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Seeing Icons:

The Evolution Of Greek Sculpture From Sanctuary To Gallery

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Archaeology

by

Chelsey Quinne Fleming

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Seeing Icons: The Evolution Of Greek Sculpture From Sanctuary To Gallery

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Doctor of Philosophy in Archaeology

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Professor Sarah P. Morris, Chair

This project examines how select works of Greek sculpture became iconic in modern museums and considers the effect of these statues on the viewer through the lens of archaeoaesthetics. I argue that the process of assigning value to art and deriving pleasure from it are initially institutional constructs. Once works of art become iconic, they have a more profound impact on the viewer and form the basis for Western-biased socio-cultural narratives that are presented as the norm.

The dissertation of Chelsey Quinne Fleming is approved.

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To Viola and Puck,

And also to coffee.

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VITA

Chelsey Fleming was born in an unspecified location, backstage at a Van Halen concert. She studied Classical archaeology at New York University, where she received her B.A. in 2009. She received an M.A. in Archaeology at the University of California, Los Angeles in 2012, where her Ph.D. is also expected in 2016. She strongly recommends that you continue the reading of this dissertation while listening to AC/DC's "Thunderstruck" on repeat.

I.

Defining Iconicity

> "'What was the barn like before it was photographed?' he said. 'What did it look like, how was it different from other barns, how was it similar to other barns? We can't answer these questions because we've read the signs, seen the people snapping the pictures. We can't get outside the aura. We're part of the aura. We're here, we're now.'
>
> He seemed immensely pleased by this."
>
> —Don DeLillo, *White Noise*

As an idea, icons are simple. They convey immediate recognition, visual power. We can all name iconic works of art, or at least conjure a mental picture. Many works on our list, independent of experience, cultural background or education, would likely be the same across a large sample of the population. The Mona Lisa, the Venus de Milo, Michelangelo's David and Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* would be popular choices, although non-Western works such as Hokusai's *Great Wave Off Kanagawa* or the Qin Dynasty terracotta warriors might be included as well. Despite the ease with which we recognize iconic works of art, however, we are at a loss to define them or what they mean to us. *Seeing Icons* explores the relationship we have with this at once ubiquitous and ambiguous symbol of modern civilization through the lens of the earliest iconic works: Greek sculpture.

The idea of iconicity, and the notion of singularly compelling masterpieces is itself very Greek. The term "icon" derives from the Greek word εἰκών, which literally means "image" or "likeness". This included real images, metaphorical representations, and imagined, mental

images.[1] An image, however, in the time of Pericles was far more potent, far more remarkable in itself than an image in the oversaturated world of Instagram and Netflix. The role of the image has changed. The creation of statues in the ancient world required significant wealth, status and resources; they were not the media of the common people, but when displayed in a public forum, or a sanctuary, they could be admired by everyone. As Cyril Mango notes, there are distinct advantages to using art as a mirror on reception: "Whereas the common folk of Byzantium did not read Homer and Pindar, everyone-the butcher, the candlemaker, and the lower-class saint could and did look at these statues."[2] Eventually the term "icon" was adopted by Christianity to refer to religious images of Christ, the Virgin and the saints. Byzantine icons were designed to avoid sacrilege by virtue of the fact that they were symbolic images, representing Christ without really resembling him in any realistic way. The symbolic ability of icons to communicate has become an integral part of their modern meaning.

The semiotician C.S. Peirce argued that signs are iconic because they represent through similarity, communicating an idea that otherwise exists only abstractly. Peirce writes, "An icon can only be a fragment of a completer sign," meaning, essentially, that an icon conveys an idea bigger than itself.[3] Iconic works, then, stand for something greater. In this view, icons gain their power from those who interpret them, who assign broader significance to them than the sum of their individual parts suggests. But the popular mythologizing of icons does not grant them that status initially; it is a symptom, not a cause of iconicity. Martin

1 See entry for εἰκών in *Jones, Liddell and Scott*, who define it as "*likeness, image*, whether picture or statue", "image in a mirror", "personal description", and (metaphorically) "living image, representation". Henry Stuart Jones, Henry George Liddell, and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon: With a Revised Supplement 1996* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

2 Cyril Mango, "Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (1963). 55.

3 Charles Sanders Peirce, *Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotic* (Chapel Hill: University Of North Carolina Press, 1991). 211.

Kemp adds in *Christ To Coke* that icons cross traditional cultural boundaries that might otherwise limit their meaning. Kemp proposes the following definition for an icon: "An iconic image is one that has achieved wholly exceptional levels of widespread recognizability and has come to carry a rich series of varied associations for very large numbers of people across time and cultures, such that it has to a greater or lesser degree transgressed the parameters of its initial making, function, context and meaning."[4] This definition of an icon—as a work that functions symbolically as more than an aesthetic, and that has visual recognition across a wide demographic—is the one engaged with here.

Most studies of iconicity perpetuate the mythology that icons are just mysterious works of art that somehow win over the public with their grandeur. I will argue here that icons are created by the institutions in which they are displayed, and that that process is independent of any intrinsic value assigned to the work of art in question. Major public exhibitions can have serious implications for the way we see the world. To give an idea of the extent that this is true, consider the influence of a single exhibition at London's Crystal Palace in 1853. A group of life-sized dinosaurs, created by sculptor Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins and early paleontologist Richard Owen, went on display here during the Great Exhibition. They were the first sculptures to depict dinosaurs, and were quite accurate for their time. Charles Dickens made the first ever dinosaur reference in literature in *Bleak House*, which was published that same year: "As much mud in the streets as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a megalosaurus, forty feet or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill."[5] Hawkins' dinosaurs also appear in an H.G. Wells novel (*Kipps*), and in numerous prints and drawings, including one in commemoration of

4 Martin Kemp, *Christ to Coke: How Image Becomes Icon* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). 11.

5 See Chapter One of Charles Dickens' *Bleak House,* originally published in 1853 by Porter & Coates.

a New Year's Eve banquet held inside the model of the Iguanodon (see below). The Crystal Palace dinosaurs even predated Darwin's *On The Origin Of The Species*, which appeared in 1859. In sum, a single, popular exhibition captured the imagination of the public in a significant manner, and with lasting impact.

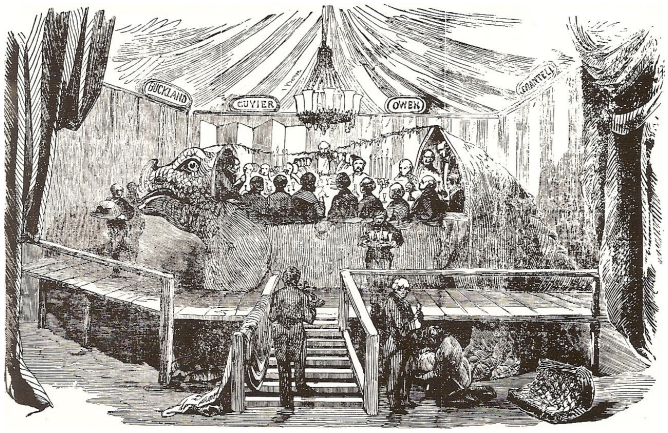

Figure 1: Woodcut of a banquet being held in the confines of one of the Crystal Palace dinosaurs. Originally appeared in the *Illustrated London News* on January 7, 1854. This image is said to be based on a sketch by the original sculptor of the dinosaurs, Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins. Now in the public domain (PD-US).

Nearly all iconic works of art in major European museum collections today were acquired during the nineteenth century.[6] This was a time when there was a powerful belief in the artist—ancient or modern—and in the ability to produce masterpieces, which were necessary in the context of new museums. They justified the existence of newly public galleries, providing a measure of their value. In *Invisible Masterpiece*, Atkins and Belting show how this was the pivotal moment when museums defined themselves as showcases for master works rather than art historical surveys. The former sought a "temple dedicated to timeless masterpieces," [the latter] saw its role as documenting art's progress over the centuries." [7] The proponents of the masterpiece schema won out, and works like the Cheramyes Kore were the

[6] This is true of the Venus de Milo, the Nike of Samothrace, and the Parthenon Marbles. The Townley Discobolus was discovered at Hadrian's Villa in 1790.

[7] Hans Belting and Helen Atkins, *The Invisible Masterpiece* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). 27.

unfortunate victims of that choice because they did not fit the mold.

Icons are deceptive in their apparent simplicity, and as a result we forget that they too were invented and have a history. The history of many famous works of art began in major European museum collections, but the Louvre is the most visited and contains the greatest number of icons.[8] The Louvre officially became a public museum in 1793 after the French revolution. It already contained the art amassed by Louis XVI and his predecessors, works like the Venus Genetrix, which could be displayed as decorative elements alongside ornate neoclassical furnishings in what was called the Etruscan style. In this context, sculpture was a decorative element, valued primarily for its contribution to the aesthetic of elite spaces. It embellished rooms, but was not necessarily their focal point. When, under Napoleon Bonaparte, the museum converted into the Musée Napoleon, even greater preference was given to singular works of Classical sculpture. These were looted and brought back to France as a display of French military might, again valued as elite symbols rather than for their historical and cultural value.[9] This entire framework relies on works of art as masterpieces that speak for themselves, whose value and beauty is self-evident because they are on display in the Louvre. Antiquities are perfectly suited for this ideology because unlike beautiful works of art produced by contemporary artists, they cannot just be purchased, they must be discovered (or stolen, à la Napoleon).

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[8] The Louvre reported 9.3 million visitors in 2014 (http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/tourism/events/article/the-louvre-the-most-visited-museum), 70% of whom came from outside of France.

[9] On the post-Revolution Louvre, see Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Univ of California Press, 1994). Pages 91-94 are especially relevant in this context.

The Louvre, then, was the place where Greek sculpture first came to light in a modern public forum outside of Greece. This makes it the ideal place to study iconicity because it is, as Duncan and Wallach argue in *The Universal Survey Museum*, "the largest and most influential of the universal survey museums, the prototype for scores of national galleries and municipal art museums."[10] It remains the home of this "early moment of bourgeois ideology," and the wing that contains ancient art—the Denon wing— continues to serve as the main entrance to the galleries. As Duncan and Wallach note, the museum is set up with "prologue" galleries that guide visitors toward important works and dramatic viewpoints, such as the base of the Daru staircase (which dates to Napoleon III) where they can admire the Winged Victory. This means that the principal entrance to the world's largest survey museum guides visitors immediately toward masterpieces from the Classical period.

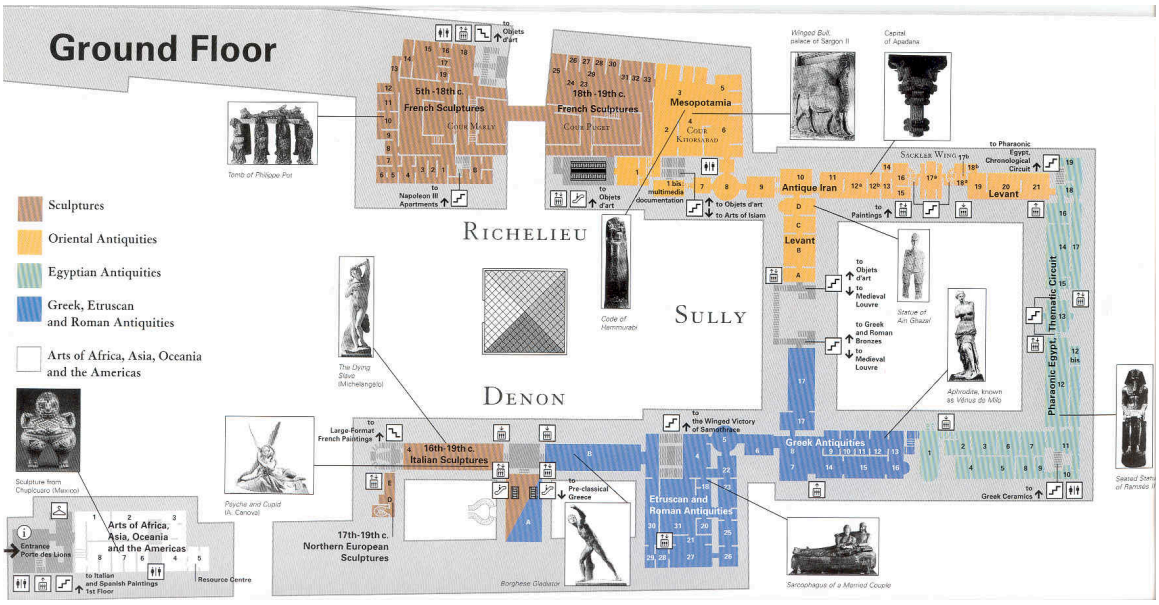

Figure 2: Ground Floor plan of galleries for the Louvre Museum; The Mona Lisa and Nike of Samothrace are located on the First Floor, and are closest to the location of the Venus de Milo as shown in the above map.

Greek sculpture as a category is iconic in itself. It is so emblematic of a mood of intellectualism, philosophical thought, erudition, that its invocation has long been a symbol

[10] Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," *Art history* 3, no. 4 (1980). 457.

employed by writers and artists. Edgar Allan Poe's raven, for example, perches on a "pallid bust of Athena," goddess of wisdom and reason, as a haunting image of the destruction of sanity. Poe refers here to Alaric the Visigoth, the destroyer of Athens in 395, and catalyst for Gibbon's *The History Of The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire*, much in vogue at the time of Poe's writing. Alaric was known to carry a banner bearing the image of a raven.[11] Giorgio DiChirico populates his barren landscapes only with pale remnants of Greek statues. In the sixteenth century, Dutch artist Maarten van Heemskerck reimagined the wonders of the ancient world in a series of engravings, in which Greek sculpture loomed large and fantastical. His Colossus of Rhodes is depicted astride the entrance to the harbor, one foot on each bank, while in the foreground an already-broken statue head foreshadows the eventual destruction that awaits.

Figure 3: Colossus of Rhodes, from a 16th-century engraving by Heemskerck, now in the public domain (PD-US).

Some of the conclusions drawn here—that iconic works gain their status from the institutions who label them as such, rather than by some sort of popular consensus—are not revolutionary. But there are much deeper implications for the way we see something when we are told it is iconic, how we assign value to those works, and how this cycle perpetuates. Further, there are often subtle ways that viewers engage (or fail to engage) with what they see

11 Poe's lines are as follows: "And the Raven never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting/ On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;/ And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming […]"

on display in museums that reflect those tacit institutional values; however muted, they are still the dominating force. That major institutions create iconic works also raises other questions. Where do our tastes in art derive? Why do some iconic works manage to achieve longevity, while others fall from popularity? Still other works of art, many that have interesting histories, are rare or valuable in their materials, or are very well executed, never become popular.

The Louvre's self-guided Greek sculpture tour includes highlights from the collection, including several pieces that could, under different circumstances, take the place of the Venus de Milo in terms of iconicity. The Crouching Aphrodite, for example, is a female nude dating to the Hellenistic period and, like the Venus de Milo, it is carved in the style of Classical art. The Fighting Warrior, formerly misidentified as a gladiator, was purchased by Napoleon in 1807 from the Borghese collection in Rome, and echoes the style of the famous sculptor Lysippus. These pieces are similar to other iconic works in many ways—Classicizing style, female nudity, marble medium—but they never became well known because they were not presented as masterpieces.

Figure 4: Crouching Aphrodite (Left; Louvre Ma2240) and (Right) Fighting Warrior, formerly "Borghese Gladiator" (Louvre Ma 527)

All of this is true in spite of the fact that studies carried out over the past several decades increasingly show that there are some common biological factors at play when we look at art (or anything, for that matter). While there may not be a single, universal mode of

seeing, there are certainly commonalities that bridge income disparities, access to media and technology, culture and education. Various studies have shown that when something is deemed beautiful, the brain responds in predictable ways—Kawataba and Zeki show that certain areas of the brain are designated for processing stimuli according to their categories as beautiful, neutral or ugly.[12] Vartanian *et al.* also argue that activation in the area of the right caudate nucleus (a component of the basal ganglia that is related to learning processes and the reward system) increases with increasing aesthetic preference, and decreases when a subject is undesirable.[13] Ramachandran and Hirstein propose eight universal rules that define the artistic experience, including the peak shift effect, in which evocative, exaggerated formal attributes are preferred.[14] Some of these factors affect other species, too. Red has been shown to be an innate, not learned, signal of intimidation and aggression in Gouldian finches, for example.[15]

Denis Dutton further argues that humans have evolved to find beauty in certain things that translate into fitness, for instance, a landscape that contains a water source or symmetrical facial features. He posits that we are too quick to jump to the conclusion that cultural boundaries are impenetrable, citing philosophical currents from Sapir and Whorf's linguistic relativity to Baxandall's Period Eye as the source of this belief.[16] This paradox—whether we like things because of cultural constructs, or because of our biology—is at the crux

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[12] Hideaki Kawabata and Semir Zeki, "Neural Correlates of Beauty," *Journal of neurophysiology* 91, no. 4 (2004).

[13] Oshin Vartanian and Vinod Goel, "Neuroanatomical Correlates of Aesthetic Preference for Paintings," *Neuroreport* 15, no. 5 (2004).

[14] Vilayanur S Ramachandran and William Hirstein, "The Science of Art: A Neurological Theory of Aesthetic Experience," *Journal of consciousness Studies* 6, no. 6-7 (1999).

[15] Sarah R Pryke, "Is Red an Innate or Learned Signal of Aggression and Intimidation?," *Animal Behaviour* 78, no. 2 (2009).

[16] Denis Dutton, *The Art Instinct: Beauty, Pleasure, & Human Evolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

of this project. Here a middle ground between these theories is adopted. While there are doubtless some universal, biological drivers for our aesthetic responses, there are also those that depend on individuality. But if there is an exception to the rule of biological bias, it is iconicity. Iconic works of art are not simply objectively *better* works; there is not a single, biological explanation for why people like them. They are works of art that have been assigned value and status, and to which audiences respond accordingly.

Some arguments that have been made for how icons attain their status are: they are beautiful, they are strange, the artists who create them are mysterious/insane/ingénues, they become pop cultural emissaries, or they are embroiled in international crime and conflict.[17] These have all played a role in the mystification and mythologizing of iconic works, but they alone are not the cause of iconicity. Michelangelo's *David*, for example, is said to be popular because of the changing ideals of beauty and a new interest in the portrayal of physical strength during the twentieth century.[18] The *Mona Lisa* gained notoriety when she was stolen from the Louvre in 1911 by Vincenzo Peruggia, who believed she belonged in Italy. In *Famous Works Of Art—And How They Got That Way*, John Nici argues that Grant Wood's *American Gothic* captured the public imagination because it is so strange, its subjects inviting the viewer into their unconventional narrative.[19]

This is not an attempt to remove agency from works of art, or from the people who create them. Many well-known works of art are beautiful, innovative and interesting, as

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[17] Many of these are argued, for example in the edited volume *Mona Lisa To Marge* Francesca; Cattelan Bonazzoli, Maurizio; Robecchi, Michele, *Mona Lisa to Marge: How the World's Greatest Artworks Entered Popular Culture* (New York: Lazy Dog Press, 2014). Van Gogh's sunflowers are said to be iconic in large part due to the mystique of his turbulent personality.

18 Ibid. 52.

19 John Nici, *Famous Works of Art—and How They Got That Way* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015). 200.

discussed above. But that fact alone does not make them iconic, and many lesser known works are equally poignant. The common thread is their prominent display in major museums, where they are established as important, and given preference over other works. And just as museums set up some works of art as masterpieces, others are ignored.

In the age of photography and mass media the dispersal of images has changed, and museums are no longer the sole authority. Photographs like Nick Ut's "Napalm Girl" became iconic through their distribution via major news outlets, which are held to different standards than museums. Ut's picture, first published on June 12, 1972, shows children suffering from severe napalm burns running down Route 1 in Vietnam. Kim Phuc, then only nine years old, is at the center of the frame, nude because her clothes have been burnt off her body. Criticism through photojournalism has been especially prevalent since the Vietnam War, when photographs like Ut's revealed the reality of American policy abroad.[20] Consider the case of a recently-iconic image: that taken by Turkish photographer Nilüfer Demir's of the body of three-year-old Syrian refugee Alan Kurdi, drowned on a Turkish beach. Demir's photograph became a viral phenomenon, raising international awareness of the refugee crisis, and creating a tangible impact on policies and aid contributions.[21] The difference between these iconic images and those put on display in museums during the nineteenth century is that news images may be presented intentionally as subversive, and are understood as such by their

[20] Daniel C Hallin, *The Uncensored War: The Media and Vietnam* (Univ of California Press, 1989); Daniel C Hallin, "The Media, the War in Vietnam, and Political Support: A Critique of the Thesis of an Oppositional Media," *The Journal of Politics* 46, no. 01 (1984); Frank Webster, *Theories of the Information Society* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

[21] In a report by Topsy, Tweets per day: "Help refugees" increased from fewer than three thousand to twenty thousand—a more than 600% increase—when Kurdi's photo was published. A fundraising effort through Migrant Offshore Aid (MOAS) was also initiated, and raised more than €250,000 in a single day. See Ysabel Camus Favis, "Throwing a Life Vest at Humanity," *Masters of Media: New Media & Design Culture, University of Amsterdam* (2016).

audience. In contrast, ancient art presented in a museum is disconnected from the critical process, so its audience rarely questions its true value or authenticity.[22]

Naturally audiences are culturally removed from ancient art and its meaning, but the museum itself is also seen as an objective forum.[23] Demir's and Ut's famous images evoked poignant emotions: Ut's photograph was criticized for its portrayal of frontal nudity; Demir's was attacked for capitalizing on the death of a child. Ut's photograph was at first rejected, before fellow photographer Horst Faas persuaded the editor of the *New York Times* it was too significant not to publish.[24] Hariman and Lucaites argue that photojournalism is the art of democracy, allowing for public engagement and criticism to an unprecedented degree.[25] Scholars who deal with visual media have come to "rely on standard critiques of the media spectacle and the power of visual technologies to counterfeit reality and fuel illusion," to such an extent that this practice is standard.[26] The opposite is true for ancient art; it is seen as the standard to which we compare other styles. Copying Classical sculpture was the foundation for artistic training at the Royal and Italian Academies and the École des Beaux-Arts (see Carlo Maratti's interpretation below).

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[22] For more on this, see Chapter Three in this volume on the Nike of Samothrace.

