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The “classical” concept in art through the ages and the inventiveness of Roman art

Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway

CAROLINE VOUT, *CLASSICAL ART. A LIFE HISTORY FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE PRESENT* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ 2018). Pp. xi + 358, figs. 205 (79 in color). ISBN 978-0-691-17703-8. \$39.50.



Fig. 1 (left). London, July 2018, Statue of actor Jeff Goldblum as Dr. Ian Malcolm in the film *Jurassic Park*.

Fig. 2 (above). Hollywood, CA, Walk of Fame. Jeff Goldblum imitating his statue’s pose.

In mid-July 2018 a colossal, bare-chested statue of the actor Jeff Goldblum was shown by BBC TV. In a 330-pound, 25-foot version, it presented the subject against the background of London’s Tower Bridge, reclining while leaning on his left elbow, in his character as Dr. Ian Malcolm in the film *Jurassic Park* (fig. 1). The image was so compelling that it inspired Goldblum himself to strike the same pose (in a more fully clothed version) on Hollywood’s Walk of Fame (fig. 2). The London sculpture was revealed as a publicity stunt by “Now TV” to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the movie, and after July 26 it was withdrawn, but the mental picture continued to exercise its fascination upon viewers and prompted several of my friends to send me photographs of possible parallels in a more permanent art medium: a reclining warrior from the W pediment of the Temple of Aphaia in Aigina (c.490 B.C.); the north river god from the W pediment of the Parthenon (c.435 B.C.); the image of the Nile on the Tazza Farnese (2nd c. B.C.) and its numerous Roman Imperial marble versions, at times combined with the similar one of the Tiber, which may have inspired Michelangelo’s acroterial figures for the Medici tombs (c.1527) or the reclining statues of Montorsoli’s Orion fountain (1574) in Messina’s Piazza Duomo.¹ I cannot presume that most or even many in the throngs of visitors who flocked to see the Goldblum statue on the Thames had these specific parallels in mind, but it cannot be denied that such “Classical” imagery, especially suitable as corner ornament for gables, is part of our mentality, whether conscious or unconscious. How was such a mental background formed, and what prompted it? To be sure, these are my own questions — *Classical art* was conceived and written well before Goldblum’s statue was set up — but they validate, to some extent, C. Vout’s approach as well. How do we define “Classical” art, and why?

The author, Reader in Classics at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Christ’s College, has already published books on ancient art, rich in illustrations and written in a fluid, modern style addressed not simply to scholars but also to a wider readership. They tend to ask unusual questions,² and the volume under review follows a comparable although ampler

1 I have not seen the film, but I thank especially Dr. Richard Tobin who first spontaneously sent me photographs of the London statue and of some parallels. Other friends have followed suit. For illustrations of the Roman Imperial marble statues of the two reclining rivers, see *LIMC*, ss.vv. Neilos, Tiberis.

2 See, e.g., *Power and eroticism in Imperial Rome* (Cambridge 2007), as reviewed in *BMC*R 2008.05.12,

approach. It builds on previous historiographic studies that have tried to explain our fascination for, and understanding of, Greek and Roman art, such as F. Haskell and N. Penny’s *Taste and the antique* (1981) or M. Marvin’s *The language of the Muses* (2008).³ But while the former offers basically a catalogue of what ancient sculptures were known when, and the latter endeavors to explain why we have believed — and still do — in “the myth of the Roman copy”, Vout aims to clarify how different periods differently understood the “Classical” concept, from its inception down to present times, and what the definition implied. Although generally chronological, her account is occasionally discontinuous, with flashes backward and forward, and seems to be more about peoples and personalities than about specific monuments and stylistic development. Whenever possible, she emphasizes objects in British collections and collectors whose holdings could be readily accessible to many of her readers. In the first part of my review I shall try to summarize the various (highly complex) chapters, focusing on the more archaeologically oriented ones, in order to give a sense of the book’s scope and argument. In the second part I shall offer some personal reflections on the way that such histories of Greek and Roman sculpture (and their reception) are traditionally conceived, and advance some specific criticism of the general assumptions that underlie such projects.

A biography of Classical sculpture

An important “Preface” (vii-ix) provides an etymology for the term “Classical” (from the Latin: “of the first order”) and explains its capitalization restricting it to Greek and Roman material. It also briefly traces its variant meanings and derivatives (classicism, classicizing) through time and clarifies the “art” of the book’s title as referring primarily to sculpture as “its most eloquent advocate”.⁴

Chapter I (“Setting the agenda, or putting the art into heritage”) begins with a trumpet blast: “Classical art is a battleground” (1). It then discusses two of the most famous examples — the group of the Tyrannicides by Kritios and Nesiotes, and the Doryphoros by Polykleitos⁵ — to demonstrate simultaneously how much and how little is actually known about them. Both monuments have come down to us only in “copies”, yet Vout does not debate the validity of our current perceptions of such art as famous *opera nobilia*, but stresses their possible meaning(s) in their “display context”, their “translocations” into Roman art, and their “misappropriation” and misrepresentation in later times and depictions. She includes other statues in the sort of “object biography” that has become a popular (and valuable) approach to antiquities in recent times.⁶

This analysis continues in chapt. 2 (“Finding the Classical in Hellenistic Greece”) by introducing more sculptures but stressing their votive character rather than their artistic importance — until around the middle of the 5th c. B.C., when a shift occurs (or, rather, when ancient,

and *Sex on show: seeing the erotic in Greece and Rome* (Berkeley, CA 2013), as reviewed in *BMCR* 2014.04.57. For an early review of Vout’s *Classical art*, see *BMCR* 2018.12.47 (M. Mikrakis).

