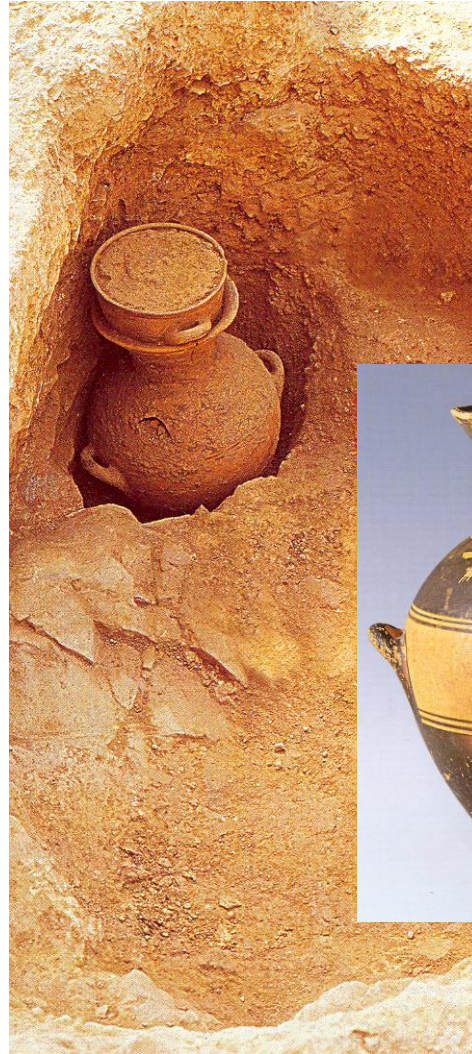
Greek Art can as social function:

- Cultic



Greek Art can as social function:

- Cultic
- Ritual



Greek Art can as social function:

- Cultic
- Ritual
- Political



Greek Art can as social function:

- Cultic
- Ritual
- Political
- Utilitarian