[23] See, for example, Mina Lukic's work Mina Lukić, "The Interplay of Museum Discourse and Popular Culture: How, When and Where History Comes Alive?," *Култура/Culture* 4, no. 8 (2014). Oscar Muscarella's discussion in Oscar White Muscarella, *The Lie Became Great: The Forgery of Ancient near Eastern Cultures*, vol. 1 (Leiden: BRILL, 2000). 145-147, and a report prepared by BritainThinks Museums Association, "Britain Thinks: Public Perceptions of—and Attitudes to—the Purposes of Museums in Society," *London: Museums Association* (March 2013 2013). Here museums are viewed by the public as "guardians of factual information and as presenting all sides of the story." (3).

[24] Martin Kemp discusses the power of Ut's photographs in Kemp, *Christ to Coke: How Image Becomes Icon*. 197-222, including the story of its controversial publication.

[25] Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007). 3.

[26] Ibid. 28.

Figure 5: Carlo Maratti, *The Academy of Painting*, ca. 1680, now in the public domain (PD-US).

In Maratti's drawing, Florentine artists copy with technical precision the Classical sculptures that surround them. Marble statues of Weary Herakles and Aphrodite Kallipygos are in the background, along with a statue of Apollo holding a lyre. The artists appear more scholar than ingénue; they are surrounded by open books, and two of them discuss a perspectival drawing in the foreground. Maratti's work captures the esteem that Classical art elicited. But this was not always the case. If there was anyone who could find criticism where others found pleasure it was Charles Baudelaire. The respect accorded to great works of sculpture—especially the Classical and neoclassical ones—was probably why Baudelaire hated it so much. As Cassandra Hamrick argues, Baudelaire hated sculpture (not just Classical sculpture, but all sculpture) because it was the art that could best command in the spectator's imagination a certain aura of greatness.[27] That greatness, in his opinion, was entirely undeserved. In his salon essay "Why Sculpture Is Boring," Baudelaire writes that sculpture had become so pervasive that it only served to complement other forms like painting and architecture.[28] This suggests that by 1840 when Baudelaire wrote his essay, around the same

[27] Lois Cassandra Streett Hamrick, "Baudelaire Et La Sculpture Ennuyeuse De Son Temps," *Nineteenth-century French studies* 35, no. 1 (2006). 110.

[28] He writes, "Sortie de l'époque sauvage, la sculpture, dans son plus magnifique développement, n'est autre chose qu'un art complémentaire. Il ne s'agit plus de tailler industrieusement des figures portatives, mais de

time the works of art discussed here were first uncovered and displayed in the Louvre, sculpture was *the* dominant artistic medium.

As such it was a powerful means of communication. Like Adorno and Horkheimer's culture industry, in which "it is claimed that standards were based in the first place on consumers' needs, and for that reason were accepted with so little resistance," sculpture as a popular and pervasive medium became a symbol of culture. Adorno and Horkheimer argue that in reality these standards of value are dictated by institutions of influence rather than consumers.[29] Mass culture is seen as distinctly more consumer-driven than the fine arts, which require more intellectual rigor. This is a problem of interpretation, because, as Adorno and Horkheimer write, "there is nothing left for the consumer to classify. Producers [of the culture industry] have done it for him."[30] This project is very much indebted to the work of Adorno and Horkheimer, but where they maintain a distinction between the fine arts and consumer media, it is here argued that divide is not so salient, and that high art is also a product of a different sort of culture industry.

That influence is especially subtle with the passage of time and the illusion of objectivity conveyed by a museum. As a result, viewers rarely challenge the narratives presented to them. The four works presented here are case studies of important works of Greek art. Two of these—the Venus de Milo and the Nike of Samothrace—are iconic. The other two—the Auxerre Maiden and the Cheramyes Kore from Samos—are entirely obscure. The process of establishing works of art as icons is not complicated: once museums present

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s'associer humblement à la peinture et à l'architecture, et de servir leurs intentions." Charles Baudelaire, "Pourquoi La Sculpture Est Ennuyeuse," *Salon de 1846, Critique d'art* (1846).

[29] Theodor W Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972). 293.

[30] Ibid. 295.

them as such, they meet little resistance. The tastes that drive modern interpretations of the past, however, are more complicated.

In Don Delillo's post-modern novel *White Noise*, the protagonist, Jack, and his friend Murray go to visit a tourist attraction known as The Most Photographed Barn In America. When they get there, they find that the visitors are so engaged with taking pictures of the barn that they are not actually looking at it. "We're not here to capture an image," Murray says, "we're here to maintain one. Every photograph reinforces the aura."[31] As Murray notes, iconic works are speak too loudly to be criticized; viewer engagement is simply about experiencing them, not about construing meaning. This renders iconic works of art both powerful in their influence and powerless to alter their own museum-imposed narratives.

[31] Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (London: Picador, 1986). 14.

II.

From Obscurity to Icon:
The Legacy Of The Venus De Milo

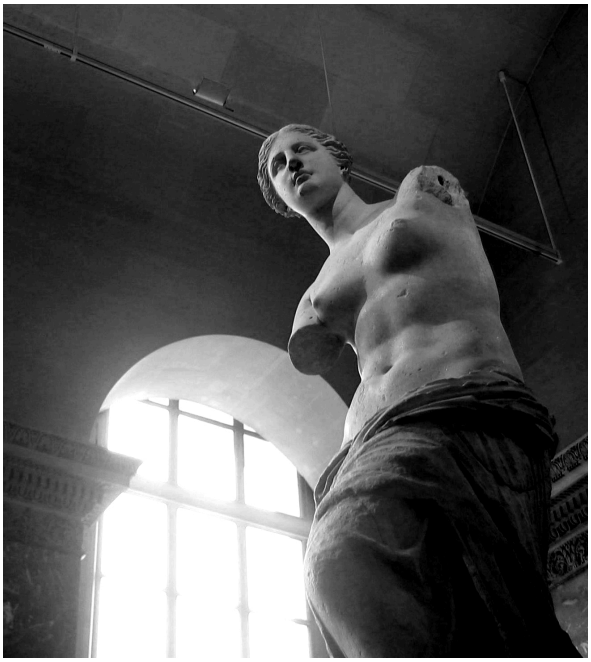

Figure 6: The Venus de Milo on display in the Louvre, photo labeled for reuse courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

One of the things the Venus de Milo and the Mona Lisa have in common is their indisputable iconicity. The great achievements of Da Vinci and Alexandros of Antioch are, however, aside from their permanent residence in the Louvre, completely dissimilar. If there is a formula for iconicity, it is difficult to see how a sixteenth century Old Masters painting and a second century BCE marble sculpture are congruent. The Venus de Milo looks back to a style and era that are not its own. It resembles those Attic fifth century works of Greek art with which we are most familiar. The heavy, wet drapery calls to mind the sculptures of the

Parthenon, and the placidity of her expression is reminiscent of the Erechtheion's caryatids. It has been called "Classicizing," a word that is fitting for both the attitude of the Hellenistic audience who commissioned it and for its modern audience, who insist on seeing it ahistorically as the epitome of fifth-century Greek art. Many arguments have been made for why we admire the Venus de Milo: the mysterious absence of arms, the mistakenly Classical identity, and the lasting power of Winckelmann's scholarship have all been proposed. These factors alone, however, do not account for the continued valuation of a work that is misunderstood and misrepresented in popular culture.

There is no question that the Venus de Milo is considered iconic today. She is the prototype for the female nude in the canon of Western art. She is, of course, not the first female nude in Greek art. That place is reserved for the Knidian Aphrodite, Praxiteles' chef d'oeuvre, now lost except for its numerous copies. But while the Knidian Aphrodite was the first female nude, the Venus de Milo has been the most enduring nude of the modern era. The history of her trajectory towards iconicity in spite of her relative obscurity in the corpus of ancient art is a complex one. The development of the canon that defined her and permitted her rise to notoriety at the Louvre is even less understood.

The disjuncture between the people who inhabited the past and the modern decontextualization of ancient sculpture, acid-washed to appear bright white—has helped Classical works achieve longevity in museums by repositioning them to suit contemporary tastes.[32] The conspicuous absence of these people, who left behind only a smattering of

[32] On acid-washing as common practice in museums into the 20th century, see Gänsicke, Susanne, et al. "The Ancient Egyptian Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Part 1, A review of treatments in the field and their consequences." *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 42.2 (2003): 167-192.; Shelley, Marjorie. *The care and handling of art objects: practices in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987. The Victoria and Albert and British Museums also list acid-washing as "traditional methods", now avoided in conservation practice. See especially "Cleaning Marble": http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/cleaning-marble/, and Ian Jenkins' "The 1930s Cleaning of the Parthenon Sculptures in the British Museum" :

beautiful objects for us to interpret according to our whims, only increases the romantic allure. Romanticism, with its emphasis on imagination and sentiment, cannot, by definition, be based on the concrete. Subscribers to this philosophy can thus conveniently construct the past that most appeals to them, and that past has historically been shaped by those in power.

Masterpieces are symbols well suited to these constructs. It is in this manner that the Parthenon marbles shed their architectural and decorative stigma and became emblematic of the grandeur of Western civilization. In spite of controversy over their removal from Athens by Lord Thomas Elgin between 1801 and 1804, the marbles would eventually reconfigure conceptually and concretely the British Museum.[33] They are the reason for John Smirke's 1823 redesign, the Greek Revival monument that stands today. The 1928 Royal Commission on National Museums and Galleries provided an institutional premise for the new role of the Parthenon marbles as an integral part of British culture. At the height of post-World War One nationalism they reported, "The Parthenon Marbles, being the greatest body of original Greek sculpture in existence, and unique monuments of its first maturity, are primarily works of art. Their former decorative function as architectural ornaments, and their present educational use as illustrations of mythical and historical events in ancient Greece, are by comparison accidental and trivial interests, which can indeed be better served by casts."[34] The Venus de Milo was unearthed in this world of colonial conflict and romantic thought, and

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http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/news_and_press/statements/parthenon_sculptures/1930s_cleaning/cleaning_the_sculptures.aspx.

[33] Lord Byron, one of the most vocal opponents of Elgin's act voiced his concern in the 1807 poem "Curse of Minerva". "Childe Harold" also deplores the plunder of Athens. Hugh Hammersley notoriously opposed the permanence of the Parthenon marbles' residence in the British Museum, arguing in a proposed amendment of 1816 that they were essentially spoils of war. For more on this, see St. Clair, William, *Lord Elgin and the Marbles*, Oxford University Press (1983), and Hitchens, Christopher, *et. al. The Elgin Marbles: Should the be returned to Greece?* Chatto & Windus Ltd (1987), among others.

[34] Ian Jenkins, *Archaeologists & Aesthetes in the Sculpture Galleries of the British Museum 1800-1939* (London: British Museum Press, 1992). 225.

there, in a sense, she remains. But while the Parthenon marbles remain central to the museum ethics discourse, other works of Classical art are still treated as timeless masterpieces, removed from both an ancient and a modern context. It is no novel theory that works of art are subject to the experiences and visions of diverse audiences. George Kubler encapsulated the mutability of art when he wrote that both astronomers and historians look at things in the present that occurred in the past. In Kubler's metaphor, a work of ancient art, like a star, is seen retrospectively through the inevitable interference of time and space. He wrote,

> Knowing the past is as astonishing a performance as knowing the stars. Astronomers look only at old light. There is no other light for them to look at. This old light of dead or distant stars was emitted long ago and it reaches us only in the present. Many historical events, like astronomical bodies, also *occur* long before they *appear*, such as secret treaties, aide-mémoires, or important works of art made for ruling personages. The physical substance of these documents often reaches qualified observers only centuries or millennia after the event.[35]

In this way, layers of meaning accrue over time, the most recent obscuring the older. Implicit in Kubler's idea is that the past and present of a work are connected through reception. As Rachel Kousser argues, the Venus de Milo, at the time of its commission by the Melians, showed an awareness of the Attic Greek art that came before it in an expression of identity and value.[36] But historically there is not an equality of viewpoints. Discussions of the subjective nature of responses to art seem to treat the world of viewership as a democracy. It is not one. In fact, it is a monarchy where some interpretations are valued above all others, and that rests firmly on the foundation of those interpretations that came before it. It is more than *Zeitgeist*, which downplays the potency and durability of the thoughts of influential institutions.

[35] George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).17.

[36] See Kousser's work on the Venus de Milo in Rachel Kousser, "Creating the Past: The Venus De Milo and the Hellenistic Reception of Classical Greece," *American journal of archaeology* (2005).

The audience of the past has no bearing on these whims, and so the Venus de Milo can be disassembled, divorced of context and Classicized until it becomes what we want it to be.

To fully understand the significance of an iconic work of ancient art like the Venus de Milo, then, we must be aware of our role in its reconstruction. A lens into ancient viewership, that is, the way people in the past viewed these same works of art, can tell us about how our valuation of art has changed over time. Seeing is dynamic and metamorphic; it is not a passive sense, but the active construction of value. This gives the viewer the power to construct anew each time they see. Henri Matisse wrote in his memoirs, "Voir c'est déjà une opération créatrice, qui exige un effort."[37] In other words, to truly see something requires effort. Matisse's own work was frequently disparaged by critics, including André Gide, Raymond Poincaré, and Charles Martel.[38]

A critic and fellow painter Georges Desvallières wrote in defense of Matisse, "Our personal sense of good taste may sometimes be shocked by them [Matisse's works]… even then our artistic intelligence should not be indifferent to the discoveries made by this artist… he has in a sense liberated our eyes and broadened our understanding…"[39] The subjectivity of critical reception, even with now valued artists like Matisse, is often lost on visitors, who trust the museum to display what is in good taste. Visitors to the Louvre seem to know that they must exert the effort that Matisse refers to, but only when it matters. In the Venus de Milo gallery, it matters. The statue is one of the only works of ancient art at the Louvre with which visitors spend a significant amount of time. In the paintings galleries, visitors stream past

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[37] Camoin, Charles, Henri Matisse, and Claudine Grammont. *Correspondance entre Charles Camoin et Henri Matisse*. Bibliothèque des arts, 1997.

[38] These polemics are published in *La Grand Revue*, and inspired Matisse's own defense of his work in the 1908 essay "Notes of a Painter." See Flam, Jack, ed. *Matisse on art*. Univ. of California Press, 1995.

[39] Jack D Flam, *Matisse on Art* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979). 31.

innumerable works by Botticelli, Louis-David, and Ingres for the chance to pose, with photographic evidence, in front of the Mona Lisa. This same, singular intent causes them to bypass the bulk of the Louvre's collection of Classical art. The Venus de Milo is treated as the sole representative of the Classical past here, however apocryphal her modern mythology. The Parthenon marbles, of course, interest visitors to the British Museum, but they lack the singular focus of the Venus. The level of visitor interest in the Venus de Milo suggests that she is the most iconic work of art from the ancient world, at least in the Louvre, if not elsewhere as well. Popular fame can be assigned to a number of works of ancient art, as is undeniably the case with the Parthenon marbles, the Discobolus, and the Knidian Aphrodite type, but few are recognizable both by name and appearance. While many know of the Parthenon marbles and their disputed location in the British Museum, few outside of academia can recognize individual scenes from the pediments and frieze. Each of these works would be a more fitting choice for the canon of Classical Greek sculpture than the Venus de Milo. How did the Venus, then, which is unrepresentative of Greek art as a whole, and generally misunderstood, come to be considered canonical?

Restoration And Winckelmann's Classicizing Influence

The Venus was not an icon in the ancient world. No surviving ancient text mentions her, and the half-draped type is not well attested in other media such as coins and gems. The only surviving accounts of her excavation come from the Comte de Marcellus de Rivière, who was the French diplomat to the Ottomans, and from Dumont d'Urville, a French naval officer stationed in the region and present during the excavation. Early accounts by d'Urville describe her as partially embedded in a wall, which was the only surviving foundation of a gymnasium. The statue was in several pieces that included the torso, the draped lower body,

and a section of the right hip. Following the initial discovery, the farmer, hoping to profit further, unearthed a hand holding an apple, another fragmentary arm, and two herms resting on inscribed bases. The gymnasium is no longer extant, but d'Urville's initial account describes, "Vénus tenant la pomme de discorde dans sa main," which further cements the attribution of the statue of Venus, and the statue's proximity to an architectural niche with an inscription above the arch.[40] The upper inscription, according to d'Urville's notes, read, "Bachios, son of Satios, assistant gymnasiarch, dedicated this exedra and this < ? > to Hermes and Herakles." Rachel Kousser has dated the letterforms used in d'Urville's drawing to 150-50 BCE, putting the statue squarely in the late Hellenistic, not Classical, period.[41] From the time of her discovery, she symbolized imperial victory in the Anglo-French conflict. The statue was uncovered by a local farmer in 1820 on the island of Melos in the Cyclades, and was given to Louis XVIII by the French diplomats overseeing that region, which was under the control of the Ottoman Turks.

The base of one of the two herms had been broken, but was later revealed to fit perfectly with the base of the Venus, indicating that the two were actually components of a sculptural group. The herm's base bore the inscription "<Alexa>ndros son of <Me>nides citizen of <Ant>ioch at Meander made it."[42] Seleucus Nicator, one of Alexander's generals, did not found Antioch until 308 BCE, which means it is impossible for the statue to be a work of the fifth century. The French, who had been hoping for a great work of Classical art, preferably by a student of Phidias, disregarded the strong evidence for a Hellenistic date. The Comte de Forbin, who was in charge of the statue's restoration at the Louvre, found the

[40] Kousser cites here M. Vogué, who published the original letters in an essay entitled "Deux lettres sur la découverte de la Vénus de Milo." *CRAI* 1874: 152-64.

[41] Kousser. 231.

[42] Kousser also provides excellent illustrations from d'Urville's journal in her article.

association of the Venus with the herm, and the resulting Hellenistic date, undesirable, and so chose not to exhibit the two together.

A later account by Jean-Gaspard Félix Ravaisson-Mollien, senior curator in charge of antiquities at the Louvre from 1870, suggests that de Forbin concealed the herms and their bases even from his colleagues. Ravaisson wrote that Quatremère de Quincy, the secretary to the Académie des Beaux-Arts, agreed that the statue was intended as a part of a larger group based on the fracture of the plinth, but had no means of restoring its original composition. The base has since been lost, and its existence would likely never have been recorded if not for a letter from Jacques-Louis David, the erstwhile art teacher of Forbin. Because the hand with the apple is also lost, it is impossible to perform tests to ascertain whether it was meant to be a part of the Venus, although this is almost certain. The apple, of course, would confirm that this is indeed Aphrodite, having just won the divine beauty contest judged by Paris.

Ravaisson-Mollien was seven years old when the Venus de Milo was discovered. Almost immediately after her installation in the Louvre, rumors circulated about the circumstances of her removal from Melos, and the state in which she was found. Ravaisson wrote in 1891,

> En dépit des fables qui ont été répandues sur l'état où était la Vénus de Milo quand elle a été trouvée, il est aujourd'hui démontré par des documents irréfutables que la célèbre statue, lorsqu'elle fut découverte par un paysan de l'île, était mutilée et séparée en deux blocs; qu'on ne trouva d'abord qu'un seul de ces blocs; qu'on trouva ensuite l'autre, ainsi que la partie supérieure d'un bras gauche et une main gauche fruste tenant une pomme, ces deux morceaux de même marbre et de mêmes proportions que les deux blocs. [43]

By 1891 the Venus was already "la célèbre statue." Ravaisson described the initial restoration process, determining that the Venus was not fully worked on her backside and was likely

[43] Félix Ravaisson, *La Venus De Milo: Par Felix Ravaisson* (Paris: Librairie Nationale, 1871). 10.

intended to be viewed only from the front. This was fitting for her display at the end of a long gallery, where circumambulation was impossible. It was also decided, contrary to the general policy of the Louvre (and museums in general during this time), to put the statue on display in her fragmentary state. Quatremère argued that since she was part of a sculptural group of which she was the only remnant, it was impossible to authentically restore her arms. For this reason, even though the hand holding the apple was already in their possession, Ravaisson and Quatremère de Quincy did not restore the Venus' missing arms. This was a choice that would have a lasting and profound impact on her popular perception.[44]

Aphrodite Of the Gymnasium: Melian Context

The restoration, or lack thereof, unintentionally modernized the Venus de Milo. Abstracted and armless, the hourglass shape of her torso now dominates the composition. Aphrodite's great achievement in the first century BCE had little to do with her beauty alone, but with the power manifest in it. Her beauty contest, represented here only in a final, victorious moment, is something of a "love conquers all" story, but with the caveat that choosing love is often a mistake. Paris' choice, as we know, leads to war, not his own happiness. The philosophical nature of a statue of Venus having just won the battle over military victory and intelligence in a Hellenistic gymnasium speaks to the educational and cultural role that gymnasia played during this period. As Kousser points out, "[The gymnasium] further served, in an increasingly cosmopolitan world, to define the essential components of Greek identity." Her location inside the gymnasium of a small, Hellenistic town implies that the Venus was probably intentionally classicizing and retrospective even at

[44] The hand has since been put on display near the Venus de Milo (it is Louvre Ma 400), although it remains largely overlooked by visitors.

the time of its dedication.[45] It is this atavism—superficially Classicizing, but anchored in a complex intellectual environment—that has complicated the Venus' modern significance.

The Melians, in their resurrection of a Classically-styled Aphrodite, had in mind a past that must have already been as mythical to them as the Venus de Milo was for her nineteenth-century audience. Nude women in art were still highly provocative during the Hellenistic period. Showing women nude seems to have remained noteworthy even for some time after Praxiteles, inspired by the alluring figure of his mistress Phryne, sculpted Aphrodite completely naked for the first time in the fourth century.[46] Surviving copies of this type are also almost exclusively Roman, as with the Ludovisi Venus and the copy in the Munich Glyptothek. This raises the question: how many female nudes aside from the Aphrodite of Knidos were actually circulating in the Mediterranean in the Hellenistic period? How unique (and how shocking?) would a piece like the Venus de Milo have been, on display in the ancient world? It is also difficult to tell whether the Melians were being provocative or conservative with their half-nude Aphrodite. The Venus de Milo must have been inspired by Praxiteles' famous work. But even Pliny sees this later period in the history of Greek art as a decline in taste. He writes that after Lysippos and Apelles, *cessavit ars deinde*: "then art stopped."[47] We could debate the true meaning of Pliny's statement, but its pejorative force is apparent, if arbitrary. Pliny was an astute observer of art and its patrons in many ways, and it was not lost on him that we erect statues not of reality, but of what we want reality to be. Thus Lucius Attius, a poet of Pliny's time, had a statue of himself dedicated in Rome's Temple of

[45] Kousser. 209.

[46] See Lucian's *Amores* (13-14), in which the author describes visiting the Knidian Aphrodite and falling under her power, "filled with instant wonder" at the sight of her.