3 *Taste and the antique* has now appeared in a new edition (2016), too late to be used by Vout. For the book by Marvin, *The language of the Muses: the dialogue between Greek and Roman sculpture* (Los Angeles, CA 2008), see its review by J. Elsner in *BMCR* 2008.05.36.

4 In archaeological publications, it is more common to capitalize Classical when referring to works of the 5th and 4th c. B.C., using lower-case “c” for the Graeco-Roman period in general.

5 See 4 for her statement: “... for the moment [my emphasis] the Tyrannicides and Doryphorus rank among classical art’s most eloquent proponents”. Vout prefers the Latin spelling of Greek names whenever possible, because of its prominent use in later (Roman, Renaissance, etc.) sources, but I am addicted to the Greek one wherever applicable, thus perpetuating the dilemma that afflicts writers on “Classical” sculpture.

6 This term implies the history of an artifact not simply at the time of its creation but also through the years and events after its discovery. V. Azoulay’s extensive French book (2014) has now appeared in English translation by J. Lloyd, *The Tyrant-Slayers of ancient Athens: a tale of two statues* (Oxford 2017); see the review by D. Lateiner at *BMCR* 2018.11.15.

mostly Roman, sources begin their accounts?) toward including signatures of masters as “a claim to originality” (22). Developments occur away from Athens, and especially toward Asia Minor and non-Greek patrons, with that enormous display of sculptures that is the Mausolleion at Halikarnassos coming perhaps “close to the concept of an art competition” among artists (25). Finally, the establishment of monarchies — not only around Alexander the Great, but also among his successors and their interest in collecting spoils from Greek centers — awakens the “nostalgia” for Classical art and the (re-)creation of its history. The Lindian Chronicle compiled in 99 B.C. involves even temples in this endeavor. The emphasis on culture, moreover, the input of libraries, and epichastic poets such as Poseidippos and Kallimachos who stress “looking” as a form of art appreciation, foster a climate of visual stimulation that leads, almost unbroken, into Roman attitudes toward literature and imitation of Greek culture.

Chapter 3 (“Making Greek culture Roman culture”) asks: “When did Rome’s absorption of Greek visual culture begin? ... When did it become possible for Greek sculpture to be Roman and Roman sculpture Greek?” (43). To be sure, Greek objects and imagery had been exported into Italy from early times, not just via Etruria but also through the Greek colonies on Italic soil, and even to Rome itself as background for its legends of origins. But the expansion of Roman military conquests in Hellenistic times had produced significant arrival of spoils to the capital and, with them, a taste for luxury affecting, literally *spoiling*, Roman taste. A strong moralizing trend developed among rhetors and other upholders of Roman *mores*; according to Vout, it “as much as any ancient-art writing proper ... puts classical art on the map as classical ‘art’” (45).

Vout seems to minimize the impact of actual Greek original statuary of the 5th and 4th c. available in Rome as source of faithful copies in Imperial times.⁷ Even allowing for the melting-down of bronze statues in later periods, she stresses that not only Pompeii and Herculaneum (“moderately affluent towns”) lacked such duplications; but so did Hadrian’s Villa at Tivoli, otherwise so full of marble sculptures. With few exceptions (e.g., the Karyatids after the Erechtheion), statuary does not faithfully replicate Greek works but seems to privilege “Hellenizing” over copying. In an important section, “Managing the legacy”, she includes examples of Egyptianizing art — not only sculpture⁸ but also paintings and mosaics — as parallels for this assimilation and “Romanization” of foreign material. It is as if, by subtly transforming the prototypes, the art works could be made to avoid moralizing judgments and to fit into decorative schemes of Roman making. This complex discussion on copying is then followed by a coda on the search for authenticity which is, however, limited to collecting (specifically the so-called Corinthian bronzes) and may often lead to forgeries or forged biographies.

To some extent, chapter 4 (“Roman art, the building blocks of empire”) continues in this vein by analyzing Hadrian’s Villa, then assessing the “recycling process” of the Arch of Constantine with its collection of reliefs from various Imperial phases, in turn leading to a similar but three-dimensional gathering of memorabilia in Constantinople in order to legitimize the establishment of a new capital, creating its own mythology. After the sack of that city in 1204, some of its “antiquities” were transported to Venice; then, when the Byzantine capital fell in 1453, the maritime Republic took over its rôle in “bringing classical art back to Italy” (90), through its naval, colonial and commercial power becoming “almost another Byzantium”. This entire chapter moves back and forth across different periods, touching on the Middle Ages,

7 Vout accepts that Tiberius so liked Lysippos’ Apoxyomenos that he kept that statue in his bedroom, and her caption to fig. 3.6 (pp. 48-49) labels the Vatican Scaper “after a work by Lysippos”. Yet she is also aware (n.23 on 248) of the (“interesting”) bronze athlete fished up off the coast of Croatia now known in other replicas, both in bronze and in marble, which lead some to believe that this type (despite its lack of torsion) reproduces the Lysippan original. The Vatican marble was identified as Lysippan in the attribution frenzy of the 1850s-60s (Vout 202). The anecdote about Tiberius, in my opinion, may be fictitious — or it may not have implied appreciation of the 4th-c. *style*.

8 See also the examples of Roman Egyptianizing female statuary in Archaizing style newly studied by L. A. Mazurek, “The Middle Platonic Isis: text and image in the Sanctuary of the Egyptian Gods at Herodes Atticus’ Marathon villa,” *AJA* 122 (2018) 611-44, figs. 6, 11, 17-19 and especially 23-24, text on 629 with n.88.

continuing down to Napoleon and his collecting tendencies, switching back to Petrarch and his interest in ancient literature, to the later travels of Cyriac of Ancona, his transcription of Greek inscriptions, and his sketching of Greek ruins that contributed to “a desire to classify, contextualize, and attribute broken marbles to named artists” (95). Vout’s writing is so full of lapidary sentences that it is tempting to string together a series of her quotes.⁹

The next pages are a breathtaking cavalcade through history and Europe, from chapt. 5 (“Reviving antiquity in Renaissance Italy”) through 6 (“European court society and the shaping of the canon”) to 7 (“Neoclassicism and the English country house”). Vout first surveys some of the great noble houses of Italy — the Medici, the Este, the Gonzaga, their powerful women, their marriages and intrigues — playing them against the various Popes and cardinals and their interest in collecting. At first, sculpture is not as prominent as ancient gems and coins — some authentic, some openly in imitation — that enrich the “studioli” of their mansions. Collecting may include fossils (“naturalia”) and “exotica” from the Orient and elsewhere, in mixtures that suggest the difficulties of navigating meaningfully through the exhibits (cf., e.g., fig. 5.23 on 123). Painters portray owners against a background of their possessions and often include a single example of “antiquities” (even a fragment) close to the master, to complete the allusion to learning.

Many such paintings are reproduced in color (a total of 79 in the whole book, counting also the dust cover) but backgrounds are occasionally too dark to distinguish the details of the “classical” sculptures.¹⁰ The 33 drawings and prints are clearer but represent rather the interests of the draftsmen and their random sketching, although they provide an important complement to Vout’s written comments. Black-and-white photographs — 93, many of them unusual — add to the richness of the volume. I don’t always agree with Vout’s personal interpretations, but this is a matter of individual preference; the advantage of such illustrations for the reader is never in doubt.

Particularly interesting is the discussion of English country houses where contemporary creations “à l’antique” mingle with genuine ancient sculptures, or at least with classical pieces restored and completed with new and imaginative limbs and attributes. The taste that had developed by the 16th c. had been sparked by the discovery of iconic pieces: the Belvedere Torso around 1430-40, the Belvedere Apollo in 1489, the Laokoon in 1506, the Farnese Hercules in 1545-46 — all of them, by the way, found on Italian soil and carved in “Roman” workshops. Michelangelo, Andrea Sansovino, Baccio Bandinelli and other sculptors of the Renaissance had produced their own creations inspired by classical prototypes. But it was the Neo-Classical period of the 18th c., influenced by the extensive travels abroad of the educated gentry, that gave rise not only to inventive restorations of ancient fragments but also to new wholes. The names of Giambattista Piranesi and Bartolomeo Cavaceppi have become synonymous with “reconstructed” antiquities; those of the slightly later Antonio Canova and Bertel Thorvaldsen epitomize creation that could pass for classical. Significant is the new fashion of the portrait bust for contemporary nobles and famous personages. Imitation of the ancients now is not simply artistic but also political — and in the same century Winckelmann (who privileges the Greeks) attempts to establish a link between art and life.¹¹

In addition, Britain’s imperialistic expansion and early discoveries abroad through the excavation of true (if fragmentary) antiquities, especially architectural sculpture and red-figured vases, encouraged personal acquisitions and even the purchase of established Italian collections, which in turn provided new materials to museums away from Italy itself, to the Louvre

9 E.g., 96: “Constantinople was a placeholder; Rome the nucleus; and Renaissance Venice a chief competitor”.

10 See, e.g., figs. 5.22 (on 122), 6.5 (on 130) and 7.1 (on 152).

11 For a recent account of one such collection see, e.g., E. Bartman, *The Ince Blundell collection of classical sculpture*, vol. 3. *The ideal sculpture* (Liverpool 2017); an extensive and informative review about the criteria of Blundell’s age, by M. Fullerton, appears in *JRA* 31 (2018) 674-77. I have not seen E. Angelicoussis, A. Stewart, D. Ben-Arie and G. M. F. Hill (edd.), *Reconstructing the Lansdowne collection of classical marbles* (Munich 2017).

and the British Museum. In England, some residences adopted interiors appropriate for sculptural displays, and private groups (like the Society of Dilettanti, which sponsored James Stuart and Nicholas Revett to draw and measure the buildings of Athens) promoted the study of objects not simply as aesthetic pleasures but also as the scientific aspect of the past.

With chapt. 8 (“Seeing anew in the nineteenth century”) we enter the world of ancient art-history as we know it. Whereas the Romans and their villas had thus far been the main sources of our antiquities, now the Greeks and their soil take pride of place. Context — or rather findspot — takes precedence over direct appreciation: archaeology has arrived. Vout states (192): “we could go as far as to say that it is the nineteenth century that is to blame for this unhelpful division and for making ‘art’ the enemy”. And later: “The beauty on which the ‘classical’ was predicated was shaken every time another example of genuine Greek sculpture begged integration” (197). The theory of “the Roman copy” and its inferior artistic status led to the approaches of the *Meisterforschung* and the *Kopienkritik*.