[47] Pliny, *Natural History* 34.54-65.

the Muses that was extraordinarily tall, although he himself was actually quite short.[48] We might imagine that like Lucius Attius, the Melians diplomatically desired to liken themselves to the fifth-century Athenians, while simultaneously maintaining their local identity. A sculptural composition that allowed Aphrodite to be only partially nude is a visual negotiation of these two desires. Was this a choice made out of conservativism? Or was the partially nude Aphrodite, with her slipping garments, just as erotic as Praxiteles' fully nude Aphrodite?

We know very little about the island of Melos after Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*. Herodotus (VIII.48) and Thucydides (V. 84.2) tell us that Melos was almost certainly founded by Dorians from Laconia, which may explain their decision to side with Sparta against Athens. Thucydides and Andocides both note that in 425 BCE Melos refused to pay the higher tribute demanded by the Athenians and was said to be defiant towards Athens.[49] In 416, in retaliation, the Athenians attacked the island, killed the men, and sold the women and children into slavery. The Athenians later repopulated Melos, and to what degree, if any, it retained its previous Doric character is unclear. If Melos was able to flourish again financially after the sack, there is little archaeological evidence to show it. The Venus de Milo is the only large-scale marble statue to have been found on the island, with the exception of a marble kouros (Athens NM 1558, *Fig. 2*, below). A silver coin hoard of predominantly Melian *staters*, which predates the Venus, has also been found.[50] In 1891, an excavation team hoping to find more works of the caliber of the Venus, discovered the kouros, but it has been paid little attention.

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[48] *NH* 34.19.

[49] Thucydides V and Andocides 4.22.

[50] These, Renfrew argues, were probably struck shortly prior to the Athenian sack of Melos, and may have been intended to fund the cost of ships and other war preparations. See Colin Renfrew, *An Island Polity: The Archaeology of Exploitation in Melos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University PRess, 1982). 49-50.

Figure 2: Kouros from Melos, Athens, National Archaeological Museum 1558. Ca. 550 BCE.

Images of Aphrodite on Melos are rare—the Venus de Milo is thus far the only one—but representations of the goddess Tyche (Fortune) are prevalent. This is not what one would expect if Aphrodite and her apple were the namesakes of the island. Where goddesses are concerned, Tyche is a more conservative choice for representation than Aphrodite: she is fully clothed, the Melian variant is maternal, and lacks the more nuanced and complex attributes of Aphrodite. In the fifth century, Tyche was generally irrelevant in images and otherwise; she is hardly a presence. Her ubiquity in the Hellenistic period gave rise to regional variants, the most popular of which was the Tyche of Antioch, originally created by Eutychides, a student of Lysippos.[51] The Melian coin hoard contained several local coins depicting Tyche, and a column drum (Athens NM 1743) shows a half-draped Tyche wearing a polos and holding a baby. In some myths Tyche is the daughter of Aphrodite and Hermes, so perhaps there is a connection between the two. From at least the fifth century, there are attestations of Melos

[51] Tyche's subsequent popularity is reflected in the coinage of Melos and elsewhere, as Kraay shows in Colin M. Kraay, *Archaic and Classical Greek Coins* (London: Methuen, 1976). 45-49. Tyche becomes especially prevalent during the Hellenistic period, but is virtually nonexistent prior. See also Lucinda Dirven, *The Palmyrenes of Dura-Europos: A Study of Religious Interaction in Roman Syria*, vol. 138 (London: Brill, 1999). 111-115. See also Pliny's discussion in *NH*.34. 51.

playing on the double meaning of its name in Greek, with coins showing an apple. "Melos," in Greek, means apple, so Aphrodite with the apple in-hand personifies the island itself. For the Melians, the true significance of the Venus de Milo was likely in the now missing apple that she held as a symbol of their city. Their preference for Tyche in local images, and especially a maternal Tyche, suggests that the Melians may have tended towards the conservative in their tastes. In other words, this Aphrodite—the Venus de Milo—was not simply an excuse to show Aphrodite naked. The Melian Aphrodite was highbrow; she was anchored in the intellectual environment of the gymnasium. As Kousser has summarized, "The Melian Aphrodite was—in its eclectic style, allusive iconography, and gymnasium display context—a carefully constructed and sophisticated retrospective work."[52]

In its ancient context, then, the Venus de Milo had a very specific meaning; her audience was narrowly Melian, and likely limited only to those elite Melian men who would have had access to the gymnasium. Her modern appeal is clearly entirely different. It is also worth noting that while Kousser shows conclusively that the Venus represents Aphrodite, held an apple and was flanked by herms, part of her allure in the public eye is her mystery, and these facts are blissfully ignored.[53] And given the limited audience and regional nature of the Venus de Milo's intended symbolism, it is interesting that she should be adopted as a universal symbol of Greek art.

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[52] Rachel Meredith Kousser, *Hellenistic and Roman Ideal Sculpture: The Allure of the Classical* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). 34.

[53] See, for example, the numerous popular discussions of what the Venus de Milo was doing with her arms, which ignore the evidence from Kousser's research and Voutier's journals. These include Virginia Postrel's *What Was The Venus De Milo Doing With Her Arms* (2015) for Slate (http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/culturebox/2015/05/the_venus_de_milo_s_arms_3d_printing_the_ancient_sculpture_spinning_thread.html). In other instances, it is questioned whether the statue represents Aphrodite at all (See Kristy Puchko's *15 Things You Should Know About The Venus de Milo,* for Mental Floss: http://mentalfloss.com/article/65911/15-things-you-should-know-about-venus-de-milo)

Sex Symbols And Skyscrapers: The Venus' Modern Reception

In the art museum, fame involves the distillation of a work into a symbol, and the efficacy of a work of art to communicate symbolically depends on its reinterpretation and adoption by later generations. Perhaps more than any other work of art, the Venus de Milo is symbolic. Of what, is a much more difficult question to answer. In Rodin's treatise *A La Venus de Milo,* Aphrodite is an ethereal and mystical feminine essence. She is the inspiration behind the semi-nudity of Marlene Dietrich in the poster for *Blonde Venus*, in which long, dark gloves truncate the actress' figure like the broken arms of the statue. Jim Dine has reinterpreted her form in serialized works in different media. She has even inspired a conceptual skyscraper by Russian arts patron and businessman Vasily Klyukin (who has also envisioned plans for a Winged Victory skyscraper). But what do these homages actually convey to the viewer, and why are we still interested in ancient forms? These adaptations are more than a testament to the enduring relevance of ancient art. Gregory Curtis, in his novella *Disarmed*, writes, "Once I saw that image, I never forgot it. How could I? The Venus de Milo permeates our culture, where her image is shorthand for lofty ideals: truth, purity, and timeless beauty."[54]

Many of these works of contemporary art are able to allude to the Venus de Milo by her silhouette alone—the nude, draped torso without arms—which demonstrates her iconicity. Even in reductionist renderings she is a symbol of femininity and the Classical aesthetic. In Jim Dine's serialized sculptures, the form of the Venus is simplified, without the personality, however idealized, that her face adds to the original composition. Dine sculpts his Venuses headless, focusing the viewer's gaze on her body. The resulting products look very modern, an effect augmented by Dine's choice of bright patinas such as the blue-green of his open-air New York series and glossy red of the three Venuses installed in the Guggenheim

[54] Curtis, Gregory. *Disarmed: The Story of the Venus de Milo*. Random House LLC, 2012. 12.

Bilbao. Other permutations incorporate several primary colors in a single piece, and several of Dine's projects, including a collage series, reduce the Venus' anatomy to color-blocked shapes, causing her to seem primitive or fauvist. Each of these alterations to the same basic form decontextualizes the statue, reinterpreting her according to anachronistic aesthetics, while simultaneously causing her to seem timeless.

Dine described his interests as emotive reduction: "My life is really a history of observing forms and taking in imagery. I don't mean in a photographic way, I mean in a way of feeling them structurally."[55] While Dine intended his work to punctuate the endurance and universality of the feminine form, others have seen malleability in the incomplete nature of Venus' form. The metaphor of the deconstructed, idealized woman is literalized in the Villiers de l'Isle Adam's 1885 science fiction novel *L'Eve Future* (The Future Eve) in which a fictionalized Thomas Edison builds the perfect woman. His robot model is inspired by the Venus de Milo. For Villiers, who was a friend of Baudelaire and equally concerned with materialism, the ideal feminine form is also a shell, void of intellect. In this way the Venus de Milo has come to emblematize both beauty and emptiness. The Venus de Milo lends herself well to reduction, however, because she is poorly understood. This gives the viewer the power to reconstruct what is missing. As one popular guidebook to Paris reads, "Some say [the Venus'] right arm held her dress, while her left arm was raised. Others say she was hugging a male statue or leaning on a column. I say she was picking her navel."[56]

For Dali, as for other Surrealists, art evoked psychological revolutions, alluded to an alternate reality, and drew out our subconscious thoughts. The best sculpture for doing so was

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[55] Jim Dine, Stephanie Wiles, and Vincent Katz, *Jim Dine, Some Drawings* (Oberlin: Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, 2005).

[56] Rick Steves, Steve Smith, Gene Openshaw, *Rick Steves Paris (Berkeley: Avalon Travel, 2014)* 133.

that which was "absolutely useless… and created wholly for the purpose of materializing in a fetishistic way, with maximum tangible reality, ideas and fantasies of a delirious character."[57] From here stemmed Dali's idea for the *Venus de Milo With Drawers*. Dali chose a work of art that represented, to him, beauty absent of meaning.

For Jim Dine and for others, the Venus de Milo is a symbol of the entire ancient world, of the so-called classical revolution that is synonymous with "the entire cultural landscape of fifth- and fourth-century BCE Greece, not only the visual arts."[58] She stands in for the past itself, and also for our reinvention of it according to our own modern image. The way we see Greek statues is largely dependent on this complex legacy. Statues have, throughout history, been construed as magical, powerful, terrifying, and erotic. The fear or desire for a statue to come to life, to act as a human being, is not an entirely primitive one. Giorgio De Chirico, in fact, was fascinated with the relationship between statues and their mimicry of life. In his memoirs, he wrote of lifelike store mannequins, "the more human it looks, the colder and more unpleasant it becomes. The mannequin is disagreeable to our eyes because it is a sort of parody of a human being … A statue does not aspire to life."[59]

Still, in spite of the unsettling nature of realistic statues, they impress us and mystify us. Their ability to mimic life intrigues us to the extent that we even harbor secret longings for them to come to life, as with Ovid's Pygmalion, who fell in love with his own creation. It is difficult to say if modern viewers have an emotional response to the Venus de Milo in this way, but they seem to know that they are meant to engage with it in a meaningful way. It is apparent that she is a symbol, and a universal one, at that.

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[57] Salvador Dali, "Objets surrealists," in *Le Surrealisme au service de la revolution*, 3 (Dec. 1931) 16.

[53] Andrew Stewart, *Classical Greece and the Birth of Western Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). 34.

[59] Giorgio De Chirico, *The Memoirs of Giorgio De Chirico* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1994). 246.

Winckelmann and The Evolution of Taste

It has been argued that some things are universally beautiful, that they appeal to everyone, regardless of experience, culture, and education. Denis Dutton sees a neurobiological impetus behind what we find beautiful. In some cases this is certainly true: symmetrical facial features, for instance, are a sign of superior genes.[60] Similarly, David Carrier sees power in language, arguing, "A strong interpretation [of a work of art] changes dramatically, perhaps permanently, how art is seen."[61] I argue, however, that in the case of the Venus de Milo, it is crafted by the museum.

Visitors experience the Venus de Milo differently than other works on display. They choose to spend their time trying to connect with it in various ways—through personal photography, reverse-mimesis, or contemplation—that indicate that they value it more than other works of ancient art. Visitors spend more time with the Venus because they know it is iconic. How do they know, universally, that this is the work that merits their contemplation? Aside from its solitary gallery display, the Venus is less immediately accessible than the Winged Victory of Samothrace, which is visible at the end of several long, intersecting hallways that meet at the top of the Daru staircase. Display choices can emphasize important works, but they alone do not create them. Even before it was housed in a gallery of its own, the Venus de Milo attracted throngs of visitors, and in fact her move was part of an attempt to

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[60] See here Joanna E Scheib, Steven W Gangestad, and Randy Thornhill, "Facial Attractiveness, Symmetry and Cues of Good Genes," *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London B: Biological Sciences* 266, no. 1431 (1999). Bernhard Fink and Ian Penton-Voak, "Evolutionary Psychology of Facial Attractiveness," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 11, no. 5 (2002).

[61] David Carrier, *Museum Skepticism: A History of the Display of Art in Public Galleries* (Durham : Duke University Press, 2006). 18.

better monitor the space for the pickpockets who preyed upon unsuspecting tourists in one of the busiest rooms of the museum.[62] In spite of the crowded room, and even though many visitors find the Venus de Milo virtually indistinguishable from other ancient nudes, they leave feeling that they have communed with an important aspect of the past. Unlike the *Mona Lisa*, which frequently disappoints, rarely is a complaint uttered about the Venus. It meets expectations.

The origin of these sentiments, if they can be called that, is certainly obtuse. Some subscribe to the *je ne sais quoi* philosophy of art experience. In some ways this is the most attractive reason for why we like art. Describing his time singing in the chorus of Berlioz's Requiem, paleobiologist Steven J. Gould acknowledged that in spite of the neurobiological and sociobiological reasons for the emotions he experienced, he also "realized that these explanations, however 'true', could never capture anything of importance about the meaning of that experience." He says this, "not to espouse mysticism or incomprehensibility, but merely to assert that the world of human behavior is too complex and too multifarious to be unlocked by any simple key."[63] Gould's explanation hits on an important aspect of the art experience, which is that once we know something is powerful, beautiful or important, we perceive it differently. In this vein, Ellen Dissanayake asserts that "Our understanding of these things in theoretical or descriptive terms is quite different than our personal experience of them."[64] Visitors may have a genuine emotional response to the Venus de Milo, or other

[62] In conversation with Louvre curator Sophie Descamps, February 28, 2014. The museum guards requested that the Venus de Milo be moved in order to better monitor for pickpockets and to disperse crowds.

[63] Stephen Jay Gould, "Sociobiology: The Art of Storytelling," *New Scientist* (16 November 1978). 533.

[64] Ellen Dissanayake, *What Is Art For?* (University of Washington Press, 1990). 33.

iconic works, because they believe them to be more important. But if seeing is the construction of our own values, who tells us how to see?

For many art historians, the answer to that question is Johann Joachim Winckelmann. In 1758, Winckelmann generated his own fantastical version of the Classical past in Rome. Unimpressed by what he considered the poor quality of Roman painting he had seen at Herculaneum, Winckelmann encountered a painting of Jupiter and Ganymede that he found truly beautiful. It was, of course, a forgery likely made for him by a friend who knew his tastes.[65] Winckelmann wrote to his friend Baron von Stosch about the painting, "Es ist ausser Rom, ich weiss nicht an welchem Orte, das allerschönste alte Gemählde entdecket, welches noch itzo bis an das Tages Licht erschienen ist, und übertrifft alles was zu Portici ist." He goes on to describe the face of Ganymede as "schön über allen Begriff"—beautiful beyond all else.[66] The allure of the forged painting was powerful because it presented Winckelmann with *his* ideal vision of Classical art. This vision, however, was unrelated to reality.

It seems impossible to begin any art historical analysis of ancient art without citing Winckelmann's influence. His biases are pervasive and lasting. More than Zeitgeist shaped Winckelmann's conception of the ideal, however. His tastes had their origins in accounts by Pliny, Philostratus, and others, often vaguely referenced, and possibly fictional. Winckelmann found an ancient source for his forged painting of Jupiter and Ganymede, who, he says, tells us that Jupiter would have been wearing a red robe.[67] In these sources, just as in the works of ancient (or sometimes modern) art he championed, Winckelmann read what he wanted to

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[65]Simon Richter, "Laocoon's Body and the Aesthetics of Pain Winckelmann, Lessing, Herder, Moritz, Goethe," (1992). 39.

[66] "An Baron von Stosch," 15 December 1760, letter 379 of *Briefe* 2:109. As cited in Richter, Simon. *Laocoon's Body and the Aesthetics of Pain: Winckelmann, Lessing, Herder, Mortiz, and Goethe*. Wayne State University Press, 1992.39.

[67] Winckelmann, Johan Joachim. *History of Ancient Art, vol. 2.* "On the Dress of Divinities." 7.

read. In this sense, the focus of Winckelmann's studies was as much a figment of his imagination as it was a reflection of the past. This does not mean that his interpretation of ancient sources is useless. His writing tells us what aspects of ancient art were valued during his lifetime—what "beautiful" was in the eighteenth century. These aesthetic ideals remained highly influential in the 1820s when the Venus de Milo was first put on display, but Winckelmann alone is not responsible for the statue's fame.

Winckelmann died a generation before the Venus de Milo was discovered. The statue would have been among the only works of original Greek sculpture he had seen. What would he have thought of it? His discussion of female drapery (that interestingly focuses almost exclusively on male drapery) suggests that the Venus' lower draped half might have appealed to him, but his critical response to the Parthenon marbles perhaps suggests otherwise. Goethe, who was raised in the shadow of Winckelmann's scholarship, said, "One *learns* nothing on reading him, but one *becomes* something."[68] Certainly we can see Winckelmann's influence on many of the early curators of the Louvre, especially Vivant Denon, whose treasure hunting trips with Napoleon instilled in him a deep romantic connection with the Classical past. Some have interpreted Goethe's statement as a compliment to Winckelmann as scholar and critic, but Goethe may equally be referring to Winckelmann's ability to respond emotionally to a work of art. Immediate, emotional responses to art were in vogue during Goethe's time, and perhaps because these scholars shaped the initial reception of the Venus de Milo, we, as modern visitors, still expect this sort of experience when we visit her.

This emotive response was prevalent in the debate over the Classical attribution of the Venus, too. Famously, Salomon Reinach argued vociferously against the assignation of the

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[68] Johann Peter Eckermann, Eduard Castle, and Hans Erich Neumann, *Gespräche Mit Goethe in Den Letzten Jahren Seines Lebens, 1823-1832*, vol. 1 (Berlin and Leipzig: Deutsches Verlagshaus Bong & Company, 1916). Originally Goethe's letters were published in 1827.

herm base with the Venus because he believed she was found in a lime kiln. If the Venus were destined to be incinerated in the kiln along with the base, then the two did not need to have any relation to one another. This enabled him to date the Venus to ca. 400 BCE. German scholars were already calling it Hellenistic, but Reinach said this was out of their desire for denigration, even of the greatest masterpieces.[69] His argument was based entirely on sentiment and possibility: "The style of the Venus de Milo is that of Attic sculptors in the same period, that is to say of the students and successors of Phidias." He effectively summed up his own bias when he wrote in his 1890 publication *"La Venus de Milo":* "taste has its truths, like reason and the heart."[70] Adolf Furtwängler, Reinach's contemporary and sometimes-nemesis, wrote in response to Reinach's Hellenistic dating of the statue that the base and herms were disassociated from the Aphrodite, because she was meant to be presented to Louis XVIII as an original work by Praxiteles. He found Reinach's argument about the lime kiln ridiculous. He countered that there was no evidence for the kiln, and that every other kiln he had excavated contained broken fragments of marble, where the architectural niche at Melos had none.[71] But Quatremère de Quincy, who at the time was serving as secretary of the Académie des Beaux Arts, said that if the Venus could not be attributed to an ancient artist, it was nevertheless beautiful. He wrote, "De quelle époque par exemple est la Vénus de Milo? Est-ce ou non un original?– Et si elle était une copie d'un artiste inconnu dans un temps de décadence, qu'en faudrait-il penser? Rien, sinon qu'elle est belle."[72] Quatremère's attitude

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[69] See Salomon Reinach, *La Vénus De Milo* (Paris: Gazette des beaux-arts, 1890).

[70] Salomon Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes, Et Religions*, vol. 3 (Paris: E. Leroux, 1908). 397.

[71] Adolf Furtwängler and Eugénie Strong, *Masterpieces of Greek Sculpture: A Series of Essays on the History of Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[72] Quatremère de Quincy, cited in Jean Aicard, *La Vénus De Milo: Recherches Sur L'histoire De La Découverte, D'après Des Documents Inédits Par Jean Aicard* (Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1874).

reflects the romantic nature of nineteenth-century scholarship. A work that is beautiful, in this realm, speaks for itself. Beauty, however, does not make an icon.

The Venus de Milo is one of the few pieces in her own gallery at the Louvre. There she stands without competition from other statues, and is flanked by ample space for visitors who wish to circumambulate her base. The statue entered the collection of the (newly public) Louvre quite early—in 1821. Many of the Louvre's best known pieces, including the Winged Victory, arrived at the Louvre over the course of the following fifty years, and perhaps we could argue that because the Venus de Milo was one of the earliest works, it retained a prominent place in the collection. The Venus, however, was not the only nude statue of a woman in the museum during the early nineteenth century. The Venus Genetrix was also prized, a favorite of Louis XIV, and remained in the collection of the museum after the Revolution. The Parisian life of the Venus Genetrix was thus already much longer than that of the Venus, which had entered the Louvre relatively quickly after its discovery on Melos.

In some ways, the two statues are not so very different (see *Fig. 4* below). The Venus Genetrix, like the Venus de Milo, is semi-nude. Her wet drapery slips from her shoulder on the right side, while she removes her mantle on the left. The drapery clings to her form, masking nothing. Her gaze is cast slightly downward, towards her right hand, which now holds the golden apple from Eris, a modern addition. Although she is a Roman copy of an original said to have been sculpted by Callimachus, in many ways she is more naturalistic in pose and expression than the Venus de Milo. Both have highly idealized faces, but the Venus Genetrix shows a hint of expression, nearly a smile, in her lips. She stands in a moderate contrapposto that balances the motion of her left arm. Her torso is not nearly as wide as that of the Venus de Milo, and her abdominals are left undefined, giving her a more youthful appearance.

The Venus de Milo, on the other hand, is conspicuously nude despite the heavily folded drapery masking her lower half. This creates a striking textural contrast to the smooth marble of her torso. Her left leg is bent, causing the drapery to emphasize the bend in her knee and the curve of her calf. Unlike the Venus Genetrix, whose weight shifts to suggest forward motion, the Venus de Milo is firmly planted in place—the bent leg is merely a suggestion of dynamism. Her exaggerated hourglass form is made even more apparent by her missing arms, which shape the negative space around her body in a way that appeals conceptually to the modern viewer. In many ways, the Venus de Milo is formally ambiguous—it is difficult to discern any breath of thought or emotion in her vacant expression, and her lack of arms leaves her intention to the viewer's imagination.