The beginning and rapid development of photography made antiquities available for mass consumption and encouraged a new way of looking; plaster casts became increasingly popular. Even “humble” objects, like the Tanagra terracotta figurines, by preserving their coloring showed how different ancient sculpture must originally have looked. Truly Archaic finds challenged Roman archaistic; hence history of art could be written more or less chronologically, making ample use of ancient sources regardless of their difference in date from the moments of creation — or even, in the case of Pliny’s *Natural History*, regardless of the writer’s intent.¹² J. Overbeck’s publication of *Die Antiken Schriftquellen* (1868) was to exercise its influence not just on his time but, as we now know, up to our own day.

Chapter 9 (“The death of classical art?”) bristles with names and events of the 20th c., but starts by illustrating new artistic means — e.g., polystyrene; steel armature (cf. figs. 9.3-9.4) — to replicate ancient subjects, as well as commercial uses of classical sculpture juxtaposed with contemporary objects and living beings. The halls of academia compete in attempts to attribute extant monuments (especially new finds like the Riace bronzes) to the best masters cited by Greek and Roman authors, regardless of the (scant) evidence (cf. 225). A section on “A place for Roman art” mentions scholars like F. Wickhoff and O. Brendel, who now approach Roman sculpture as worthy of attention in its own right — not simply as a coda to the Greek — even if a clear stylistic evolution cannot be followed because of “eclecticism”. Conversely, the Italian R. Bianchi Bandinelli speaks of “plebeian” as contrasted with “noble” art, advocating a class-based diversity in sculptural renderings.¹³ A final section (“Classical art and the modern museum”) highlights public displays that mix media as well as periods: Vout illustrates (figs. 9.12-9.13) some rooms of the Mougins Museum of Classical Art established in 2011 in the south of France by the British investment manager C. Levett, and extols its popularity due to its location near the Riviera and the Cannes Film Festival. The Frenchman George Ortiz (d. 2013) is cited as “one of the greatest collectors of the period” (235), marking the introduction of a new form of philanthropy through acquisition and then donation of ancient art to public institutions.

12 I take this opportunity to rectify an erroneous statement by L.-A. Touchette, “Archaism and eclecticism,” in E. A. Friedland and M. Grunow Sobocinski (edd.), *The Oxford handbook of Roman sculpture* (Oxford 2015) 292-306. As cited there, my definition of the two styles has been completely reversed; it should instead read (as, most recently, in my *Hellenistic sculpture III: the styles of ca. 100-31 B.C.* [Madison, WI 2002] 142): “I call Archaistic a work which at first glance looks almost coherently Archaic, with only a few mannerisms or anachronistic traits betraying the fact that it was made after 480. By contrast, I call Archaizing a work made in the style of its own period — most explicitly the Hellenistic Baroque — but whose underlying pattern is Archaic”.

13 It is somewhat startling to see the 1938 photograph (fig. 9.1 on 222) of Bianchi Bandinelli — an esteemed archaeologist as well as a member of the Italian nobility and an avowed Marxist — wearing the “camicia nera” of the Fascist régime while showing a panel of the Ara Pacis to Hitler and Mussolini.

The book closes with a very brief chapt. 10 (“And the moral of the story is ...”), which does not quite provide an answer but reiterates: “This is, and was only ever destined to be, a life history of classical art a biography or travelogue — a mapping not of facts, but of the way in which Greek and Roman artifacts experience history” (243). The book’s contribution is seen in its “longue durée approach”, its emphasis on the different voices with which antiquities speak to different periods — hence the need for us to look hard and chronologically.¹⁴ Toward the end, Vout announces that the Munich Glyptothek — which, for the sake of “purity”, had previously removed all additions by Thorvaldsen to the Aigina pediments — in 2011 marked the bicentennial of their discovery by putting new versions of the restored figures on display. She comments: “They had relearned the lingo. For art to be classical it has to know its place in the discourse” (245). The concluding sentence reads: “Classical art has plenty left to say. Let us not let our search for certainties stifle it”.

The volume contains abundant notes for each chapter, 42 pages of bibliography, and an Index.¹⁵ It is hard to tell for which readership it is intended: it seems too difficult for a college introductory course; it provides a mine of information for graduate students in art or cultural history, but the “ore” will have to be mined for complete understanding. Scholars with a “classical” background will enjoy the pithy presentation and will wish to follow up on some theories.

Traditional accounts of Classical sculpture and the debatable assumptions on which they are based

It is impossible to do justice to a book of this complexity within the compass of a review — even less to summarize it properly without making selections according to the particular reviewer’s viewpoint; in reading it, I had to clarify my own. I found my validation in a book that stressed continuity in approaches rather than difference based on specific, contingent, standards. By chance, I tackled *Classical art* as I had just finished reading J. O’Malley’s *Four cultures of the West* (Cambridge, MA 2004),¹⁶ which attempts a somewhat comparable broad survey of four tendencies that still continue to shape our understanding of the past:

1. the prophetic culture of Jeremiah;
2. the academic culture of Aristotle and Aquinas;
3. the humanistic culture of Cicero and Erasmus; and
4. the culture of art, of Pheidias, Michelangelo, and ritual performance.