The descriptions given by the admirers of the Venus de Milo are frequently so vague that they could be about a myriad of ancient statues. Rodin, for example, wrote, "Quelle splendeur en ton beau torse, assis fermement sur tes jambes solides, et dans ces demi-teintes qui dorment sur tes seins, sur ton ventre splendide, large comme la mer!" ("What splendour in your beautiful torso, seated firmly on your solid legs, and in those half tones that sleep upon your breasts, upon your splendid belly, large like the sea!")[73] Gregory Curtis asked, "And how old is she? She is not an adolescent, she is not a virgin, and she is not a crone. She could be twenty-five or thirty or fifty."[74]

The Louvre's visitors are also confused. Some of them desperately ask others whether this is, in fact, the Venus de Milo. One man, seeing the Venus Genetrix on his way out of the

[73] Rodin (1912) 12.

[74] Curtis (2012) 14.

gallery said, "Oh, look, there's another Venus de Milo."[75] In other words, she is both iconic and obscure. Everyone seemed to know the phrase "Venus de Milo" but not everyone knew which piece that title belonged to. The Venus was so famous that she became synonymous with other semi-nude statues of women. This suggests that the iconicity of the Venus de Milo does not stem from her unique beauty, although that iconicity certainly influences the way visitors see her.

Many nude or semi-nude classicizing female statues in the Louvre's collection—the Venus of Arles and the Capitoline Venus type—are also generically quite similar to the Venus de Milo. This begs the question– why was it so essential for the Venus to be a Classical icon? The other Venuses are no less beautiful than the Venus de Milo. The answer for art historians seems to be: Winckelmann. We should not dismiss the lasting impact of Winckelmann's scholarship on the aesthetic ideal that shaped the nineteenth century reception of the Venus de Milo. Winckelmann's scholarship alone does not explain why the Venus de Milo attained iconicity rather than other works in the Louvre's collection of antiquities, like the Venus Genetrix, the Capitoline Venus, or the Venus of Arles.

Much like the Venus Genetrix, the Venus of Arles had been in the collection of the museum for more than a century already. It was discovered in 1651, and belonged first to the royal collection. The Capitoline Venus, of course, is a work of the second century CE, a date far later than that preferred by the French, but it is undeniably a copy of the Praxitelean Knidian Aphrodite type. This alone could make it valuable, as the Discobolos is for the British Museum. Still, the Capitoline Venus is virtually unknown to the average museum visitor. It is possible that these works were valued less because they are later than the Venus de Milo,

[75] Based on in-gallery observations, discussions, and social media feedback. For more on this, see "Charting Iconicity" in this volume.

although only slightly when one takes into account its Hellenistic date. In fact, the date of the Venus Genetrix is unclearly labeled in its display and in museum materials where it is listed as "fourth-fifth century (Roman copy of original by Callimachus)."[76] One could argue that like the Venus de Milo, it is also misconstrued as Classical as opposed to Classicizing. Although the label and materials for the Venus de Milo have now been changed to account for a Hellenistic date, visitors seem unaware, and it remains a symbol of Classical Greece. More importantly, these other Venuses serve to illustrate that beauty and style are not sufficient for iconicity.

The conflation of the Venus de Milo with the Venus Genetrix suggests that many visitors see the two as formally similar. Both are mostly nude, both have the wet drapery that we, like Winckelmann, associate with the High Classical period, and both have serene, idealized faces. The Venus Genetrix, however, unlike the Venus de Milo, is relatively unknown to the average museumgoer. They see her only as another version of the icon they are familiar with, although the two are contextually quite different. The Venus Genetrix type became did not become important until the Julio-Claudian dynasty, whose emperors mythically traced their lineage to Aphrodite through the Trojan prince Aeneas. The Venus de Milo, on the other hand, was almost certainly more overtly sensual on display in a gymnasium for young men. These differences in original function are not conveyed stylistically in either sculpture.

[76] Louvre Museum: Louvre.fr/venusgenetrix.

Figure 4. The Venus Genetrix (left) and the Venus de Milo (right) on display in the Louvre. Images labeled for reuse.

The Museum As Maker Of Icons

The answer to the question of iconicity is a simple one, but one with profound implications. The Venus de Milo became iconic, quite simply, because the Louvre needed an icon. When the allies defeated Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815, the French Empire was restructured, and more than 5,000 works were repatriated from the Musée Napoléon, renamed the Louvre that year. This included nearly 300 statues, one of which was Winckelmann's favorite, the Apollo Belvedere. An account of the allied reclamation of Paris and the Louvre reads, "When the armies of England and Prussia took possession of the French capital on 5th July 1815, it certainly contained the largest collection of ancient statues, as well as paintings and pictures of the first masters, that had ever been, or perhaps ever will be, brought together in any one spot."[77]

[77] Pillan, Francis, and Underwood, T.G., eds. *Descriptive Catalogue of the antique statues, paintings, and other productions of the Fine Arts, that existed in the Louvre, at the time the allies took possession of Paris in July 1815, to which are added some useful hints to those who intend to visit the memorable field of Waterloo.* Edinburgh, 1816. 5.

The Louvre, in other words, was the ultimate universal museum, a concept that was not yet defined, but which was already contentious. The French, and especially Vivant Denon, the Louvre's first director, were deeply upset by the restitution of so many works of art. The Apollo Belvedere had been the centerpiece of the collection, and it was repatriated along with the Laocoon, the Medici Venus, and the Dying Gaul. The act of repatriation is not surprising now, but as Margaret Miles notes, this was "the first time in early modern history and the first time since Scipio Aemilianus" that a policy of restitution, not plundering, followed war.[78] The Duke of Wellington's decision was revolutionary, and set a precedent. The Duke wrote that it would, "In my opinion, be unjust in the Sovereigns [of Europe] to gratify the people of France on this subject, at the expense of their own people, but the sacrifice they would make would be impolitic, as it would deprive them of the opportunity of giving the people of France a great moral lesson."[79] Two classical scholars from Edinburgh, writing at the time of the initiative, wrote, "The national vanity of the French was too deeply wounded by the removal of the productions of Fine Arts from their Capital, to admit of allowing any testimony of what they had once been possessed of to remain in general circulation […]"[80] The loss of these works of art was a matter of pride, of "vanity." There are no unbiased accounts in warfare, but the status conferred from these ancient masterpieces,

[78] Margaret M Miles, *Art as Plunder: The Ancient Origins of Debate About Cultural Property* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). 334.

[79] Excerpted from Miles (2008), the letter of the Duke of Wellington to Viscount Castlereagh, K.G., Paris, September 23, 1815.

[80] Pillan and Underwood (1816) 3.

seems to have been as personal as their acquisition. The loss of the Apollo Belvedere, in particular, was felt so saliently that it apparently made French women weep.[81]

Denon, who considered himself both a scholar and archaeologist, undertook many of these acquisitions himself. He had traveled with Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, sketching Egyptian art that he published in a volume called *Voyage dans la basse et la haute Egypte* in 1802. When he accompanied Napoleon to Italy, he was considered a tastemaker.[82] He was the first to see the beauty in Italian Primitives, an interest he expressed by looting a number of paintings and parading them through the streets of Paris in the style of a Roman triumph.[83] Denon's association with these looted masterpieces is illustrated in Benjamin Zix's 1811 portrait of Denon at the entrance to the Salle Diane (below). In it, Denon sits studiously at his desk, is surrounded by obelisks, Greek and Roman sculpture, and papyrus scrolls. The vast quantity of works acquired by the French is alluded to in one record of October 1, 1803, in which one hundred cases of antiquities arrived from Italy alone.[84]

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[81] Stone discusses this in Stone, Peter G. *Cultural heritage, ethics and the military*. Vol. 4. Boydell Press, 2011. Originally recorded in Wellington's papers, see especially Wellington, Duque de. "The Dispatches of Field Marshall the Duke of Wellington/compiled (…) by Lieut. Colonel Gurwood." (1834).

[82] Denon's influence outlived Napoleon. After Waterloo, the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III consulted him for the newly opened Prussian Picture Gallery, and Tsar Alexander I made purchases for the Hermitage based on Denon's taste in Old Masters from Cassel. For more on this see Edward P Alexander, *Museum Masters: Their Museums and Their Influence* (Walnut Creek: Rowman Altamira, 1983). 108.

[83] Ian Dennis Jenkins, *Archaeologists & Aesthetes: In the Sculpture Galleries of the British Museum 1800-1939* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1992). 14.

[84] McClellan, 120-121.

Figure 5: Benjamin Zix, *Allegorical Portrait of Vivant Denon*, 1811. Musee du Louvre.

After Napoleon's defeat, Denon's newly amassed collection was quickly disassembled. The antiquities wing went from being crowded with ancient statues to nearly empty in less than a year's time. The British Museum purchased what had only recently been termed the Elgin Marbles in 1816, which only exacerbated this loss. Denon saw the British, who oversaw the restitution process, and W.R. Hamilton, who was a secretary of Lord Elgin, in particular, as rivals.[85]

Denon was faced with a minimal collection of antiquities at a time when Classical art signified erudition and imperial success. This is the era in which in the British Museum restructured the entire museum around the Elgin Marbles.[86] The original museum was based in Montagu House in Bloomsbury, and was designed by Robert Hooke in the style of a French Hôtel de Ville. The entire character of the new museum, however, was reevaluated to suit the marbles upon their acquisition, and Robert Smirke was commissioned to rebuild the

[85] Jenkins, 15.
[86] "The Parthenon marbles": here I call them "Elgin" to denote their association with Lord Elgin at this time.

museum as a Greek temple, still in its current state. This is the environment in which Vivant Denon acquired and lost an entire collection of antiquities, and when the Venus de Milo was discovered five years after the restitution, it would have had to fill a significant lacuna in the Louvre collection. The statue looked Classical, even if it was not. It had the heavy drapery that appealed to Winckelmann, and the idealized nudity of the Venus di Medici and the Apollo Belvedere, both of which had been returned to Italy several years prior. It was thus the icon that the Louvre needed.

It is perhaps easy to forget that the role of the curator is very different now than it was when the Venus de Milo was first put on display. The rise of the curator-as-author is linked closely to the institutional critique—the criticism of gallery and museum practices in relation to social and cultural concerns. Nineteenth-century curation was exactly that in the literal sense: the care and maintenance of works of art. As Hal Foster summarizes, the institutional critique is less combative, and more an "investigation of the institution of art, its perceptual and cognitive, structural and discursive parameters."[87] This allows curators to be subtly critical of the institutions that employ them. In the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, the curator was neither author nor artist, but preserver of fact. For the Louvre to present a work of art as Classical masterpiece meant unquestionably that it was.

Paul O'Neill notes that over the course of the 1980s, the symbol of the institutional critique was the museum itself, which meant that curators could renegotiate the relationship between artists, their work, and the ways in which they were displayed and valued. In other words, curators were those who assigned value, both literally, in terms of the art market, and figuratively in terms of criticism and canon. There are many facets of this subjectivity. The

[87] Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996). 20.

simple inclusion of a work in an exhibition could later augment its sale price at auction (if it ever reached that point), but also ensured that it would become a part of the discourse through catalogues, criticism and documentation. As Buchloh argued, "An institutional critique became the central focus of [these] artists' assaults on the false neutrality of vision that provides the underlying rationale for those institutions."[88] Because of the nature of this discourse, it is easy to forget not only that early museum displays did not employ these methods, but also that modern audiences do not think critically about works that are not presented to them in this way. Neither the audience of 1821 nor the audience of today considers the Venus de Milo as an object worthy of criticism. As an icon, it is beyond reproach.

The subjectivity of both the objects themselves and their display in the museum are taken for granted in academic circles, but not for audiences. A recent report by BritainThinks shows that audiences still largely see museums as trustworthy guardians of facts, but this is because they believe curators are not inserting their opinions or personal biases into the exhibition.[89] This is very different from one of the primary roles of the curator as defined by O'Neill, which is that "the act of curating conveys value to art through its presentation and discussion."[90] If this value is assumed to be inherent, discussion becomes irrelevant. In this sense, the Venus de Milo continues to reinforce the outmoded mindset of a nineteenth century romantic.

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[88] Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* Winter, no. 55 (1990).

[89] "Public perceptions of—and attitudes to—the purposes of museums in society", a report prepared by BritainThinks for the Museums Association. March 2013.

[90] O'Neill, 28.

The Louvre did everything in its power to highlight the Venus de Milo in its new display setting. Display, especially that which was unworthy of the piece in question, was a concern for scholars of the time. In 1815 Quatremère had written a polemic against the uninspired display of art in museums. In particular, he was concerned with art that was decontextualized. By this he did not mean ancient art in the museum, but rather, to place ancient art in the wrong museum. In *Considerations Morales Sur La Destination Des Ouvrages de l'art*, he wrote of Lebrun's Magdalen painting, which had recently been moved from the Louvre to Versailles, "The colorless picture, exposed in splendid galleries to the vain curiosity of chilling criticism, appears a ghost of its former self. It hardly attracted notice… I saw it... And I turned away my eyes."[91] Quatremère conveys a highly emotional response to art and its display. The title of his essay alone—"moral considerations"—discloses this attitude. Placing works of art in equally beautiful settings is central here, as we can be sure that it was with the newly discovered Venus de Milo.

When the Venus de Milo was installed in the antiquities gallery– the Salle Diane– in May of 1821, she was placed at the end of a long corridor in the same place the Apollo Belvedere had formerly stood. One icon took the place of another. In this position of honor, the Venus de Milo was highlighted above all other works in the collection. Thanks to the singular focal point in a newly sparse gallery space, her prominence was especially salient. The Louvre had also only recently become a public institution in 1793, and its visitors must have been struck by these long, spectacular gallery spaces that were inaccessible except to the very elite before the Revolution. The museum further emphasized the iconicity of a select works of art in its collection in 1977, when it reduced its permanent collections to seven: Painting,

[91] Translation is McClellan's. See his *Inventing the Louvre: Art, politics, and the origins of the modern museum in eighteenth-century Paris*. Univ of California Press, 1994. 296.

Sculpture, Objets d'Art, Prints and Drawings, Greek, Roman and Etruscan, and Egyptian and Oriental.[92] As Bresc argues, "The star work of art took on the status of a symbol." These star works were: the Mona Lisa, the Venus de Milo and the Winged Victory.[93] This model stresses a passive visitor, who needs to be told what to value. As Hal Foster writes, "Just as the viewer must be posited as passive in order to be activated, the artwork must be deemed dead so that it can be resuscitated. This ideology, central to the modern discourse on the art museum, is also fundamental to art history 'as a humanistic discipline', whose mission, Erwin Panofsky wrote 75 years ago, is to 'enliven what otherwise would remain dead'."[94] Foster was referring to museums as places of spectacle and performance in the modern sense, but his argument can equally be applied to the role of the icon in helping visitors to navigate a collection. While the icon gives the allusion of significance, however, it is also capable of obfuscation. Visitors rarely understand why iconic works are considered such, but a museum is an authority in the realm of value assignation.

The success of the Louvre's creation of an icon is plain. Replicas of the Venus de Milo could easily be acquired by the 1850s.[95] A 1910 catalogue of casts available for purchase at the Louvre shop includes the Venus de Milo, Winged Victory, and, ironically, the Apollo Belvedere, which had since been returned to Italy.[96] In Daumier's *L'amateur*, an erudite

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[92]Anne Gombault, "Company Profile: Organizational Saga of a Superstar Museum: The Louvre," *International Journal of Arts Management* (2002). 73.

[93]Geneviève Bresc, *Mémoires Du Louvre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1991). 122. Gombault (2002) also makes note of this reorganization to emphasize masterpieces.

[94] Hal Foster. "After the White Cube." *London Review of Books* 37.6: March 2015. 25-26.

[95] These appear everywhere, from collectors' books to etchings by Daumier, to photographs and artists' studies. A photograph in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum shows a late nineteenth century studio of casts of famous works for Royal Academy artists in residence to study, which includes the Venus de Milo.

[96] Paul Vitry, *Catalogue Des Moulages En Vente Au Palais Du Louvre: Antiquité* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1908).

gentleman sits in placid consideration of a miniature Venus de Milo cast (see *Fig. 6* below). The piece was the subject of frequent public lectures from 1821 on, keeping it constantly in the public eye. It has been written about more frequently than perhaps any other work from the ancient world, in publications both scholarly and popular.

Figure 6: Daumier, *L'amateur*, 1835. Ink on paper. Note the replica Venus de Milo in the background.

Museum audiences take note of this iconicity. They spend more time with the Venus de Milo than with any other work of ancient art in the museum's collection (See *Fig. 7* below, as discussed in-depth in Chapter 7). The next most iconic piece, the Nike of Samothrace, receives slightly over half the amount of time in observation of the Venus de Milo. The fame of the Venus overrules, in a museum setting, the power of cultural, biological and environmental diversity in the development of individual taste and preference for art. This data speaks to the impact of a museum's choices, not only on its audience, but on the development of a canon. There is no greater icon, but also none less understood than the

Venus de Milo, and without changes in display, policy and labeling, that is unlikely to change.

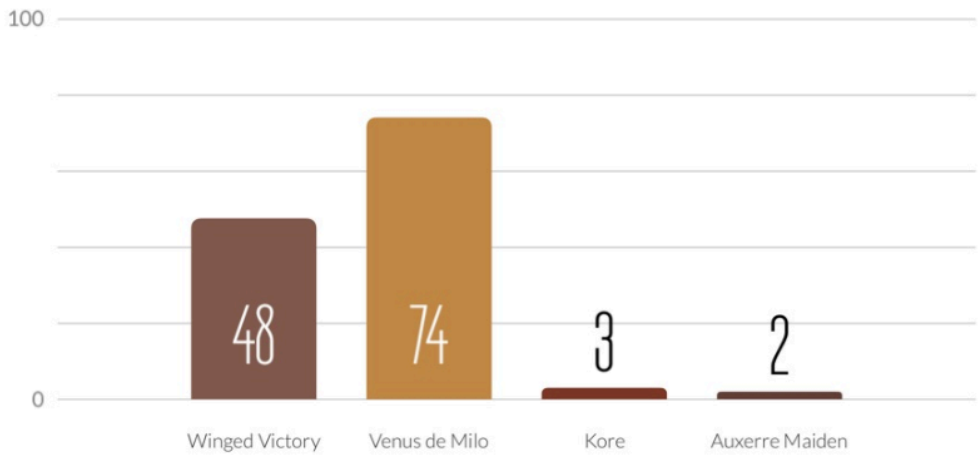

Figure 7: Amount of time in seconds spent with objects in the antiquities wing of the Louvre. These numbers include only observations of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, the Venus de Milo, the Kore from the Cheramyes Group at Samos, and the Auxerre Maiden.

III.

(Re)Constructing Beauty:

The Story Of The Nike Of Samothrace

At a moment of despair in Aristophanes' *Peace*, Trygaeus, its protagonist, suddenly turns to the audience and demands, "If anyone of you happens to have been initiated in Samothrace, now you should pray to Callone!"[97] For Aristophanes and his contemporaries, Samothrace was known as the seat of this cult, a mystery cult that we know little about aside from a few ambiguous references (Strabo remarks that he does not even know who the

[97] *Peace* 227-78, translated in N Lewis, "The Ancient Literary Sources (Samothrace 1)," *New York* (1958). The play was originally performed in 421 BCE, only a few days, reportedly, before the Peace of Nicias, which marked the end of the Peloponnesian War.

Samothracian gods are).[98] The Nike of Samothrace, found in fragments in 1863 above the sanctuary to those Great Gods, was likely a thanks-offering to the cult that defined Samothrace in ancient minds. Unlike many iconic works of art, whose fame is often due in part to their mysterious origins, the find-spot of the Nike was never obscure. Like fellow icons the Venus de Milo and the *Mona Lisa*, the Nike's history has nothing to do with her modern importance. For the Samothracians, the Nike would have been the symbol of a military battle, the successful application of brute force. That military significance was not lost on modern audiences. Following World War One, the United States designed medals for American veterans that capitalized on that image, employing, "The two greatest symbols known of peace and victory, the rainbow and the Winged Victory statue of Samothrace."[99] In the Louvre, the Nike emerged as an emblem of beauty and high fashion, an image that is largely the product of restorations made between 1863 and 1883. That work is responsible for her modern appearance and status as an icon. More than any single aspect of the Classical past, the Nike, positioned at the top of the Daru staircase, has become a symbol of the Louvre itself.

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[98] Strabo 7, frg. 50 (331c). For more on the history of Samothrace and the sanctuary, see Susan Guettel Cole, *Theoi Megaloi: The Cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace*, vol. 96 (London: Brill Archive, 1984); Sandra Blakely, "Human Geography, Gis Technology, and Ancient Mysteries: A Case Study from the Island of Samothrace," *Getty Research Journal* 7, no. 1 (2015); Sandra Blakely, "Kadmos, Jason, and the Great Gods of Samothrace: Initiation as Mediation in a Northern Aegean Context," *Electronic Antiquity: Communicating The Classics* 11, no. 1 (November 2007); Sandra Blakely, "Toward an Archaeology of Secrecy: Power, Paradox, and the Great Gods of Samothrace," *Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 21, no. 1 (2011); James R McCredie, Olga Palagia, and Bonna D Wescoat, *Samothracian Connections: Essays in Honor of James R. Mccredie* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010); Bonna D Wescoat, "Coming and Going in the Sanctuary of the Great Gods, Samothrace," in *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[99] See the original article by Ferriss Powell Merritt, "The Victory Medal for Veterans," *Colliers, The National Weekly* September 13 (1919). Perhaps conflating the two images of Victory and Peace, commemorative medals minted between 1914 and 1919 begin to depict a winged Peace allegory, who closely resembles the Nike but also carries an olive branch. Others represent Victory holding a shield. These are illustrated in Hibbler, Harold E. and Kappen, Charles V., *So Called Dollars: An Illustrated Standard Catalogue.* Coin & Currency Institute (2008). 171-172.

I argue that works like the Venus de Milo and Auxerre Maiden are benefactors (or victims) of institutional choices that enabled them to attain their status.[100] Of all the works of art that have become iconic in museum collections, the Nike is among the easiest to explain as a true masterpiece. It fits nicely with our standard of beauty. It has widespread recognition. It is responsible for the term "winged victory" being adopted in pop culture, for use in Nike sneaker advertisements and air force battalions, often with negligible connection to the original work of art. There is even an insect-sized robot named Winged Victory.[101] It is not uncommon for an ancient statue to undergo such estrangement from its original context and meaning. The Nike, however, has undergone a transformation in popularity and aesthetic assessment that is unparalleled by other iconic works of art. In its infancy in the Louvre, the statue was denigrated as much as it is extolled now. It has been argued that the statue is popular today because of its location on top of the Daru staircase, which allows visitors to glimpse the Nike from below as they come down the hall.[102] It is true that this is a dramatic viewing experience.

But while display played a role in the Nike's popularity, restoration is what eventually elevated the statue to iconicity. Restoration, especially during the turn of the nineteenth century, was tailored to the most apt tastes and standards, regardless of historicity. Early restorations were often the manifestation of wishful thinking, but these alterations are infrequently acknowledged or explained by major museums. In the case of the Nike of

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[100] For more on the Auxerre Maiden, see Chapter Four of this volume.

[101] See Robert Wood, "Fly, Robot, Fly," *Spectrum, IEEE* 45, no. 3 (2008). If Winckelmann could have envisaged a post-apocalyptic future scenario for Classical sculpture, this might have been it.

[102] See, for instance, John H. D'Arms, "The Rise and Fall of Classic Statues," *New York Times*, no. September 20 (1981).

Samothrace restoration created, out of fragments, something contemporary audiences could find beautiful.

Rhodian Or Roman? The Debate Over The Nike's Origin

Samothrace was never praised, as Athens was, as an epicenter of art and culture. When Cyriacus of Ancona, the antiquarian and so-called Father of Archaeology, visited the island in 1444, the history of the island's religion and its sanctuary had been largely forgotten, and the Nike long buried.[103] The island (*Saonessos* in Greek) gets its name from the Samian and Thracian settlers that colonized the island in antiquity.[104] The Samothracians were known as seafarers; Eusebius credits them with inventing the first boats, an apocryphal claim that nevertheless conveys their strong maritime identity.[105] There are numerous ancient literary references to Samothrace and its people—especially mentions of its mystery cult and network of ships—but the Nike is absent from all of these. Pliny, one of the few authors to discuss art in detail, did visit Samothrace but does not mention the Nike. Two different statues, a Venus and Pothos by Scopas, are his only concern. These, according to Pliny, were worshipped during religious ceremonies. If the Nike was produced anytime during the Hellenistic period,

[103] See Lehmann's report on this: Karl Lehmann-Hartleben, "Cyriacus of Ancona, Aristotle, and Teiresias in Samothrace," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 12, no. 2 (1943). For more on Cyriacus' early visits, see also Marina Belozerskaya, "The First Tourist," *History Today* 60, no. 3 (2010); Marina Belozerskaya, *To Wake the Dead: A Renaissance Merchant and the Birth of Archaeology* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2009).

[104] Diodorus, *Library of History*, V.47. 2-3.

[105] Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 1.10.

as is the general consensus, Pliny must have seen it. It is odd that he would not mention it.[106] Perhaps the statues of Venus and Pothos drew his attention because they were associated with the famous sculptor Scopas. The Nike, unattributed to any specific artist, was invisible to him.

Initiation ceremonies began sometime prior to the mid-fifth century BCE when the first ceramic dedications to the Great Gods appear.[107] The cult was primarily local in influence until the fourth century, but the gods themselves were already worshiped by the pre-Greek inhabitants of the island. The island eventually gained notoriety as a cult center, but not until the late fifth century. A speech written by Antiphon that survives in fragments describes Samothrace around 425 BCE as a poor city incapable of paying the full tribute to Athens, and suggesting the Samothracians were not yet influential as a cult center.[108] The theater that the Nike ornaments is located at the entrance to the sanctuary and is the oldest surviving structure in this ritual landscape and the culmination of the Sacred Way. The gods worshiped here—the "Kabeiroi", also called the "Great Gods"—pre-dated the arrival of the Greeks on the island. Sandra Blakely summarizes, "Herodotus deemed the Kabeiroi Pelasgian, Pausanias and Aristides, Pergamene, and numerous authors, Phrygian."[109] There were a myriad of theories about the origin of the Kabeiroi, and perhaps their mystery was part of their appeal. Diodorus was correct, as Blakely notes, in his assumption that the language of the Samothracian mysteries was Thracian. Bonfante and Brixhe confirmed this in their study of non-Greek ceramic graffiti from the temple of Apollo at the site. The graffiti are commonly

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[106] Pliny, *Natural History.* 4.4—"The First Artists Who Excelled In The Sculpture Of Marble […]"

[107] Cole, *Theoi Megaloi: The Cult of the Great Gods at Samothrace.*. 11.

[108] Antiphon, "On The Tribute To Samothrace": " Ἡ γὰρ νῆσος, ἣν ἔχομεν, δήλη μὲν καὶ πόρρωθεν <ὅτι> ἐστὶν ὑψηλὴ καὶ τραχεῖα· καὶ τὰ μὲν χρήσιμα καὶ ἐργάσιμα μικρὰ αὐτῆς ἐστι, τὰ δ' ἀργὰ πολλά, μικρᾶς αὐτῆς οὔσης."

[109] Blakely, "Kadmos, Jason, and the Great Gods of Samothrace: Initiation as Mediation in a Northern Aegean Context." *Electronic Antiquity.* 11.1.

variants of "DIN" or "DINTOLE". These inscriptions confirm that these are dedications to the Great Goddess. They may refer to Mount Dindymene, another place for the worship of the Great Goddess in Phrygia, or to her alternate name.[110]

The big question for the Nike of Samothrace is: which victory does she celebrate? Production dates spanning two hundred years have been variously assigned to the Nike. These depend on the victory she commemorates, which, without inscriptions, will likely always remain a mystery. The most recent analyses propose that Rhodians commissioned the Nike to celebrate two naval victories over Antiochos III of Syria in 190 BCE.[111] The Seleucid kings frequently minted coins bearing winged victories for their triumphs, although a coin depicting a naval victory of this date cannot be conclusively linked to the Nike of Samothrace. More convincingly, the marble of the base and the ship is of Rhodian origin, from the town of Lartos, an unusual choice if the statue has no connection to the island of Rhodes.[112] The figure itself was carved of Parian marble, and was carved in several pieces prior to assembly. This technique was used in Asia Minor, the Dodecanese and the Cyclades, which further suggests a Rhodian manufacture.[113] Samples taken from the Nike's wing, base, and the hand were analyzed using several methods, including examination of grain size and marble

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[110] Blakely discusses this, (supra) and linguistic studies on the ceramic graffiti from the temple of Apollo in Mesembria have been done by Claude Brixhe, "Zônê Et Samothrace: Lueurs Sur La Langue Thrace Et Nouveau Chapitre De La Grammaire Comparée?," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 150, no. 1 (2006). Bonfante was the first to determine the pre-Greek language was Thracian in Giuliano Bonfante, "A Note on the Samothracian Language," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 24, no. 2 (1955). "Dindymene" is an alternate name for Cybele in Phrygia.

[111] See the Louvre's own labels here: http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/winged-victory-samothrace, which have been updated following the symposium on the subject of the Nike that was held in 2015. It should also be noted that Marianne Hamiaux has thoroughly documented these arguments, the origins of the Nike of Samothrace, and the processes of restoration and reconstruction that occurred, both current and past.

[112] See "A Closer Look At The Victory Of Samothrace": http://musee.louvre.fr/oal/victoiredesamothrace/victoiredesamothrace_acc_en.html.

[113] Ibid.

crystalline structure under a stereoscopic microscope, Electron Paramagnetic Resonance Spectroscopy, and Stable Isotope Analysis.[114] The ship's base matches a quarry in the southeast region of Rhodes both in its isotopic signature and in its blue-gray veined appearance. Stone tool marks also indicate this region was used as an ancient quarry, making a strong case for the Nike's Rhodian connection.[115]

Another stylistic node that links the Nike to Rhodes is the Attalid-sponsored Great Altar at Pergamon. Comparison between these two has been used to assign a date to the Nike. A Rhodian sculptor may even have been responsible for the carving of the great Altar, although the evidence for a Rhodian school is elusive.[116] This approach to dating is a difficult one, because its validity rests on the accuracy of the stylistic comparison. Each of these monuments shows a similar dynamism and depth of relief carving; the giants of the Pergamon altar contort their bodies in an agony that is mirrored in their faces. This is the *pathos*, or suffering, that is characteristic of Hellenistic art. The Nike has the deep-grooved robes and incipient motion of the figures on the altar. Athena, for instance, who is shown grasping the hair of one of the giants, looks very much like the Nike in posture and dress (see *Fig. 7* below). But is this enough to determine a date? If the Nike's face expressed this characteristic emotion, we will never know. For this reason comparisons between the two monuments focus on drapery styles.

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[114] Results published in Y. Maniatis et al., *The Sanctuary of the Great Gods on Samothrace, Greece: An Extended Marble Provenance Study*, *Interdisciplinary studies on ancient stone. Proceedings of the IX ASMOSIA Conference (Tarragona, 2009). Istituto Català d'Arqueologia Clàssica, Tarragona* (Tarragona: 2012).

[115] Ibid. 270.

[116] Gloria S. Merker, *The Hellenistic Sculpture of Rhodes*, vol. 40, *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology* (Göteborg: Paul Astroms Forlag, 1973). 14. On a Rhodian school of sculptors see Nancy Thomson De Grummond and Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, *From Pergamon to Sperlonga: Sculpture and Context*, vol. 34 (Berkeley: Univ of California Press, 2000). 94-96.

To muddy the waters further, the date of the Pergamon altar is also contested. It had long been thought that the Attalid king Eumenes II dedicated it in 184 BCE after defeating a Celtic tribe. A sherd of pottery found in 1961 inside the foundation of the altar has been dated to 172 BCE, using relative methods, suggesting that the altar cannot have been built before that time. Another sounding in 1994 uncovered more material that confirms that date.[117] Because the altar site was disturbed prior to Callaghan's findings, however, the sherd cannot be taken as conclusive evidence of a date, merely a general indication. The relationship of the Nike to the altar still remains ambiguous, and while it is likely that the two are close in date, they may not be so close that the date of one depends on the other. The assumption that works with similar styles must have been produced at the same time has long been a problem with the dating and categorization of ancient art. The Venus de Milo, for example, looks Classical in style, but is securely dated to the Hellenistic period.[118]

While few Rhodian works survive, ancient writers describe Rhodes as a landscape replete with monumental sculpture. Their most famous victory monument was the Colossus of Rhodes, which portrayed Helios, patron god of the city. Pliny reports that Rhodes was home to more than a hundred colossal statues, many of which may have fallen victim to the earthquake of 228 BCE.[119] If this is true, that number is astounding: a larger corpus than we would expect even in a place like Athens, Olympia, or other sites of colossi visited by Pliny.

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[117] See Callaghan's original study, and argument that the altar dates to after the Gallic victories of 167 in PJ Callaghan, "On the Date of the Great Altar of Zeus at Pergamon," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 28, no. 1 (1981). See also Hans-Joachim Schalles, Gioia De Luca, and Wolfgang Radt, "Sondagen Im Fundament Des Großen Altars," *Pergamenische Forschungen* 12, no. Berlin (1999).

[118] See *Chapter Two* of this publication.

[119] Pliny, *NH* 34.42. It is possible, of course, that these statues were toppled in any of the numerous regional earthquakes before Pliny's time in the first century.

Figure 7: (Left) British Museum 1873,0803.1, minted in Salamis; Photo property of the Trustees of the British Museum; (Right) Athena frieze of the Great altar of Pergamon. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and labeled for noncommercial reuse under Creative Commons.

Following its discovery, Alois Hauser argued that the Nike was dedicated by Demetrios Poliorketes in honor of his defeat of Ptolemy I Soter's naval fleet off the coast of Salamis in Cyprus.[120] This has been the most long-lived of the Nike's origin stories. Demetrios, ruler of Macedon until 283 BCE, was a rival of the Rhodians. His nickname, Poliorketes ("The Besieger"), derives from an unsuccessful year-long siege of Rhodes one year prior to his victory over Ptolemy I. An association with Demetrios' victory would date the statue after 306 BCE. Hauser's argument was very popular, and was supported by Salomon Reinach and Champoiseau himself.[121] This theory relies on the dating of a tetradrachm minted sometime between 301 and 292 that represents a victory statue on the prow of a ship (see *Fig. 7* above). Andrew Stewart vehemently disagrees with a third-century date, arguing that drawing a parallel solely based on the iconographic analysis of the victory type as translated from

[120] Hauser's argument appears in: Alexander Conze et al., *Archäologische Untersuchungen Auf Samothrake* (Vienna: 1880). 52.

[121] Charles Champoiseau, "La Victoire De Samothrace," *Revue Archéologique* (1880). 16. Reinach also discusses this in Salomon Reinach, "La Victoire de Samothrace," *Gazette des Beaux-arts*, 1891. 91.

statuary to coinage is impossible.[122] More recently, Johannes Christian Bernhardt has revived this theory, although with little support from the academic community. Bernhardt proposes that Demetrios' tetradrachm is the only means of dating the Nike since Hellenistic sculpture is varied in its style, and does not neatly fit into a chronological progression. Of course, these stylistic chronologies are likely the source of many mistaken attributions and Stewart, at least, is not persuaded. The Louvre's labels still associate the Nike with a Rhodian victory, either "erected in honor of the battle of Myonnisos, or perhaps the Rhodian victory at Side in 190 BCE against the fleet of Antiochus III of Syria."[123]

Aside from these two most prominent origin theories, others exist, as numerous as Hellenistic naval victories. François Queyrel argued at the Louvre's 2015 symposium that the statue is Rhodian, but an ex-voto for success in general rather than for a single victory.[124] Stewart sees the Nike as a victory dedication in honor of the Bithynian war of 156-154 BCE, a time when Rhodians dedicated five quadriremes that were taken as booty from their conflict with Cretan pirates.[125] Olga Palagia does not believe the Nike is Greek, but Roman—a dedication made by Aemilius Paullus for the Roman triumph over Macedon in 168 BCE.[126] While there is no definitive evidence other than the existing canon that the Nike is Greek, no

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[122] Stewart made this argument at a Journée d'étude held at the Louvre in March 2015 for the purpose of examining new insights on the Nike of Samothrace. See also his review of Johannes Christian Bernhardt: *Das Nikemonument von Samothrake und der Kampf der Bilder,* in *Sehepunkte*, Ausgabe 15 (2015), Nr. 5.

[123] "The Winged Victory of Samothrace". http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/winged-victory-samothrace. See also Marianne Hamiaux, "La Victoire De Samothrace: Découverte Et Restauration," *Journal des savants* 1, no. 1 (2001).

[124] François Queyrel, *La Victoire, Pas Une Victoire*, *La Victoire de Samothrace : redécouvrir un chef-d'œuvre de l'époque hellénistique* (Louvre Museum, 2015).

[125] Andy Stewart, *La Victoire, Un Autre Avis*, *La Victoire de Samothrace : redécouvrir un chef-d'œuvre de l'époque hellénistique* (Louvre: Louvre, 2015).

[126] Palagia, Olga, "The Victory of Samothrace And The Aftermath Of The Battle Of Pydna" in McCredie, Palagia, and Wescoat, *Samothracian Connections: Essays in Honor of James R. Mccredie*.

naval battles were fought during the Roman-Macedonian conflict. In Palagia's view, the Nike should be dated much later to correspond better with the dates of the Pergamene altar. The Romans had a strong presence on Samothrace from the time of Paullus' triumph, apparently due to an interest in the cult of the Great Gods. Palagia's argument, like others, relies on stylistic comparisons. Another victory monument indisputably attributed to Aemilius Paullus, and for the same battle at Pydna, stands at Delphi. This shows a frieze of Romans fighting Macedonians, a historical reference to the actual battle. It would be impossible to distinguish these warrior figures as Roman and not as Greek based on style if we did not know that Paullus was responsible for the monument. It is not out of the realm of possibility for Paullus to have commissioned another, separate Greek-styled victory monument for his battle, but as R.R.R. Smith notes, Roman patrons seem to have preferred historical scenes while Hellenistic patrons commemorated their victories via paintings or statue groups.[127] The latest date assigned to the statue is 31 BCE. For Heiner Knell, Augustus (then still Octavian) likely dedicated the Nike after the Battle of Actium.[128]

Other victory monuments, as Angelos Chaniotis has pointed out, are much more explicit about the details of that victory, especially who was responsible for it. After all, this is the point of a victory monument. The statues of dying Gauls erected in the Pergamene acropolis only survive in copies, but are widely known to have been set up by the Attalids

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[127] Roland RR Smith, *Hellenistic Sculpture: A Handbook* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991). 185.

[128] Heiner Knell, *Die Nike Von Samothrake: Typus, Form, Bedeutung Und Wirkungsgeschichte Eines Rhodischen Sieges-Anathems Im Kabirenheiligtum Von Samothrake* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997).. See also Stewart's study of the Gauls on display in Athens in Andrew F Stewart and Manoles Korres, *Attalos, Athens, and the Akropolis: The Pergamene" Little Barbarians" and Their Roman and Renaissance Legacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

following the Gallic defeat[129]. The Spartan Monument of the Admirals at Delphi is also particular to that culture. Lysander commissioned it after the Spartan victory over the Athenians at Aegispotamoi. Ellen Rice argues that contrary to the Greek custom of dedicating the armor of the defeated at Delphi, the Spartans reused or sold that armor and benefited from its proceeds.[130] This would have been a purposeful anti-Greek stance. These examples are explicitly traceable, through inscriptions and through subject matter, to the victor. The Nike of Samothrace undoubtedly once had such an inscription, but it is curious that it has not been found given its discovery in situ.

There is no artist signature to identify the sculptor who produced the Nike. Champoiseau immediately wanted the statue to be a lost work of Lysippus, the official sculptor of Alexander the Great. His amateurism is a likely explanation for why this claim was not taken seriously. Lysippus' only real connection to the Nike of Samothrace, as far as we know, is his prominence as a sculptor in the Hellenistic period. Lysippus also sculpted more than 1500 works—all of which were apparently in bronze.[131] Pliny does tell a story about the Rhodians commissioning a chariot for Helios, the patron god of their city. That monument was set up at Delphi, but is now lost, probably because it was made of gold.[132] This is strong evidence in favor of a Rhodian origin for the Nike, if not for an attribution to Lysippus.

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[129] Angelos Chaniotis, *War in the Hellenistic World: A Social and Cultural History*, vol. 8 (John Wiley & Sons, 2008). 282.

[130] Rice, Ellen. "The glorious dead: Commemoration of the fallen and portrayal of victory in the late classical and hellenistic world", in John Rich and Graham Shipley, *War and Society in the Greek World*, vol. 4 (London: Routledge, 1993). 227.

[131] Pliny (1.1 on the display of marble) may be exaggerating here. Even so, there are no known works by Lysippus in marble, although there are quite a few Roman marble copies of Lysippan originals.

[132] See here Pliny, *NH* 34.63 and Dio Chysostom 31.86.

The location and placement of the Nike was evident from the earliest excavations at the site. A long processional route weaves through the city, past a Milesian banqueting hall that mirrors the three-chambered dining halls of Macedonian palaces, the Neorion ship monument, hall of choral dancers, the anaktoron, where sacred objects were held, and finally ending at the theater of the sanctuary of the Great Gods.[133] This was an impressive landscape of wealth and power. The Nike monument sat at the top of this theater, partially set into a large niche.[134] It was originally thought that there was a reflecting pool or fountain, perhaps even a a fountain house surrounding the Nike, but there are no pipes or a drainage system to support that hypothesis. In her current installation in the Louvre, the Nike meets the viewer head-on (so to speak)—on, but in antiquity she was displayed at an angle. Champoiseau's drawings confirm what is observable from the angle of the Nike's base—that the monument emerged from its niche at an obtuse angle toward the center-left of the theater.[135] The left side of the statue—the good side—would have faced outwards, while the right side is slightly less detailed. Of all the surviving naval winged victory monuments, this display at Samothrace is most striking.

Naval dedications like the Nike of Samothrace were not uncommon during the Hellenistic period. The tetradrachm of Demetrios Poliorketes makes it evident that the naval victory alighting on a ship's prow was a type in the ancient world. That iconography was

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[133] The Emory project traces the excavation history and identification of these structures. See, for instance, "Banqueting Hall Dedicated By A Woman From Miletus": http://www.samothrace.emory.edu/visualizing-the-sanctuary/interactive-plan/milesian-banqueting-hall.

[134] A reconstruction drawn by Alec Daykin for *Samothracian Connections,* for instance, shows the Nike as part of a fountain (See Phyllis Williams Lehmann, Karl Lehmann, and Karl Lehmann, *Samothracian Reflections: Aspects of the Revival of the Antique* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973). See also http://www.mlahanas.de/Greeks/Arts/Nike.html and M. Bieber, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age* (1962) fig. 68.

[135] Champoiseau (1880).

pervasive enough to be recognized and legible as a symbol of naval victory on coinage, even in the miniature. So the Nike, while impressive in execution and scale, was in fact one of many monuments of this type. In some instances naval victory monuments included remnants of spolia, like ship fragments, figureheads, or even the entire ship.[136] When the Athenians captured twelve Peloponnesian ships off the coast of Rhion, they used one intact boat as a victory monument dedicated to Poseidon.[137] Aside from this Thucydidean reference, preserved ship monuments are exclusively Hellenistic in date. A ship's prow at Lindos is dated to the third century, a small, ship-shaped statue base from Epidauros is late fourth century, and a poorly preserved monument in Thasos dates to the second century BCE. These examples are not well preserved—the Thasos monument survives only in foundation—and do not have winged Nikes.[138]

Cyrene, where a victory monument stood in the agora, offers the closest parallel to the Nike of Samothrace. The striding statue here has no wings and has therefore been identified as Athena based on remnants of a helmet. Dating to 250 BCE, the Cyrene "Athena" is very similar in dress and striding pose to the Nike of Samothrace, but has received much less attention. This sculpture differs from other victory monuments in its dedicatory intent. It commemorates not only the peace agreement between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids, but also the marriage of Berenike, a native of Cyrene, and Ptolemy III. As Michael Scott shows, the ship's prow replicates the type used in the Ptolemaic navy, with imagery of dolphins, Isis

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[136] Rice (1993). 242. See also Kristian L Lorenzo, "Naval War and Cross Cultural Adaptation in Classical Cyprus," *Poca (postgraduate Cypriot Archaeology) 2012* (2015).

[137] Thucydides. *The History Of The Pelopponesian War*. 2.84.

[138] Palagia summarizes the details of the Nike's comparanda in McCredie, Palagia, and Wescoat, *Samothracian Connections: Essays in Honor of James R. Mccredie*. 154-165.

and Berenike herself.[139] Paeonios created a statue of Nike in the fifth century for the Temple of Zeus at Olympia (see *Fig. 8* below). His Nike, much earlier than the Nike of Samothrace, was discovered in 1933 and remains in Greece. While few in modern times have heard of Paeonios' work, it may have served as an inspiration for works like the Nike of Samothrace.