O’Malley’s main approach is through the lens of religion, but he underscores the prevalence of analytical discourse (culture 2) in our universities, and the practice of culture 3 in our schools exposing students to Greek and Latin studies — a practice also valid for the United Kingdom at least until fairly recently.

I respond to that same “Western” background in cultures 2 and 3, having been brought up in Italy in the 1930s and 1940s, when we were taught that our nation’s history began with Etruria¹⁷ and the foundation of Rome, and we sang “Sole che sorgi ...” even if, as children, we did not realize that it closely translated Horace’s *Carmen Saeculare*. I completed my Classical Liceo with heavy doses of Greek and Latin literature, and, in the early 1950s, my University Laurea in “Lettere Classiche” — its archaeology courses strongly based on Overbeck in attempts to “illustrate” its ancient sources. In the United States, by contrast, I came under the compelling guidance of Rhys Carpenter who urged me to look at the sculptures first, taking no previous

14 This admonition is frequently repeated: cf. 228, “We must ... continue to teach our students how to look. ... By learning about new ways of seeing, we see how our own are culturally contingent”.

15 I noticed very few typographical errors, none serious, but some erroneous word divisions: e.g., 121: pala-zzo. The caption for fig. 5.4 on 103 wrongly spells the Italian city as “Sienna”.

16 See, e.g., its review by B. O’Donnell, *Christianity and literature* 54.4 (2005) 615-18.

17 It is somewhat surprising to me that Vout makes so little of Etruscan influence on the art of Greece and especially Rome — an influence that goes beyond the impact on realistic portraiture and certainly infiltrates religion and, at least during Hellenistic times, history.

attributions for granted. In combination, my approach has evolved through the years, and this review of Vout's book seems to be my last opportunity to express in print my final thoughts on matters of ancient art, and on how today I would teach my course on Greek sculpture were I — improbably — given the chance.

I consider myself an archaeologist rather than an art-historian and will therefore, inevitably, react accordingly. I was, for instance, somewhat disturbed to find the collectors Ortiz and Levett mentioned with equanimity, if not approbation, whereas their practices are today deprecated in archaeological circles as encouraging the illicit export of antiquities and even the creation of some sophisticated forgeries.¹⁸ I appreciate Vout's openness in confronting the validity of judgments by some modern and even some ancient sources,¹⁹ yet my own tendency would be to try reaching conclusions — or at least to debate possibilities — without “stifling” our search for information, as new evidence from excavations or new theoretical approaches provide new, tentative answers.

Let me return briefly to the two foundational examples cited by Vout in chapt. 1: the Tyrannicides and the Doryphoros.

In 1970, I proclaimed 477 B.C. — the date given for the group by Kritios and Nesiotes in the *Marmor Parium* (a compilation of 264-263 B.C.) — as “the legal birthday of the Severe Style” and my sentence, or variations of it, has received resonance in several and quite recent publications. Yet my own account of the two statues themselves, as known from reproductions in other media and forms, was more nuanced, and I have since presented different possibilities for the development of the Early Classical style on the basis of additional epigraphic and stylistic evidence.²⁰ Now finds from excavations, and the historical destruction of Miletos in 494 B.C., may imply an earlier inception for the Severe formulas in Asia Minor;²¹ and it is undoubted that the style itself lingered in Sicily and was resumed in Severizing manner during Late Hellenistic and Roman times, with different subjects and implications. As for the Doryphoros, the iconic marble from Pompeii (now in the Naples museum) lacks its eponymous attribute and

18 A case in point may be the silver Warren Cup, purchased by the British Museum as a genuine antiquity but attributed by M. T. Marabini Moevs to Alfredo Castellani, the last member of a family of Italian silversmiths, restorers and antiquarians active in the early 20th c. In keeping with Vout's exhortations, the imagery of the vessel should probably be read as suited to the erotic climate of its modern maker's time although based on depictions of motifs on Greek pottery and terra sigillata. For a thorough examination, see Marabini Moevs, “The Warren chalice in the imagination of its creator and as a reflection of his time,” *BullCom* 114 (2013) 157-83.

19 See, e.g., her n.5 on 250: “... traditionally, though not universally, thought ...”; n.10 on 251: “it is usually assumed ... but this is not certain”; n. 51 on 252: “or at least this is the claim of Pliny ...”; and n.54: “not uncontroversially...”. See also supra n.5.

20 On 477 B.C., see Vout 1-4 and n.11 on 247, citing also more recent mentions (cf. n.30 below for a 2017 essay) and being quite cautious in her chronological assessment. My statement appears in *The Severe Style in Greek sculpture* (Princeton, NJ 1970) 12, but see a fuller discussion of the two sculptors there on 79-83 (now obviously outdated). In a paper delivered in 1983, I suggested that rapid change in style was engendered by increased demand, especially at Aigina: “Late Archaic sculpture,” in C. G. Boulter (ed.), *Greek art: Archaic into Classical* (Leiden 1985) 3-17. I finally took a more regional approach in “XXVIII. The Severe Style: updating the issue” (the translation of a paper delivered in Italian in 1990) in *Second chance: Greek sculptural studies revisited* (London 2004) 627-39 and 769.

Note that the Parian Chronicle purports to start its compilation in 1582/81 B.C. and includes events considered mythical, such as the Great Flood and the trip of the Argonauts, although later dates suggested may be more reliable.

21 The point was argued by A. Slawisch in a lecture delivered at Bryn Mawr College in April 2018, entitled “How fast does a city recover from destruction? A new view of the creation of the Severe Style”. See also her article (with T. C. Wilkinson) which considerably revises our notions: “Processions, propaganda, and pixels: reconstructing the Sacred Way between Miletos and Didyma,” *AJA* 122 (2018) 101-43.

V. Franciosi has argued that it originally held the *porpax* and *antilabe* of a shield in its left arm, sword in right hand; it was therefore *not* a Doryphoros but, possibly, the *nudo telo incessent* or the *hageter arma sumens* cited by Pliny (*NH* 34.55) among the works attributed to Polykleitos. The supposedly probative Argos relief shows a man holding an *akontion*, not a *doru*, and it too, therefore, does not qualify.²²

Without agreeing with Franciosi’s alternative suggestions, I fully accept that each “Roman copy” should always be checked for its own intended identity, and here I am quite impressed by Vout’s argument about the “Hellenizing” of Roman reproductions after Greek originals. It would be easy to draw parallels with what happened after World War II when Italy (and Europe in general) absorbed (and continues to absorb) “Americanisms” not only in life habits but even in vocabulary (the latter driven to extremes by the computer and its specialized language). Conversely, the U.S.A. has experienced substantial changes in (modified) food preferences, driven not only by Italian but also by Mexican, Indian, Chinese, Thai and other regional cuisines. I believe the “ancient copying practice” may find a more cogent comparison with the world of music, where famous composers created variations on works by other musicians — Beethoven on a theme from Mozart’s *Magic Flute*; Rachmaninov’s *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*; Brahms’ *Variations on a Theme by Haydn* — not simply as expressions of admiration but of genuine inspiration. No implications of ‘inferiority’ or suggestions of inaccuracies are therefore possible.²³

I am not convinced by the Hellenistic appreciation of 5th-c. masters like Polykleitos and Pheidias; the Greek originals, I believe, were admired more for their materials (gold and ivory, bronze) or their enormous size than for their particular styles. The famous names inscribed on the (empty) bases recovered from Hellenistic courts may not have identified true works by *the* Myron and *the* Praxiteles;²⁴ indeed, we know that a later Myron and a later Praxiteles existed, and that names were often repeated generationally within the extended family of major sculptors — even the colossal Athena from the Pergamene citadel does not truly replicate the Athenian Parthenos. The emotional baroque style so famously associated with the capital of the Attalids could be used elsewhere for votive purposes (as in the case of the Nike of Samothrace) and was, after all, produced even there by many and now largely anonymous masters, whose 5 preserved (inscribed) ethnics on the Altar’s Gigantomachy reveal diverse proveniences, including — unexpectedly? — Athens.

I do not see Hellenistic palaces as being adorned with Greek Classical originals or with copies of such, or indeed with much permanent statuary in the round. Their decoration must have consisted primarily of mosaic pavements, (perhaps) some architectural reliefs, and, mostly, statuettes and luxury objects. Nothing significant has been found at Pella, nothing at the 5 palaces at Pergamon; and, even if the Altar of Zeus, as suggested by A. Scholl, alluded to the mythical residence of Zeus on Mt. Olympos, its embellishment was exclusively an integral

22 V. Franciosi, *Il “Doriforo” di Policleto* (Naples 2003), with a preface by P. G. Themelis, discussing statues from the Gymnasion at Messene depicting Theseus, Hermes, Herakles, and a copy of the “Doryphoros” — which would represent Theseus after killing the Minotaur. For a review, see, e.g., R. Di Cesare, *ASAtene* 81, ser. 3.3 pt. 2 ([2003] 2005) 720-23, who does not agree with Franciosi but suggests that each extant copy of the type should be checked for possible attributes characterizing different personages.

23 Other examples are Beethoven’s 33 *Diabelli Variations* and Mozart’s 12 variations on “Ah, vous dirai-je Maman”. For these and other musical suggestions I am indebted to my neighbour Dr. Kurt Reiss. For recent changes in our approach to Roman sculpture, surprisingly including the theory of the “official prototype” in Imperial portraiture, see the comments by S. H. Bell at *BMCR* 2019.01.22 (a review of B. Longfellow and E. E. Perry [edd.], *Roman artists, patrons, and public consumption* [Ann Arbor, MI 2017]).

24 Statue bases: cf. Vout 30-31. The bronze statuette of a satyr (her fig. 2.14), rather than supporting a connection with the 5th-c. sculptor, may validate Rhys Carpenter’s early assertion that the pose was stylistically later and that the famous group attributed to Myron was (like the now-discredited “Invitation to the Dance”) a modern juxtaposition; cf. my *Severe Style* (supra n.20) 85-86.

part of the structure.²⁵ Even the elaborate procession (*pompē*) organized by Ptolemy II or that by Antiochos IV Epiphanes (Vout 33-35) were spectacle rather than substance, and probably they comprised (besides human actors) only temporary (if elaborate) automata and images — true ephemera, like the reclining Goldblum in London with which I began this review, or the many *sacre rappresentazioni* and religious processions held in Italy during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, which also comprised elaborate floats and ephemera.