Figure 8: Nike of Paeonios, now in the Archaeological Museum of Olympia, fifth century BCE. Photo courtesy of Roccuz and shared via Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Italy.

The winged victory type was also duplicated in the form of an acroterion, adorning the corners of the Hieron at Samothrace. In style that victory looks very different from the Nike—she is also over life-sized and wears a belted chiton, like the larger Nike, but has a much longer, slenderer torso. The carving is also not as high in relief, the stance less exaggerated and the result less theatrical. Thematically, the sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace provided an entire visual landscape of victory, of which the Nike was the central focus. In sum, it is impossible to specify which victory the Nike honored without more evidence, but there is a far better case for a Rhodian dedication than a Roman one. The result of this unsolvable pursuit of the Nike's true origins is that other issues such as its nineteenth century restoration have largely been neglected.

[139] Michael Scott, *Space and Society in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). 30.

Prime Real Estate: Why Location Matters More Than We Think (But Still Does Not Make A Masterpiece)

When the Crimean War ended in 1856, France was the foremost military power in Europe, and protected its interests by installing diplomats in territories throughout the East and Mediterranean. Napoleon III appointed a young Charles Champoiseau as consul in the Turkish city of Adrianople, modern Edirne, which borders Greece and Bulgaria. Adrianople has a long Classical history. It is named for the Roman emperor Hadrian, but was also the purported site of Orestias, founded by the son of Agamemnon. After learning that nearby Samothrace was renowned for its antiquities, Champoiseau requested a modest government allotment of 2,500 francs to begin work at the site.[140] As Marianne Hamiaux notes, Champoiseau was always interested in beautiful objects, not as historical evidence, but as autonomous masterpieces.[141] According to Champoiseau's first-person narrative, published in 1880, the Nike emerged breast-first from the ground, and the workers announced the find: "Monsieur, nous avons trouvé une femme!"[142] Eventually the statue was uncovered with the torso largely intact, but its wings in fragments, along with large marble blocks that would later prove to be the plinth and ship's prow on which she stands. Champoiseau's men did not uncover a head or arms, and this would turn out to form an important aspect of the statue's identity for modern audiences. In 1950 a right hand was found. It is open, indicating that it

[140] Archives nationales, F 17, 294a3, dépêche du 15 septembre 1862. Champoiseau also makes a note of this in his account in the archaeological review, the only published account of his excavations: Champoiseau, "La Victoire De Samothrace." Champoiseau himself calls the amount of money "modeste".

[141] Hamiaux, "La Victoire De Samothrace: Découverte Et Restauration." 153.

[142] Champoiseau (1880). 12.

likely did not hold a ribbon banner or trumpet (as has been proposed in some reconstructions).[143] That hand is now on display in its own case in an alcove beside the statue.

It took the statue a year to travel to France. It arrived at the Louvre in May of 1864, and underwent only minor restoration before being put on display. She was first installed in 1866 in the Salle des Caryatides of the Louvre, a section of the palace built during the sixteenth century and named for the caryatids that support a musician's platform designed by Jean Goujon (see *Fig. 8* below). The initial reception of the statue was not positive, nor was Champoiseau acclaimed as an archaeological hero. In one letter dated to 1863, Longpérier, a cabinet member under Napoleon III, admits to his colleague the Count of Nieuwerkerke that he is skeptical of Champoiseau's competence:

> I have full confidence in the good faith of Mr. Champoiseau, but I have to say that reading his report to the Minister of Public Instruction left me with doubts about his archaeological competence. You know from experience, Mr. Superintendent, to what point travelers are prone to exaggerate the value of the ancient objects that they discover…[144]

Champoiseau might have been given more credit if the Nike had been fully restored before going on display. In appearance, the statue barely resembled her current state. The Nike lacked wings, and the impressive display atop the Daru staircase that are now an integral part of its iconicity. In looking at Charles de Wailly's 1785 drawing of the Salle des Caryatides (*Fig. 8*), it is perhaps easy to see why a Nike without wings would not stand out in such an

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[143] Most notably Benndorf's 1880 reconstruction, published in Conze, et al. (1880). He depicts the Nike blowing a trumpet with one hand and holding a staff with the other. His drawing is based on the Demetrios coin.

[144] Translation mine. Original reads: « . . .J'ai toute confiance dans la bonne foi de Mr Champoiseau, mais je dois dire que la lecture de son rapport à M. le Ministre de l'Instruction publique me laisse des doutes considérables sur sa compétence archéologique. Vous savez par expérience, M. le Surintendant, à quel point les voyageurs sont prompts à exagérer la valeur des objets antiques qu'ils découvrent... » and is reproduced in Hamiaux, "La Victoire De Samothrace: Découverte Et Restauration." From a letter in Archives des Musées Nationnaux, A4, 17 novembre 1883.

environment. The four caryatid pillars with their Classicizing wet drapery draw the focus towards the end of the long gallery, and away from the statues that line the walls.

Figure 9: (Left) Charles de Waily's drawing of the Salle des Caryatides in 1785, and (right) photograph of the room in its current state. Both images labeled for reuse via Wikimedia Commons.

The role that famous works of art played in the national ethos at this time should not be underestimated. Salmon Reinach nicely sums up this sentiment when he says of the Nike, "Un Français, M. Champoiseau, avait fort heureusement précédé la mission autrichienne: c'est à la sûreté de son coup d'oeil et à son énergie que nous devons la *Victoire* du Louvre."[145] Notably, the Nike is called the "Louvre Victory", completely removed from her Samothracian context. In this vein, the temptation to recontextualize ancient masterpieces in typically French settings was irresistible. These displays changed with contemporary whims and the Nike was a part of those fashions. In 1883, at the end of the second restoration project during which the Nike was given her wings, restaurateur Félix Ravaisson-Mollien made the decision to relocate the statue to the top of the Daru staircase. Hector Lefuel's grandiose Napoleonic staircase offered a dramatic, wide frame for the Nike. It is now the busiest section of hallway in the Louvre. It is estimated that seven million visitors climb the stairs each year, not to

[145] Salomon Reinach, "La Victoire de Samothrace," *Gazette des Beaux-arts*, 1891. 91.

admire Classical art, but on their way to the *Mona Lisa*. It is this relocation that is credited with making the Nike the symbol she has become.[146]

It was not just the location that changed the way visitors saw the Nike of Samothrace. From 1892 on, the Nike was displayed according to contemporary tastes, presented in the context of the original palace, and thus indistinguishable from it for most visitors. Edmond Guillaume, the architect of the Louvre and Tuileries at the turn of the century, envisaged a colorful backdrop for the Nike. The vaults of the staircase were covered in mosaics and the walls were painted in the beaux-arts style. The mosaics were planned with the Nike in mind; they show personifications of Victory holding palm fronds alternating with portraits of famous men. But in the 1930s, the staircase changed again, this time under the supervision of Henri Verne, who widened the pathways and replaced the railings with others that fit contemporary Art Deco tastes. The mosaics were covered with wallpaper that was painted to look like stones. In one incarnation the Nike was set in a highly decorative, ornate alcove, in another she was the sole focus of a "purist" setting.[147]

Stephen Greenblatt argues that dramatic displays—"displays of wonder," as with the Nike of Samothrace—arrest the viewer, drawing them into a work of art and evoking deep, emotional responses, but they do not convey more complex relationships between that work and the rest of a collection. For Greenblatt, a categorical difference exists between displays that inspire wonder, and others that have resonance, "the power of the displayed object to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex,

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[146] This has been argued repeatedly, most recently by Nici, *Famous Works of Art—and How They Got That Way*. 65.

[147] Marianne; Laugier Hamiaux, Lodovic, Martinez, Jean-Luc, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece* (Paris: Somogy Art Publishers, 2016). 19.

dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged."[148] There is no denying that the Nike produces wonder in her audience from her perch at the top of the Daru staircase, but perhaps as Greenblatt suggests, the result is a loss of these historical connections. In fact, the juxtaposition of the Nike with the long staircase is a perfect emulation of her ancient position at the apex of the Samothracian theater. There, aisles and stairs focus the eye in a one-point perspective that accentuates the victory monument. A team at Emory University created reconstructions of the monument in context that make it clear that it would have been visible at a distance: again, a display meant to evoke wonder.[149] The Louvre's installation is more than memorable; it is iconic of the museum itself.

That display was made famous in Stanley Donen's 1957 film *Funny Face*. Here the Nike and her staircase provide a backdrop for Audrey Hepburn and her Givenchy dress, which mirrors the shape of the Nike's wings as it flies behind her. This scene is well known, too, no less because of that red Givenchy dress (see *Fig. 10* below). It demonstrates the theatrical element of the Nike's display here—there is a sort of meta-referential theatricality to this segment of the film, where the audience watches Hepburn at the same time as an imagined (Richard Avedon-inspired) photographer watches her through his lens. Here is an overt likening of the impossible lines of ancient drapery to high fashion. The Nike is not, in this instance, a representative of the cult of the Great Gods of Samothrace, or of a Rhodian naval victory. She is purely a beautiful object to be enjoyed by the viewer. This raises the question: is the Nike famous only because of her display on the Daru staircase?

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[148] Stephem Greenblatt. "Resonance and Wonder", in Ivan Karp, *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2012). 42.

[149] Samothrace Reconstruction: "Hieron To Nike," at http://www.samothrace.emory.edu/visualizing-the-sanctuary/3-D-walkthroughs.

Figure 10: (Left) The Nike of Samothrace behind Audrey Hepburn in the 1957 Stanley Donen film *Funny Face*.

The artist Martial Raysse also uses the Nike as a universal symbol of beauty in his film *Jesus Cola.* Raysse writes, "so civilized, so accustomed to painting have people become that, whenever they see a beautiful picture, they salivate like Pavlov's dog and exclaim, 'Oh, it's beautiful!'"[150] In Raysse's work the Nike, which has been cast as a miniature, appears ridiculously cradled in the arms of the film's protagonist like a human baby (*Fig. 11*). The idea of a small, inauthentic image of Winged Victory belies Raysse's disdain for the artistic conception of beauty, especially within the confines of the art museum. In this sphere famous works of art become popular commodities, reproduced as colorful, plastic versions of their former selves. *Made In Japan- La grande odalisque* truncates Ingres' nude, excerpting only a portrait, which is painted Kelly green. Another painting, *Tableau simple et doux*, mocks François Gérard's *Cupid And Psyche* by replacing the butterfly flitting above their heads with a neon heart. Raysse uses famous works of art because they are a part of these institutions of beauty—they are the representatives of fine art specifically within the walls of great museums. They parody the seriousness of these institutions, and our belief in them as makers of taste. One commentator describes Raysse's work as "something like Benny Hill meets Simone de

[150] Gregory Battcock, *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, 1st ed. (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1968). 400.

Beauvoir at Max's Kansas City."[151] Raysse's own commentary on taste is evident. A show in New York in 1964 was called "Made in Japan… Horrible Paintings… Paintings of Bad Taste." One of the tenets of this "bad taste" is the Pop art dimension and its accessibility to the general public.

Another member of the Nice school and Pop art movement, Yves Klein, like Raysse saw the Nike as a symbol. *Victoire de Samothrace S 9* is one of a series of synthetic resin, stone and metal casts of the Nike that Klein painted a vibrant blue, now recognized as International Klein Blue. While Klein and Raysse's representations of the Nike are superficially similar in terms of their bright colors and exuberance, there is also a ritual dimension in Klein's work that is absent in Raysse's. For Klein, the blue was not just a splash of Pop color, but one with strong historical connotations of wealth and royalty.[152] Klein's blue elevates the miniature casts of the victory, whereas Raysse's representations parody these works and their status as icons.

Figure 11: A frame from Martial Raysse's *Jesus Cola* (author's photograph).

[151] Aimee Walleston, "So Nice in New York: Martial Raysse at Luxembourg & Dayan," *Art In America Magazine* June 12 (2013).

[152] In the Middle Ages, recipes for Egyptian blue were lost, and blue became a quite expensive pigment. Azurite and ultramarine imported from Afghanistan were the only sources of blue at the time, and its use was largely limited to representations of royalty and, frequently, the Madonna. See here, Frederick Maire, *Modern Pigments and Their Vehicles: Their Properties and Uses Considered Mainly from the Practical Side, and How to Make Tints from Them* (London: J. Wiley & Sons, 1908).

The Nike continues to play an active role in contemporary art. Edward Allington has augmented Klein's serialization, producing hundreds of victories in rows as if factory-produced. *Victory Boxed* was cast, like Allington's other works, from models purchased in museum gift shops. Like the gift shop model, *Victory Boxed* commoditizes, but also creates something original out of these copied components. The replication of ancient sculpture, not for the purposes of subversion or criticism, as we have seen here, but as a pure study of form, was the foundation of an artistic education. Further, copies were the primary means of image dispersal in the ancient world.[153] Allington, who is cognizant of the ancient history of copy-making, uses serialization in many of his works. It is, as he describes it, a sort of homage to the Western tradition of copying and a treatise on authenticity. Of a series of reproductions of the *Medici Venus*, Allington says, "my reproduction *Venus*, image of the Goddess of Love, presides over the act of reproduction. She may not be telling the truth, but I'm pretty certain that she isn't telling lies."[154] In another nod to the institutional assignation of value, Allington writes that he purchased his Venus at the Metropolitan Museum gift shop, where, although it is only plastic painted to resemble marble, it still costs more than $300.

The reproduction of famous works of Classical art has a long history in Western European academies. Here ancient art was indisputably perfection. As Martin Postle writes, "In the French academy students were no longer merely encouraged to study the antique but

[153] The Varvakeion, for example, is the only surviving image of the statue of Athena that was originally housed in the Parthenon. It is Roman, miniature in scale, and itself may be a copy of a copy. See Claire Cullen Davison and Geoffrey B. Waywell, *Pheidias: The Sculptures & Ancient Sources* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London, 2009).

[154] Allington, Edward. "Venus a Go Go, To Go", in Anthony Hughes and Erich Ranfft, *Sculpture and Its Reproductions* (London: Reaktion books, 1997). 166.

to defer to its absolute authority."[155] The reinterpretations of artists like Allington, Raysse, and Klein, then, are a direct response—boredom, perhaps—to this authority. For these artists the beauty of the object is not called into question as much as its unassailability. None of these interpretations of the Nike take into account her display. While *Funny Face* suggests that the both Nike and staircase were already iconic in the 1950s, the Nike itself is not the focus of that sequence in the film as much as the Louvre's architecture. In Raysse's work the Nike appears in a contextual vacuum. Still, his choice to adapt images so closely connected to their institutions reflects how strong that connection is. All of Raysse's adapted images are considered conventionally beautiful. Perhaps it is not entirely false to argue that the Nike would not be as famous were it not for her display on the staircase—that display of wonder, as Greenblatt would put it—that tells viewers she is a masterpiece. That display, however, does not account for her iconicity, or for her popularity as a replicable work in modern adaptations. If anything, the Nike's cameo in Raysse's film, and her serialization by Allington and Klein show that the form itself, especially the winged, draped torso, is a recognizable symbol. That symbol is the product of restoration, without which the Nike would likely not be known at all.

Restoration as Reinvention

The modern notion of restoring a work for the sole purpose of presenting its original state as truthfully as possible would have been laughable to the Romans, and likely to many nineteenth century restorers as well. Romans might alter a portrait to suit a new patron (or the whims of the previous one) by replacing or reworking heads. In the first century, Augustus

[155] Postle, Martin. "Naked Authority? Reproducing Antique Statuary in the English Academy, from Lely to Haydon", in Ibid. 79.

restored the Forum Boarium's Etruscan Temple of Portunus with new travertine marble to restore its shine.[156] From the Renaissance on, it was common practice to replace or sculpt anew missing limbs, heads or noses. Charles Townley was notorious for restoring new heads to his statues, regardless of their period. The Townley Discobolus in the British Museum is the best surviving copy of Myron's fifth-century work, but the head, which was said to have been found near the statue, probably does not belong with it and is angled incorrectly. Sculptor Carlo Albacini was hired to restore any missing appendages before Townley even purchased the Discobolus, as would have been expected in 1792.[157]

Just as Townley's Discobolus was considered incomplete without a head, the Nike was considered incomplete without her wings, only one of which is original. There were three restorations of the Nike prior to the most recent project, which was begun in 2002. The first of these was also the briefest. Following the Nike's arrival at the Louvre, conservator Adrien de Longpérier reassembled portions of the torso and drapery, but did not dramatically alter the fragmentary nature of the statue (see below). Longpérier's task was not an easy, nor entirely objective one: the torso alone was in 118 separate fragments. Among those fragments, one section was thought to be hair, but no trace of cheek, nose or mouth could be found on which to attach it.[158] The ship base, made of 23 separate blocks and weighing nearly 27 tons, was also largely assembled during this time. Alois Hauser was the first to recognize that the marble pieces of the base formed a ship.

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[156] John H. Stubbs, *Time Honored: A Global View of Architectural Conservation* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2009). 168.

[157] See *The Townley Discobolus:* http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=8760&partId=1

[158] Hamiaux (2001). 165. Originally from the Fraz Valéry Marie Cumont Cécile Aubry-Vitet Rohan-Chabot (Comtesse de), *Souvenirs De Froehner* (Imprimerie Daupeley-Gouverneur, 1931).

Figure 12: (Left) Nike of Samothrace in 1880, before restoration. This is the original photograph published in Champoiseau's report of 1880. (Right) The Nike after her most recent conservation in 2014, during which the plinth was removed.

The Nike was on display for nearly fifteen years before undergoing another, much more significant restoration between 1880 and 1883. This would be the most important alteration of the Nike, creating the iconic image that now exists. Before the reconstruction of the 1880s, the Nike was not generally liked. The first unveiling of the Nike in 1866 met with criticism. Adrien de Longpérier was one of the few to see the Nike's potential when she arrived in boxed fragments at the museum. Marianne Hamiaux records Longpérier's initial impression of the statue: "This statue, of which the entire upper portion is broken, is extremely beautiful and could justify the costs that M. Champoiseau has incurred to your administration."[159] Ravaisson-Mollien also lauded the statue as one of the museum's prize antiquities, even in its fragmentary state.[160] Others called her a poorly executed study in

[159] Hamiaux (2001). 164. Original from the Archives des Musées Nationaux, A4, 17 November, 1883, Letters dating between the 19th of December, 1863 and the 8th of January, 1864: "Cette statue, dont toute la partie supérieure est brisée, est extrêmement belle et pourra justifier les frais que l'envoi de M. Champoiseau occasionne à votre administration…"

[160] Charles Ravaisson-Mollien, "La Critique Des Sculptures Antiques Au Musée Du Louvre À Propos Des Catalogues En Préparation," *Revue Archéologique* (1876).

drapery and an example of Hellenistic decadence.[161] It took a second restoration, during which the right wing and the upper torso were reassembled and a left wing created out of plaster, for the Nike to suddenly become accepted as a masterpiece.[162]

The impact of this second restoration between 1880 and 1883 was great. Decisions made during this time to restore the torso, replace the missing wing and breast, leave the head and arms incomplete, and display the Nike facing forwards on her plinth, shaped the Nike into a work of art that was admired almost universally. By the time Marinetti published his *Futurist Manifesto* in 1908, the Nike was so well known that she was the standard of ancient beauty against which a new modernism defined itself. In his call to arms, Marinetti calls to those who agree that "A howling automobile that seems to be running under gunfire is more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace."[163] In her niche at Samothrace, the Nike would have been set up at an angle to her plinth; in her new installation, she met her audience head-on in a display that left no doubt as to her magnificence. There was an ancient, if likely fanciful, precedent for this installation. In 1884, Zambusch, a Prussian artist, drew a reconstruction of the Nike based on the coins of Demetrius Poliorcetes, which served to reinforce unnecessarily that the monument corresponded with that victory.[164] Zambusch's drawing clearly influenced restorations. In the tetradrachm, Victory's stance aligns with the

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[161] See subsequent. Donohue dates the initial critique to 1867, when Gustave Deville wrote that the Nike was a "mediocre decorative figure of a late date." Alice A Donohue, *Greek Sculpture and the Problem of Description* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). 143. Deville had taken over the excavations of Samothrace after Champoiseau was reassigned in 1866, and reported that the entire trip was one of suffering. His dislike of the Nike perhaps stems from this resentment. See here Hamiaux (2001). 176-177.

[162] The left wing is made almost entirely of plaster, with a few original fragments interspersed between. Hamiaux, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*. 75.

[163] "Une automobile rugissante, qui a l'air de courir sur de la mitraille, est plus belle que la Victoire de Samothrace." See Marinetti, F.T. 1909. "Le Manifeste du futurisme.", *Le Figaro*, 20 February. Paris.

[164] Salomon Reinach, "La Victoire de Samothrace," *Gazette des Beaux-arts*, 1891. 95. The drawing was based on Benndorf (1880).

lines of the ship, and this is how the Louvre's Nike was also set in her base. This decision—to display the Nike frontally—has had a major impact on her modern reception and iconicity. That frontal profile, with both wings angled backwards as in Demetrios Poliorketes' coin, has become a symbol of the Louvre. Further, the statue was made to seem far more complete than it was. Would the Nike be considered important without the added left wing? Or with only a single breast intact? To further complicate matters, whitewash was applied to the surface of the Nike during nineteenth century restorations, which unified the original marble with the plaster reconstruction. This makes it virtually impossible for the viewer to distinguish between the two surfaces.[165] Without these alterations, the Nike would look very different.

By 1891 life-sized plaster models of the Winged Victory could be purchased in the Louvre gift shop for 300 francs. The Louvre had its own cast workshop dedicated to copying the museum's most famous works. The onus placed on individual masterpieces is evident in the museum's selection of its prize works for reproduction. Under Napoleon Bonaparte, who founded the cast workshop at the Louvre, each official department of French government was given casts of the Apollo Belvedere, the Borghese Gladiator and the Laocoon.[166] These were envoys of culture, and reminders of France's dominance over Italy, from which those masterpieces had been looted. Each of the three masterpieces selected as a gift to government branches was a work of ancient art. It took twenty years after the initial discovery by Champoiseau for the Nike to gain notoriety, and the primary factor in that change was the restoration of her wings. Studies that attribute the Nike's fame to her location on the Daru

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[165] Hamiaux, *The Winged Victory of Samothrace: Rediscovering a Masterpiece*. 17.