Ecphrastic poets and their verses were more concerned with turning out appealing verses than with adhering to contemporary artistic reality. The point can be made even earlier about Socrates' dialogue with the sculptor Kleiton, as related by Xenophon (*Mem.* 3.10.1-8), concerning the importance of depicting the activities of the soul (*pathe*) — which, however, cannot be observed in any of the extant renderings of the 5th c. B.C.²⁶ A comparable suggestion has been made in connection with the 6th-c. poet Hipponax, whose virulent verses were supposedly responsible for the suicide of two sculptors, Bupalos and Athenis. The couple were allegedly guilty of having made a portrait of the poet as ugly and deformed; yet this kind of realistic rendering is impossible for that time. It has therefore been argued²⁷ that the story was invented, and that the poet “was fashioning a reputation for himself within the competitive, literary arena of the symposium”. In consequence, the several statues by Bupalos on view in the Augustan period, according to statements by Pliny and Pausanias, are not only on subjects anachronistic for Archaic sculpture, but were probably Archaizing or Archaistic.

As in the Classical period, Hellenistic free-standing statuary, I believe, was primarily intended for votive (including athletic and mythical) or funerary, but not for narrative purposes; honorary portraits proliferated from the late 4th c., but outdoors, usually in public contexts and sanctuaries. Victory monuments tended to follow earlier practices by using allegory (trophies) or divine/ethnic imagery only occasionally standing next to statues of historical rulers. Luxurious houses on Delos may have contained portraits of their owners or architectural embellishment, but no narrative or genre images, in contrast with official buildings on the island. The suggestion that satyrs and other denizens of nature (like the Barberini faun, which was indeed found in Rome) could be Hellenistic originals or replicas of Hellenistic prototypes seems improbable on current evidence, given the lack of suitable settings. My own allegorical interpretation of images of a 3rd-c. B.C. “Boy strangling a goose” has been considerably

25 Altar as Palace of Zeus: A. Scholl, “The Pergamon Altar: architecture, sculpture, and meaning,” in C. A. Picon and S. Hemingway (edd.), *Pergamon and the Hellenistic kingdoms of the ancient world* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 2016) 44-53, especially 50; the archaizing “Dancer” from the Banqueting Hall of Palace V (*ibid.*, cat. no. 184 on 246-47) probably had utilitarian purpose (as a lamp-holder or in association with candelabra) as befits its style, appropriate to connote an inanimate subject.

P. Webb, *Hellenistic architectural sculpture* (Madison, WI 1996) n.107 on 71, had already questioned the presence of free-standing statues in the intercolumniations of the Altar's external colonnade, and more recent reconstructions seem to exclude it.

26 This passage was emphasized by G. Adornato in a paper “Ancient and modern views of Hellenistic sculpture” delivered at the symposium (March 2016) organized by the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., in connection with the exhibition “Power and Pathos”. Adornato, however, admitted also that such realistic practice was not attested by contemporary (late 5th to early 4th c. B.C.) evidence.

27 The argument is convincingly and extensively made by G. Hedreen, *The image of the artist in Archaic and Classical Greece: art, poetry, and subjectivity* (Cambridge 2006) 107-15, with comments on caricature in Late Archaic on 116-21, and summary (whence my quotation) on 132. For definitions of the terminology, see *supra* n.12, and n.25 for an archaizing statue from Pergamon. Bupalos is mentioned by Vout 86, in discussing the Lindian Chronicle, but her n.122 on 268 expresses doubt as to the sculptor's (“fictitious”) existence, with reference to Hedreen. That same note cites Lysippos' Kairos, “referred to as ‘Chronos’ by Cedrenus” and described by Poseidippos. Although partly based on the 4th-c. Lysippan work, the personification on the marble relief in Turin is now properly identified as Tempus by G. Adornato in “Lysippus without the Kairos. A Greek masterpiece between art and literature,” *JdI* 130 (2015) 159-82.

undermined by great numbers of (votive, funerary) statuettes of Alexandrian children holding pets that finally found a proper decorative function only on Italic soil.²⁸

Vout gives little emphasis to what has been called the “Neo-Attic phase” — the impact of Greek sculptural production that invaded Roman markets during the Late Republican/Early Imperial period. She mentions only briefly (especially n.79 on 260) the two shipwrecks whose cargoes have given us such a different understanding of what Roman culture desired. Yet to me this is a turning point in our art-historical reconstructions. Location — private gardens (*horti*) and expansive villas, natural landscapes and vistas — encouraged idyllic subject-matter and private enjoyment. Italic cities (not just Rome) were combining a novel interest in Homeric poems with a desire for personal identities, which led to foundation myths based on person-ages from the Trojan War — hence the proliferation of narrative sculpture like the Laokoon, the adventures of Odysseus, and the Sperlonga complex. Even Venice, supposedly a late arrival on this scene, attributed its origin to the Trojan Antenor, and competed in the acquisition of precious marbles and sculptures.²⁹

I suspect that our reliance on the ancient sources, our craving for attributions, our reluctance to ascribe originality to unnamed Hellenistic and Imperial sculptors — our relative frustration about “great masters” without portfolio, as Vout phrases it (225) — has led to a strong opposition to an art, both Greek and Roman, produced by anonymous masters. To be sure, many names, again of both nationalities, are mentioned in Pliny and other ancient writers, but they can no longer be safely identified with their *œuvre*. A recent publication, reacting against the perceived trend of “the death of the author” and intending to vindicate the importance of the individual in the creation of the material culture of ancient Greece, gathered essays by 11 scholars who addressed subjects such as architecture, painting, sculpture and other artistic forms. No tangible new results seem to have emerged, the concluding essay striking an ultimately more balanced note.³⁰ Yet the inclusion of Greek coinage in the survey illuminated for me the potential of Roman numismatics for later history of art.