[166]Charlotte Schreiter. "Competition, Exchange, Comparison", in Andrea and Savoy Meyer, Benedicte, *The Museum Is Open: Towards a Transnational History of Museums 1750-1940*, *Museum Anthropology Review* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2014).

Staircase often neglect to mention that this second restoration, and along with it the sway in public opinion and gift shop models, took place before that move.[167]

A third restoration took place between 1932 and 1934, when a modern marble plinth was added beneath the Nike's feet, giving her several extra inches of height. The public response to this last restoration is not known, and, in fact, it may have gone unnoticed. The modern conservation project began in 2002 in order to address surface discoloration and a crack in the modern plinth. The goal of this new project was to address the surface discoloration and the cracked modern plinth. The metal armatures that held the wings in place had also begun to corrode. The plaster that had given the Nike the appearance of completeness had oxidized over the decades and caused irremediable yellowing to the entire surface of the statue. Modern conservators determined that to take no action would result in the continued alteration of the original work, and so it was decided that a fourth large-scale conservation project would begin.[168]

It is the nature of conservation projects that they must always choose between hastening and delaying the effects of aging. Taking no action hastens those effects—the yellowing of stone, the leaching of oxidized metal. To act forestalls these things, but is not always reversible.[169] The alteration of a work of art over time is inevitable, if sometimes lamentable. An optimistic view of this alteration is expressed by Heidegger, who argued that the alteration itself should be considered a part of the work of art. He wrote, "World-

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[167] John Nici is only one among many who have highlighted the staircase display as the reason for the popularity of the Nike. See "Nike of Samothrace: The Victory Of The Staircase" in Nici, *Famous Works of Art—and How They Got That Way*. Another argument in this vein can be found in the Winged Victory section of Bonazzoli, *Mona Lisa to Marge: How the World's Greatest Artworks Entered Popular Culture.*

[168] This is thoroughly outlined and discussed in Hamiaux et al. (2016). 17.

[169] David Scott has an excellent discussion of the theoretical framework involving time and conservation in his forthcoming book.

withdrawal and world-decay can never be undone. The works are no longer the same as they once were."[170] For Heidegger there is truthfulness to this process. On this matter he turns to Aristotle, who discussed the relationship between art and truth in *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle notes that knowledge (*episteme*) and art (*techne*) have different relationships with truth. Art/*techne*, on the one hand, reveals the truth through its appearance—a ship is a ship; a house is a house; a sacred chalice is a sacred chalice.[171] In this way the appearance of a work of art is inseparable from its being, regardless of the ways it may have changed over time. Heidegger applies Aristotelian ideas to modern technology, but Aristotle's own discussion would have had much more to do with the craft of the Nike of Samothrace. If this seems disingenuous, the reader may take comfort in the fact that Adorno labeled Heidegger a hater of curiosity.[172] Adorno argued for the demystification of works of art as symbols. These works are often the victims of the "artsy-craftsy element in the jargon [which] provides a refuge for the stale notion that art should be brought back into life […] It gathers reproductions of kitschy life-reforming impulses and spares them the hopeless testing ground of actualization."[173] The best policy, then, in Adorno's view, is one of transparency. In fact ancient artists accepted the changing nature of works of art, and in many cases the look of age provided a certain air of authenticity. In Plutarch's *Moralia*, for instance, Philinus and Basilocles contemplate the unique blue patina of bronzes at Delphi, which is distinct from the typical verdigris or rust

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[170] Martin Heidegger and David Farrell Krell, *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)* (New York: Harper, 1993). 23.

[171] Aristotle. *Nicomachaean Ethics*, VI, 3-4.

[172] Theodor Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity. 1964* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973). 110.

[173] Adorno (1964). 108-109.

that would be expected from an old statue.[174] One visitor, a connoisseur, asks whether there might have been "some process of alloying and treating used by the artisans of early times for bronze, something like what is called the tempering of swords, on the disappearance of which bronze came to have a respite from employment in war?"[175] These histories, which write themselves over time on the surfaces of works of art, are only telling if one can discern original from restoration.

It is impossible to restore works of ancient art fully to their original appearance. Less has been written about the aging of Classical marbles, and the modern issue of surface discoloration is one that ancient authors likely never considered because the marble of ancient statues was never intended to be exposed; it was a canvas for paint. Infrared photography showed that a blue strip ran along the hem of the Nike's dress and that parts of the ship were painted with black detail. The marble itself is varied in color. Three different types of Parian marble were used to create the figure of victory, the wings, and the base. The smoothest of these—lychnites from Marathi—was used for the flesh. The body and wings were sculpted in coarser Parian marble, and the ship is the blue-gray veined Rhodian lithos lartios marble, the source of the Rhodian artist controversy. The newly cleaned surface of the Nike shows these grains in far better detail than before. The blue of the base stands out against the white of the body and wings. While these surfaces are beautiful, they do not reflect the ancient (painted) state of the statue, or her condition prior to restoration. The labels nearby have adopted a more Heideggerian philosophy towards aging: it simply happens and is a part of the work.

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[174] Plutarch. *Moralia*. "The Oracles At Delphi," 2.

[175] This from Harold North Fowler's Loeb translation: Harold North Fowler and Frank Cole Babbitt, *Plutarch's Moralia*, vol. 10 (London: W. Heinemann, 1936).

They make note of the fact that one wing is recast in plaster, but do not explicitly state the full extent of the nineteenth-century restorations, as Adorno might have liked.

More than appearance, however, the Nike presented a practical problem involving visitors and museum traffic-flow. A pitfall of the Nike's dramatic Daru staircase installation is that visitors have a difficult time looking at the statue for any length of time. The stairwell is the most heavily trafficked section of space in the museum, and it precludes any frontally-facing benches.[176] As a result, pre-conservation, visitors attempted to sit at the base of the Nike, not realizing that the stone base was also ancient. A rail was installed to prevent this, but the situation is one that is not ideal for the viewer. To further complicate the visitor's dilemma, guards do not permit sitting on the adjacent stairwells, which offer the best angles from which to view the Nike.

To better preserve the original statue base, a separate lower socle of about 60 cm was designed to distance visitors without the need for a rail. This also allowed the Nike to retain the same overall height once the cracked modern plinth had been removed. The supplementary modern base below the ship's prow compensated for the small loss in height that resulted from the removal of the plinth. In short, these decisions effectively maintained the appearance of the old display. The towering five and a half meters of height (including the base) was maintained. The frontal position on the staircase remained the same. None of these changes significantly altered the overall effect of the Nike to the degree that the nineteenth century restorations did. Those restorations created out of the Nike an entirely distinct work of art, giving the illusion of completeness and creating a symmetrical profile. That Nike—the Nike of nineteenth century ideals—is the Nike that is iconic now.

[176] Hamiaux, et al. (2016) 20.

The wings are undoubtedly the most significant aspect of the restorations, and of the Nike's iconic status. Hamiaux found that the restored right wing would have angled upwards, not back to mirror the left wing. The symmetrical V-shape formed by the two wings framing the headless torso is in actuality an appealing fiction. This may seem like a minor detail, but it is not; it affects the Nike's profile and symmetry. Wings have been the statue's most salient feature since their creation in the 1880s. The unnaturally vertical wings form a frame for the fragmentary, headless torso, and draw from the upward motion of the staircase.

Toward A Modern Definition Of Beauty

Two forces are at odds in the conservation of iconic works: the desire to retain an authenticity of ancient appearance, and the desire to preserve what makes that work iconic. We value originality. To the modern viewer, the Nike is a one of a kind masterpiece because it is the best surviving example of this type, but that type was repeated through both coinage and sculpture in the ancient world. While this may not diminish the Nike's appeal to the modern viewer, we might consider that if the ship monument of Cyrene had been installed in the Louvre it could equally have become a modern icon. Further, with processes of restoration and conservation there are only degrees of originality: the work's original state can never be reproduced.

Iconic works develop mythologies that prevent us from asking ourselves why we like them. Alice Donohue traces the first critique of the Nike of Samothrace to 1867, immediately following its installation in the Salle des Caryatides. Gustave Deville wrote then that the Nike was merely a "mediocre decorative figure of a late date."[177] A.S. Murray, the Scottish archaeologist and curator in Greek and Roman antiquities at the British Museum, admitted

[177] Donohue (2005). 143.

that the statue "surpasses in refinement the draped figures of the Pergamos frieze, with which, on the whole, it must be compared as a contemporary or nearly contemporary work," but nevertheless refused to believe an Athenian sculptor could have been responsible for such an inferior work.[178] Murray's assessment may seem civil by modern standards, but a Hellenistic date was, for the nineteenth century, equivalent to a condemnation. But reception suddenly changed after the restoration of the wings in 1880.

By 1913, Proust's self-consciously bourgeoise Madame Verdurin was telling the guests at her salon that the Nike, along with *Night Watch* and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, was the "supreme masterpiece of the universe."[179] Proust creates an absurd character in Madame Verdurin, who avoids laughter for fear of her jaw becoming detached and concerns herself with elitist posturing. That her traditionally good taste upholds the Nike as a masterpiece should indicate that at the time of publication, the statue was not just well received, but had already attained the unassailable status of iconicity.[180] This view was widely held, not just in Proust's imagined salons, but throughout Parisian high society. A movement in support of idealism over realism arose out of the Rosicrucian salons, which themselves were coming in vogue just as the Nike had gained popularity. The Nike, and Hellenistic art in general, favored idealism and dramatic compositions. Liking the right sort of art acted as a filter to exclude those with poor taste (including, in the Rosicrucian view, artists like Dégas and Manet). Initiates to the Rosicrucian sect were asked by leader Joséphin Péladin, "Artists—do you

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[178] Alexander Stuart Murray, *A History of Greek Sculpture*, vol. 2 (London: J. Murray, 1883). 374.

[179] Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982). 118. See also a commentary from Dimier's *Esthétique:* L Dimier, "Esthétique," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 8, no. 4 (1900). 54.

[180] See Marcel Proust, *À La Recherche Du Temps Perdu* (Paris: Grasset et Gallimard, 1913)., especially Volume I, 250-252 for a discussion on taste.

believe in the Pantheon and St. Ouen, in Leonardo and in the Nike of Samothrace, in Beethoven and Parsifal? You will be admitted to the Rose + Croix."[181] Péladin's goal was to destroy realism as embodied in photography, industrialism and works of Impressionist art by Manet. The Nike of Samothrace was the ideal counterpoint to these modernist threats. In an ironic ignorance of the modern restorations that contributed to the Nike's popularity, she was extolled as a timeless standard of beauty.

One would think that the fame of the Nike of Samothrace would redeem Hellenistic art in the eyes of its critics, but this was not the case. Hellenistic period works continued to be seen as degenerate, second only to Roman art in their ability to elicit disdain. Charles Eliot Norton, art history professor at Harvard during the turn of the century, wrote in 1891 of the Laocoon that it "has been described by Winckelmann, Goethe, and others, and for a long time was regarded as one of the chief works of Greek art; but this view is now altogether antiquated, and, instead of holding a very high position, it now has a comparatively low one." Norton expresses a change in taste that if anything suggests that Hellenistic art was even less popular than ever. He divulges later that Pliny genuinely admired the Laocoon, but denounces Pliny's art expertise on the grounds that no Roman was capable of judging art because they "innately lacked the nobility of the better work of the Greeks."[182] Of course Winckelmann never acknowledged the Laocoon as Hellenistic, nor did he entertain the possibility that it might not be Greek at all, but Roman. Norton's commentary suggests that the Nike's iconicity surpassed in importance her Hellenistic date, the same date that had caused Murray and Deville to dismiss the piece a decade prior.

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[181] Laurinda S. Dixon, "Art And Music At The Salons De La Rose+Croix, 1892-1897" in Gabriel P Weisberg, *The Documented Image: Visions in Art History* (Syracuse University Press, 1987). 166.

[182] Harry Fletcher; Norton Brown, Charles Eliot; Wiggin, William Harrison, *History of Ancient Art* (London: A. Mudge & Son, 1891). 229.

The idiom "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" dates to 1878, when Irish author Margaret Wolfe Hungerford published her novel *Molly Bawn*. Hungerford's idea was by no means a new one. In Shakespeare's *Love's Labours Lost* the French princess tells her admirer Lord Boyet that he need not flatter her since "Beauty is bought by judgment of the eye."[183] Michael Baxandall argued that while our eyes are physiologically the same, we see differently, across cultures and social strata.[184] In essence, Baxandall's commentary mirrors Hungerford's, and Shakespeare's, and none of this will be a surprise to the reader. But what do we know about our modern construct of beauty as it relates to the ancient one? If Norton's thoughts on the Nike are any measure of this, they indicate an underlying and early concern with authenticity. The Nike of Samothrace, unlike the Laocoon, is an original work of Greek art, not an inferior Roman copy (at least in Norton's view). Few of us would disagree that authenticity is an important facet of why we value ancient art, but it is more difficult to dissect the relationship between authenticity and beauty. Even in instances when authenticity is ambiguous at best, studies show it is still valued. In Oscar Schwartz's modified poetry-Turing test, for example, audiences are asked whether they can discern between poems written by humans and those written by computers.[185] In some cases, depending on the style of the poet, that task was very easy; in others it became difficult. Words that out of context may be meaningless, are taken as a whole to be either beautiful or not based entirely on this premise of authenticity—the authenticity of time, place, and emotion assumed by the poet. This

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[183] On *Molly Bawn* see protagonists Marcia and Molly's conversation in Margaret Wolfe Hungerford, *Molly Bawn* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1878).. 143. On Shakespeare's *Loves Labours Lost* see Act II, Scene I for the repartée between the princess and Lord Boyet.

[184] Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[185] Schwartz's version of the Turing test can be found at botpoet.com, and the original lecture is entitled "Can A Computer Write Poetry?" *Can a Computer Write Poetry?*, directed by Oscar Schwartz (TED, 2015).

underscores a desire for authenticity of intent or meaning in works of art. Poems written by a computer are not valued because, science fiction universes aside, the computer cannot authentically feel emotion. Audiences believe that when they look at a work of art on display in a museum, they are the recipients of that ancient artist's meaning and intent. If that formal representation is three parts ancient artist and one part modern restoration, however, that experience is a fanciful one.

To appreciate something as beautiful, we must believe it is authentic, and this is where the role of conservators is an important one. At the crux of this notion of authentic beauty is the labeling of something symbolically or culturally significant as "beautiful" whether or not its attributes alone have aesthetic appeal. In this way the Virgin Mary is called "beautiful", when in fact her appearance is entirely distinct from a Hollywood actress, who also might be labeled as such for very different reasons. The Virgin, as Roger Scruton notes, is beautiful because she is a "symbol of purity, and for this very reason is held apart from the realm of sexual appetite", where an actress is very much a manifestation of that desire.[186] Were Leonardo's *Virgin Of The Rocks* or Raphael's *Alba Madonna* found to be fakes, would we still look at them and remark on the beauty of the Virgin? This relationship between beauty and authenticity—a form of truth by definition—has a long history going back (at least) to Plato, who wrote that beautiful objects encourage a quest for truth in their viewers.[187]

David Konstan and Alexander Nehamas have recently written philosophical treatises on beauty. Both authors address a central tenet of any discussion on the subject: Platonic ideals. Konstan takes issue with Nehamas' interpretation of Plato, in which the loveliness of

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[186] Roger Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*, vol. 262 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). 54.

[187] See Plato, *Symposium* 209a below.

minor objects "can gradually inspire a longing for goodness and truth."[188] We see this in the *Symposium* when Diotima defines the poet's role as producing wisdom and virtue through beauty.[189] This, Konstan argues, is simply not the case. The misguided efforts of modern scholarship to "identify beauty with the good requires Plato's transcendental metaphysics, which found its way into modern approaches to art, where it merged with other currents deriving from classical antiquity along with newer styles of thought, thereby giving rise to the kinds of problems that we have been pondering."[190] In other words, the Platonic notion of beauty as applied in this instance is largely a modern construct according to which beauty has always been associated with the pursuit of good and truth. As Konstan writes, this is a fairly ridiculous assessment. In some instances beauty may inspire goodness, but it might just as easily inspire corruption. Further, in this model beauty and authenticity are thoroughly intertwined. No hypothetical viewer would contemplate a forged work of art and argue that it inspires them to pursue truth and goodness.

But in fact many forged works of art are beautiful in their own right and appreciated as such. In 2007 the Bruce Museum in Greenwich, Connecticut hosted an exhibition of forged works entitled "Fakes and Forgeries: The Art of Deception".[191] The Bruce's exhibition showed many admittedly beautiful fakes, but not to be admired aesthetically as much as to

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[188] David Konstan, *Beauty: The Fortunes of an Ancient Greek Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).. 30. See Nehamas's argument in *Only a promise of happiness: The place of beauty in a world of art*. Alexander Nehamas, *Only a Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). 133.

[189] Plato. *Symposium*, 209a: " φρόνησίν τε καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν—ὧν δή εἰσι καὶ οἱ ποιηταὶ πάντες γεννήτορες καὶ τῶν δημιουργῶν ὅσοι λέγονται εὑρετικοὶ εἶναι."

[190] Konstan, *Beauty: The Fortunes of an Ancient Greek Idea*. 30.

[191] A review of the Bruce's 2007 exhibition can be found in Mark Sagoff, "On Restoring and Reproducing Art," *The Journal of Philosophy* 75, no. 9 (1978); Grace Glueck, "They Are Inauthentic, Yes, but Beautiful," *New York Times* (May 18 2007). See also Oklahoma City Museum of Art's "Intent To Deceive: Fakes And Forgeries In The Art World".

serve as educational tools. A New York Times review called the fake reliquaries and "Vermeers" beautiful. Even so, these pieces broadly came from museum storage and study collections, and have not been displayed since they were found to be fake. The dissonance that accompanies the discovery that a beautiful work of art is not original often carries with it an emotional impact.

Mexican artist Brigído Lara sold tens of thousands of fake pre-Columbian pots to major museum collections, passing them off as original. Lara mimicked types produced by the Mayans, Aztecs and Totonacs with a high degree of accuracy. Lara's creations were so convincing that they entered the collections of major museums: the Metropolitan, the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, the Saint Louis Art Museum and the Dallas Museum of Art all acquired pre-Columbian art made by Lara. Only when he was arrested for looting archaeological sites did Lara admit that these pots were not looted contraband, but forgeries. When Lara's pots were presented as genuine works and displayed in museum collections, they were valued and considered beautiful. Once revealed as forgeries, however, they were removed from display or de-accessioned. In interview, former director of the Dallas Museum of Art Harry Parker stated, "My first reaction to the charge [that these works were fake] was very defensive because these are pieces that I have very much admired and I have proudly shown to all kinds of visitors, some of them great Pre-Columbian authorities." Parker's admiration is limited to genuine works of ancient art in spite of the fact that there is no discernible difference between Veracruz style figures of the seventh century CE and Lara's reproductions. He said, "Now they look a little different to me." Even so, suddenly Lara's works were not even considered beautiful. Summing up the effect of their inauthenticity on

their perception, the press release of April 25, 1987 called them "cheap copies."[192] The Lara scandal highlights the degree to which perceived authenticity not only affects value on the art market, but also influences the way audiences see these works.

The Nike of Samothrace is an original work of the Hellenistic period. And while much of her dress and torso are also original, much is not. There is no noticeable difference between the restored segments and original ones. Do viewers notice this? Do they care? In an examination of how tourists experience Bodie, a ghost town, Dydia DeLyser argues that authentic representation of the past is not necessarily a concern. Bodie, a mid-nineteenth century frontier town at the Eastern border of California, was first settled as a mining camp, but its population dwindled after the gold rush. Many of the building facades are reconstructions that Delyser proposes only fuel visitors' fantasies of the American West, regardless of their authenticity.[193]

But a museum is unlike a ghost town in terms of visitor expectation, and authenticity carries a different weight in these spheres. Mark Sagoff suggests that we cannot appreciate the aesthetic value of a work of art without feeling that it is authentic. "You cannot," Sagoff writes, "appreciate a forgery by pretending it is a masterpiece. A painting is to be respected for what it is—the creation of a particular artist working at a certain place and time."[194] What does this mean in the context of a partially authentic work? The Nike, like many works of ancient art, is not inauthentic, but it is not entirely original, either. Many viewers express a fondness for the fragmentary nature of ancient statues, not realizing that these fragments are

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[192] The original press release is entitled "Art World Stunned By 3 Fakes", and can be found in the archives of the *New York Times*, Associated Press, April 25, 1987.

[193] Dydia DeLyser, "Authenticity on the Ground: Engaging the Past in a California Ghost Town," *Annals of the association of American geographers* 89, no. 4 (1999).

[194] Sagoff, "On Restoring and Reproducing Art." 453.

the product of restorers. Few are aware of the sheer number of fragments that compose the Nike. Shelley's "Ozymandias" captures the romance that is ascribed to antiquity in disrepair: "I met a traveler from an antique land who said—'two vast and trunkless legs of stone stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand, half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown and wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command, tell that its sculptor well those passions read […]". In an interview with Louvre curator Ludovic Laugier, artist Rainier Lericolais shares this sentiment, stating that he is glad the head of the Nike was never discovered—she is better as a fragment.[195] The very fact that a statue is fragmentary evinces authenticity. If pieces are missing, they must not have been found, the viewer assumes. This is not always the case. Further, fragmentation suggests that what is there must be original, and this is the problem with the Nike's restored wing, as attractive as it may be.

The authenticity of art—that is, the truthfulness of its origins in terms of authorship and cultural milieu—are all we have to distinguish what art is. Museums are uncontested houses of the authentic, ancient or modern. Lara's career success proves that this assumption is not always valid. We negotiate what is authentic and what is not based on what we are told, and very few people are capable of discerning with the naked eye or otherwise what is authentic, even those who are in positions of authority. Both Sotheby's and Christie's intended to sell the same Gauguin painting, *Vase de Fleurs (Lilas)*, in May 2000, one or both of which were fakes from the collection of Manhattan art dealer Ely Sakhai. Archaeologist Oscar White Muscarella has brought to light countless forgeries in museum collections.[196] If these examples demonstrate anything it is that even experts have difficulty discerning what is authentic. Few

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[195] Annabelle Brouard, host, "La Victoire De Samothrace," Les Regardeurs, *F. Culture*, 2015.

[196] See here Newman, George E., and Paul Bloom. "Art and authenticity: The importance of originals in judgments of value." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*141.3 (2012): 558.

works that come from authoritative pedigrees—art museums, galleries, or well-documented private collections—undergo rigorous scrutiny.