I end with a comment that takes me out of my comfort zone of knowledge but is offered as an expression of hope for future research. In 1607, a very large hoard of Imperial gold *aurei* was found in Belgium. After passing through various hands, it was entrusted to Peter Paul Rubens, who took it to Paris where it was sold and eventually ended up in the Cabinet des Médailles.

28 On the date of the Barberini Faun, Vout (fig. 8.22 on 208, and 225) seems non-committal; on the “Boy strangling the Goose” (fig. 2.19 on 42), she correctly stresses that it is a popular Roman version of an earlier work. To her n.172 on 257, add F. Queyrel, “Le Garçon du Cricket et les enfants d’Alexandrie,” in J.-Y. Empereur (ed.), *Alexandrina* 4 (2014) 131-61, especially 150-57.

29 On the Neo-Attic style/period, see M. D. Fullerton, *Greek sculpture* (Chichester 2016) 310-16. On Italic love for gardens, see now W. F. Jashemski, K. L. Gleason, K. J. Hartswick and A.-A. Malek (edd.), *Gardens of the Roman empire* (Cambridge 2018), especially 341-65 (Hartswick).

Venice founded by Antenor: Vout 89, with reference in n.142 on 269. Recent excavations, combined with dendrochronology, have considerably lowered the date of preparations for Piazza San Marco to the period between A.D. 650 and 770: A. J. Ammerman, P. Kuniholm *et al.*, “Beneath the Basilica of San Marco: new light on the origin of Venice,” *Antiquity* 91 no. 360 (2017) 1620-29.

Imported antiquities: Vout 91 (and fig. 4.19 on 93) describes as possibly Constantine’s sons the “two porphyry reliefs, the so-called Tetrarchs ... originally from the area of Constantinople known as the Philadelphion ... now subservient [i.e., no longer in power, as when they were first carved]. Huddled together in their new setting in conspiratorial embrace, they mark out Venice’s religious and governmental territory”. The interpretation is vivid but may be misleading: a recent proposal finds the possible precursor of the composition on a panel from a long frieze recently excavated in Nicomedia (Izmit), a tetrarchic capital. It shows Diocletian and Maximian embracing in an *adventus* scene datable slightly before A.D. 293: T. Şare Ağtürk, “A new tetrarchic relief from Nicomedia: embracing emperors,” *AJA* 122 (2018) 411-26.

30 K. Seaman and P. Schultz (edd.), *Artists and artistic production in ancient Greece* (Cambridge 2017). There A. Stewart discusses again Kritios and Nesiotes; the concluding essay is by J. Hurwit. See also the review by J. B. Grossman at *BMCR* 2017.11.60.

An article has now explored how the patterned imagery of Roman actions (e.g., in *adventus* scenes) and of personifications properly labelled on the coins influenced Rubens' illustration of the triumphal entrance into Antwerp of Ferdinand of Austria in 1635, as part of a book by a collector, Caspar Gevartius.³¹ It is this Roman penchant for defining imagery (as contrasted with anonymous Greek minting symbols) that must have proved more fruitful than we realize for later masters, and that may perhaps lead to more future identifications and more acknowledgment of the inventiveness of Roman art.

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31 C. Arnold-Biucchi, "Coins and classical imagery in the time of Rubens: the *Stage of Welcome* in Caspar Gevartius's *Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi*," in A. C. Knaap and M. C. J. Putnam (edd.), *Art, music, and spectacle in the age of Rubens* (Turnhout 2013) 189-215.

Images on Greek, Hellenistic and Roman coins: a conference held at Athens in 2012

Martin Beckmann

P. P. IOSSIF, FR. DE CALLATAÏ, R. VEYMIERS (edd.), *TYPOI. GREEK AND ROMAN COINS SEEN THROUGH THEIR IMAGES. NOBLE ISSUES, HUMBLE USERS? PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY THE BELGIAN AND FRENCH SCHOOLS AT ATHENS, 26-28 SEPTEMBER 2012* (Série Histoire 3; Presses Universitaires de Liège 2018). Pp. 526, charts, pls. 71 mostly in colour. ISBN 978-2-87562-157-3.

This book contains the proceedings of a conference held in 2012 at the Belgian and French Schools in Athens. Although its title references "Greek and Roman" coins, it is much more heavily focussed on the former than the latter, with only 5 of 22 articles dedicated to Roman subjects. Its second subtitle, "*Noble issuers, humble users?*" suggests that the conference was intended to address questions such as who decided what iconography would appear on coins, and how these were received by the actual users of money. Some contributors do this, others do not.

Introductory chapters and Greek coinage

First, F. de CallataÏ ("*L'iconographie des monnaies grecques: brève historiographie et présentation des principales problématiques*") gives a thorough introduction to research on Greek numismatic iconography. Beginning with the 16th c., he traces the development of numismatic science to the present day and then highlights new methodological developments in modern research, particularly quantification, iconology and semiology. He moves next to the questions asked by modern researchers, focussing especially on themes expressed in the title of the book: the choice of types, the intention behind them and their reception, and the varying distribution of types between metals and between coins and other media.