The aim of the museum visitor, of course, is not always to critically scrutinize works of art; museums are also about the enjoyment of art, and gaining a perspective into the past. It is that perspective that is made problematic by the fact that reconstructions are not made apparent, however. Reconstructions emphasize a vision of the past, and of the ideal female form, that is tailored to the tastes of the restorers' epoch rather than the Nike's. Emphasizing the existence of past reconstructions and modern conservation efforts would showcase the value of preserving ancient art and the important role played by the museum during that process.

IV.

Against Expectations:
The Problem With The Auxerre Maiden

Figure 13: Auxerre Maiden on display in the Denon wing of the Louvre. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Even the most dedicated visitors to the Louvre, with their audio guides, sketchbooks and airs of genuine concern, bypass the Auxerre Maiden without a glance. At a diminutive 75 centimeters, the limestone statue is easily missed beside the gargantuan Cheramyes kore, and lacks the grandiose display of the Nike of Samothrace. And yet the Auxerre Maiden is considered the type piece for the Daedalic style. Art history students have been using variants

of *Art Through The Ages*, the introductory Western Art History textbook, in their undergraduate studies for nearly a century. The Auxerre Maiden is listed here as "the masterpiece of the style usually referred to as Daedalic, after the legendary artist Daedalus, whose name means 'the skillful one'".[197] Its most recent editor, Kleiner, is not the only art historian to use the Auxerre Maiden as the type piece for Daedalic art. Myers' *Encyclopedia of World Art,* published at around the same time, pinpointed two works as exemplary of the Daedalic style: the "Lady of Auxerre" and the much larger but less detailed statue of Nikandre.[198] The Louvre itself labels her as a "masterpiece of the Daedalic style" and highlights "The U-shaped face, the heavy, stepped hair, and the strict frontality [that] are hallmarks of this style."[199] These authors are only a few among many who have highlighted the uniquely intricate style of the Auxerre Maiden. Being the representative of an entire period of Greek art, however, has not made her better known to museum audiences.

Perhaps most importantly, the statue is one of the earliest reintroductions of the three-dimensional human form into an artistic canon in which it had seemingly been forgotten.[200] This innovation is invisible in the gallery setting, where size speaks volumes. And while she is small compared to later, life-sized icons like the Winged Victory, or infamous colossal works like the statue of Olympian Zeus, she was sculpted during a transitional period between figurine and statue. Nearly every piece in the Louvre's Cycladic and Early Archaic gallery preceding it is under half a meter in size: folded arm figures in marble, terracotta figurines and

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[197] Kleiner, Fred. *Gardner's Art through the Ages: The Western Perspective,* |. Vol. 1, 2013. 111.

[198] Myers, Bernard Samuel. *Encyclopedia of world art*. (1959).cccxxix

[199] Louvre Museum. *Statue of a woman, known as the "Lady of Auxerre"*. http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/statue-woman-known-lady-auxerre

[200] The Daedalic style coincides approximately with the dates of the Orientalizing period in Greek art—from the eighth to the sixth century BCE.

pots abound and are also largely ignored. First displayed at the Louvre in 1909, the Auxerre Maiden is a victim of her placement in the Cycladic and Archaic gallery, containing more than a millennium of Greek history relegated to an alcove adjacent to the high-traffic Venus de Milo room. But while her display is important, there are other ways in which the Auxerre Maiden simply does not correspond with our expectations for Greek art, for icons of any type, and especially for those of women in Greek art.

Cretan Art In Transition

Discoveries in museum basements are among the most fantasized about pursuits of curatorial work, and the uncovering of the Auxerre Maiden at the Auxerrois regional museum is no exception. Far more attention has been paid to the circumstances involving that modern history than to her ancient one. The Maiden dates to the seventh century, a period of renaissance in Cretan art when stone sculpture was just beginning to be produced again at the end of the Greek Dark Ages. It was previously thought that this renaissance ended in the sixth century with a sharp decline in monumental sculpture and pottery on Crete, a phase that has been termed one of "artistic and cultural impoverishment."[201] It is now thought that rather than economic turmoil, the evidence points to differing social approaches to funerary dedications.[202] Fashions change, even thanatological ones. Further evidence of large-scale feasting at sites like Azoria does not correlate with any form of economic depression.[203] If our assessment of this period in Cretan history is accurate, the Auxerre Maiden was produced at

[201] Brice L Erickson, *Crete in Transition: Pottery Styles and Island History in the Archaic Classical Periods* (American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 2011). 1.

[202] See especially James Whitley, "Cretan Laws and Cretan Literacy," *American journal of archaeology* (1997).

[203] See, for instance, Donald C Haggis et al., "Excavations at Azoria, 2002," *Hesperia* (2004); Manolis I Stefanakis et al., "Excavations at Azoria, 2003-2004, Part 1: The Archaic Civic Complex," *Hesperia* (2007).

this juncture between the reintroduction of the human form in sculpture and its subsequent fall from popularity in Crete.

This was a complicated period in Cretan history. The argument in favor of a Cretan depression is based on a gap in material evidence from Knossos. This pattern has been projected onto the entire island of Crete with the summation that it suffered from a recession and sharp decrease in population over the course of the sixth century.[204] Cretan Iron Age cemeteries were in use continuously from the twelfth to seventh centuries, and a sudden decline in grave goods during the sixth century has struck many as evidence of recession or abandonment. It is true that between 600 and 400 BCE, there is almost a complete lack of monumental stone sculpture, which is especially marked at Knossos. Erickson notes that four lone kouroi fragments and several limestone birds from the Sanctuary of Zeus Thenatas near Knossos are virtually the sole representatives of this two-century span.[205] This starkly contrasts with earlier periods, during which sculpture was an integral part of funerary dedications. Brice Erickson proposes, alternately, that the rest of the island—including Eleutherna, the likely origin of the Auxerre statue—did not suffer economically during the sixth century, and that the disruption in pottery sequences documented at Knossos is not consistent with findings at other major sites. Regardless of cause, epigraphic inscriptions replace the large-scale sculpture and pottery that dominated funerary landscapes. Ideology rather than economy likely drove this trend, and it is perhaps important that the Auxerre Maiden abuts this time of changing fashions. While several nearly identical statues exist from the seventh century, monumental

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[204] Erickson cites here M Prent, "97. The 6th Century BC in Crete: The Best Candidate for Being a Dark Age," *Debating Dark Ages (Caeculus* (1996); Nikolas Stampolidis, "Eleutherna on Crete; an Interim Report on the Geometric-Archaic Cemetery," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* (1990); John Nicolas Coldstream et al., "Knossos North Cemetery Early Greek Tombs: Volume I: The Tombs, and Catalogue of Finds," *The British School at Athens. Supplementary Volumes* (1996). 722.

[205] Erickson (2011) 7.

works in the style of the Maiden all but disappear from Crete in the decades that follow, although similar types are produced in small scale.

A stylistic shift is also evident: representational imagery in bronze and ceramic art is virtually nonexistent.[206] Whitley suggests the preponderance of inscriptions is the manifestation of a new type of civic ideology that discouraged ostentatious aristocratic display.[207] At Eleutherna, the likely home of the Auxerre Maiden, funerary sculpture of the seventh century was often highly intricate and, more than decoration, it seems to have defined the cemetery's architectural profile. In situ as part of a larger funerary monument, the rather small Maiden would have been quite imposing.

A mysterious provenance has yielded profligate theories about the identity and origin of the statue, but while her identity remains elusive, her ancient display context is not. The most comprehensive recent studies are those of Jean-Luc Martinez and Nikolaos Stampolidis.[208] Martinez's study evaluates several arguments, including whether the Maiden is a goddess or a mortal and if she can accurately be considered an early kore. Stampolidis' work attempts to connect the maiden specifically to the cemetery at Eleutherna, drawing parallels to other in situ monuments there. He has excavated extensively at Eleutherna, and has found very convincing evidence that the Maiden has one, if not several, twin statues (see below).[209] These twins provide a plausible model for her ancient display inside an architectural niche.

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[206] Erickson summarizes Whitley's and Kondoleon's arguments on page 21.

[207] Whitley, "Cretan Laws and Cretan Literacy." 659.

[208] Jean-Luc Martinez, *La Dame D'auxerre*, vol. 16 (RMN, 2000). Nikolaos Chr Stampolidēs, Athanasia Kanta, and A Giannikourē, *Athanasia: The Earthly, the Celestial and the Underworld in the Mediterranean from the Late Bronze and the Early Iron Age* (University of Crete, Department of History & Archeology, 2012).Pasquier, Alain. *Mer Egée - Grèce des Îles. Catalogue d'exhibition* (Musée du Louvre, commissariat en coll. avec F. Villard) 1979.

[209] See especially Stampolidis, Nikolaos. "Four ivory heads from the geometric/archaic cemetery at Eleutherna," in *Ivory in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Period, British Museum Occasional Papers,* 85, 1992, 141-162.

Most importantly, both of these studies suggest that a regional style existed at seventh century Eleutherna, of which the Auxerre Maiden is the best-preserved example. This is further evidence that, at least stylistically, the art history textbooks got it right—that the Auxerre Maiden is, in fact, a standout work in an intentional, regional style. The Maiden's copies preclude the possibility she was ever meant as a portrait, and her style is certainly too abstracted to be identified with individual features. This standardization could suggest a regional representation of a divinity, an idea that Stampolidis supports.

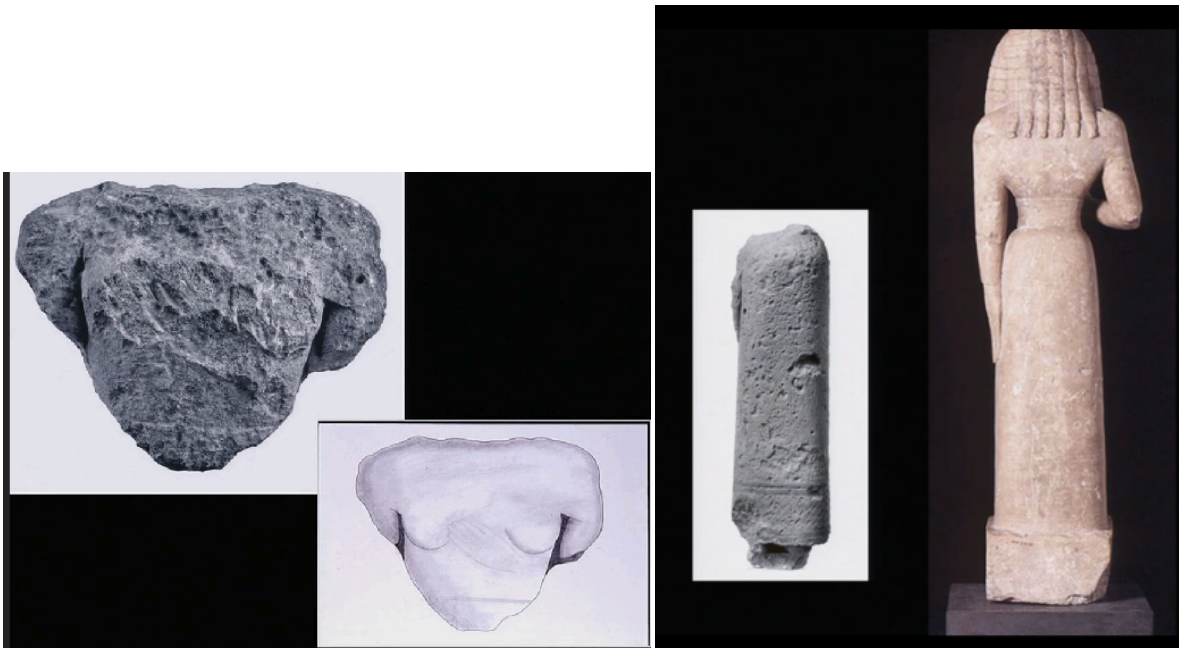

Figure 14: Two fragmentary statues in similar styles and materials as the Auxerre Maiden, each found at the Eleutherna necropolis. Note the hand gesture on the leftmost statue.

Of course, as Martinez notes, her true identity is unknown—she may be a divinity, a dedicant, or someone else entirely.[210] The best case for constructing an identity for the Maiden lies in her original display context. An ivory fragment of a stylistically similar face, discovered in situ at the cemetery of Eleutherna in Crete, is the primary evidence for a Cretan

[210] Martinez discusses this fully in Martinez, *La Dame D'auxerre*. 20-22.

origin.[211] While this fragment is smaller, and differs slightly in quality and material, the resemblance to the statue in the Louvre is unmistakable. Another, larger fragment of the lower half of a limestone kore was found in situ at the false door niche of a monument for fallen soldiers within the necropolis. This fragment has been identified based on stylistic, microscopic (analysis of preserved polychromy), and petrographic evidence, as one related to the Auxerre Maiden.[212] While various studies suggest that macroscopic analysis of limestone is often insufficient for determining provenance, the confluence of evidence in this case strongly favors a relationship between the two statues.[213]

Without knowing how she arrived in France, we can only guess at the original display of the Auxerre Maiden, but parallels at Eleutherna facilitate contextual reconstruction. At Eleutherna, at least, it is unlikely that these types of statues would have been used as simple grave markers. The preserved polychromy on the Eleutherna Kore, one of the statue's "twins," likely survives due to partial sheltering, and Stampolidis argues that the level of preservation precludes constant outdoor exposure. The fragment of the Eleutherna Kore was found near monument 4A, a monument that has been identified as a cenotaph for fallen soldiers, located beside a series of large funeral pyres.[214] Stampolidis reconstructs the Eleutherna Kore at the niche of the pseudo-door of this building, as a sort of divinity that

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[211] Nikolaos Christos Stampolidis. "Eleutherna on Crete: A Preliminary Report on the Geometric Archaic Cemetery." *BSA* 85, 1990. 375-403 [,pp. 390-400, fig. 26].

[212] Nikolaos Stampolidis, "Eleutherna on Crete: An Early Iron Age Site" (May 10, 2013). Lecture given at Metropolitan Museum, May 10.

[213] See here the work of K Polikreti et al., "Provenance of Archaeological Limestone with Epr Spectroscopy: The Case of the Cypriote-Type Statuettes," *Journal of archaeological science* 31, no. 7 (2004). 1015-1028. Kotsonas also discusses the difficulties involved with the analysis of three statuettes from Gortyn in "Three Early, Limestone Sculptures from Gortyn and their Mediterranean Profile" in Stampolidēs, Kanta, and Giannikourē, *Athanasia: The Earthly, the Celestial and the Underworld in the Mediterranean from the Late Bronze and the Early Iron Age*.

[214] See again Stampolidis (2013).

"separated the two worlds, that of the living on the outside and inside that of the deceased."[215] The Auxerre Maiden may have served a similar purpose. If this is the case, there is perhaps a functional motivation behind her plank-like form, which would enable her to be placed flush against the wall of an architectural niche, where her back would never have been seen. There are miniaturized examples of this sort of display in the form of limestone naiskoi—small temple models—from the site of Gortyn.[216] These depict statues, presumably of deities, set up inside niches.

Art historical texts typically describe the Auxerre Maiden as one of the best-preserved freestanding Archaic statues but this probably incorrect.[217] Other statues of this style are integrated into Cretan architecture, and placed inside niches rather than set up as standalone works. Even if she were not placed inside a niche, she would have been part of a much larger funerary landscape, gaining monumentality from the architecture she adorned. If understood as a freestanding piece, it is easier to draw false parallels between the Maiden and early korai, statues of maidens that were carved in the round and often had idiosyncratic features—faces, dresses, attributes—that have led some to suggest they may have represented real dedicants.[218] Certainly the inscriptions of Athenian korai render them far more personal (e.g. "Euthydikos the son of Thaliarchos dedicated [me]" for a kore from the Acropolis of Athens). The categorization of dedications as either "first-fruits" or tithes also connect korai to a specific

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[215]Nikolaos Christos Stampolidis. *Ancient Eleutherna: West Sector*. Translated by Cullen, Tim and Oikonomou, Athina. Ministry of Culture, Archaeological Receipts Fund: Athens, 2008.

[216] Stampolidēs, Kanta, and Giannikourē, *Athanasia: The Earthly, the Celestial and the Underworld in the Mediterranean from the Late Bronze and the Early Iron Age*. illustrates these.

[217] See, for instance, "Collignon, Maxime". https://dictionaryofarthistorians.org/collignonl.htm.

[218] Catherine Keesling discusses the unique facial features and the potential realism involved in painting korai in Catherine M Keesling and Catherine M Keesling, *The Votive Statues of the Athenian Acropolis* (Cambridge University Press Cambridge,, UK, 2003).

social and religious institution, and we have no knowledge of any such ritual for Eleutherna. Although there are similarities in form, such as frontality and archaizing features, the functions of the two may have been very different. For the Auxerre Maiden to be labeled as an early kore, then, simply makes her seem a less-advanced and complex representative of early Athenian religion where, in fact, she may be entirely distinct from that process. While there are korai from several regions—Athens, Chios, Samos—the Athenian ones are the best known.

Martinez proposes that the hand she places across her chest—a feature that is consistent in other Cretan variants of the statue—marks the Auxerre Maiden as a mourning figure.[219] Her exaggerated hand gesture would have been readable even at some height from viewers below. While it is impossible to know for certain whether Stampolidis' reconstruction, which locates the statues inside post and lintel niches, is correct, his argument benefits from the strong similarity between surviving works at Eleutherna and the Louvre statue. The matter of reconstruction is not trivial, either. If it is true that the Auxerre Maiden were meant as an architectural work, we have perhaps been evaluating her stylistically according to an entirely inappropriate canon. Works that are meant to be viewed in the round, like the Winged Victory of Samothrace or the dancing satyr from Mazzara del Vallo, must engage the viewer in a very different fashion than a work intended for display high up on the façade of a building.

Although there is no record of how the Maiden came to be in France, Maxime Collignon, antiquities curator at the Louvre, told an intriguing and highly embellished story of her discovery in an old storeroom. In Collignon's account, the statue was gathering dust in the municipal museum of Auxerre when it was recognized as a masterpiece and transferred to the

[219] Martinez (2000).

Louvre for display in the Salle Diane.[220] Citing a letter from the Auxerre museum's curator, Collignon says the museum registers and archives contained no record of the Auxerre Maiden, but notes that she may have entered the collection untraditionally because her accession number—"285"—was written in Arabic numerals as opposed to the standard Roman numerals. Regional museum policies circa 1905 were likely not especially consistent, in particular for a collection that had few antiquities with which to compare or catalogue an unusual work like the Auxerre Maiden.

Many years later in 1964, returning to old auction catalogues, Claude Rolley reconstructed what he believed to have happened pre-Collignon.[221] The first recorded appearance of the statue was at an auction at Saint-Bris le Vineux on the 26 of May and 2 of June, 1895. On these dates, Edouard Bourgoin's widow was selling her deceased husband's affairs, among which resided the Auxerre Maiden. Bourgoin had been a Parisian sculptor of moderate success, working mostly in wood, who moved to Saint-Bris very shortly before his death in 1895. He also had an antique store, and he must have acquired the maiden for sale in his shop. Rolley cites the *Bulletin municipal* on this subject. It is here that the sale price was also recorded—as damning a vector of value as ever existed—a paltry 1-Franc note. For this small sum the maiden passed into the personal collection of Louis David, one of Bourgoin's friends, and not to be confused with the neoclassical painter. It is at this juncture that the story of the Auxerre Maiden becomes mythologized. Collignon has said that David used the statue as stage decoration for Pygmalion's workshop in the 1899 performance of Victor Massé's

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[220] See a discussion of Collignon's account in Claude Rolley, "Deux Notes Auxerroises. I. Le Trépied D'auxerre. Ii. La Provenance De La Dame D'auxerre," *Bulletin de Correspondance hellenique* 88, no. 2 (1964). 444-445. Originally in Maxime Collignon, "Une Statuette Grecque Archaïque Du Musée D'auxerre," *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 52, no. 1 (1908).

[221] Rolley, Claude. "Deux notes auxerroises. I. Le trépied d'Auxerre. II. La provenance de la dame d'Auxerre." *Bulletin de Correspondance hellenique* 88.2 (1964): 442-445. 443.

*Galat*ée. After the play, David anonymously donated the work to the local museum, where it was thought to be a poor, underdeveloped specimen, and called a "caillou cassé."[222] This explains why it was not listed in the museum's inventory, and was marked haphazardly with a number incongruent with the other pieces in inventory.

In her dissertation on the nineteenth-century reception of Greek works, Sophie Schvalberg proposes that at least part of this story is romanticized fiction.[223] Rolley's sources, for one, are testimonia, including conversations with G. David, the son of Louis, and Monsieur Belle, the former curator of the municipal museum, and the purported utterer of the "broken stone" assessment of the Auxerre Maiden. Schvalberg argues that during this time Daedalic works generally passed unrecognized by the public as being Greek, so the maiden's use as scenery for a Greek play is dubious. Perceptions of the work have not changed in any significant way; even now, the statue does not look like what a museum audience expects of Greek sculpture. It is, of course, possible that the statue was not chosen for its look of authenticity, but simply because it was an available and economical choice (at a single franc!). Schvalberg further argues that the maiden was brought to France at a much later date—in 1907—by the architect Jules Bourgoin-Esclavy, not the Bourgoin mentioned by Rolley. There is little concrete evidence for this argument, but this can also be said of Rolley and Collignon's version of events. In support of Schvalberg's argument is the fact that Bourgoin-Esclavy (the "other" Bourgoin) was an Orientalist. His interest in the Auxerre Maiden, then, may have

[222] Ibid. Rolley reports this story as told by Collignon, although Collignon himself did not document it in writing, and we should be skeptical of its veracity.

[223] Schvalberg's dissertation is entitled *Le modèle grec dans l'art français 1815-1914.*
A talk she gave at Fontainebleu, is available here, in which she summarizes specifically the arguments about the Auxerre Maiden: http://festivaldelhistoiredelart.com/programmes/le-voyage-improbable-de-la-dame-dauxerre/

been due to her misconstrued Near Eastern Origin origin rather than her recognition as early Greek art.

In a sense it does not matter which of these stories, if either, is closer to the truth. The subtext of Collignon and Rolley's stories is that the curator is capable of seeing something in a work of art that the average person does not. Use as scenery, not coincidentally for a play about a statue that comes to life, further underscores this notion of a masterpiece hidden in plain view. If Schvalberg is correct in her assumption that Bourgoin-Esclavy, the architect and Orientalist, is responsible for the extraction of the statue from Greece, then once again the original interest stemmed from a failure of recognition. In both cases the statue was at the mercy of the perception of the primitive in art, years before Picasso visited the Trocadéro.[224]

At The Intersection of Primitive Art And Good Taste

The historiography of Cretan art during the seventh century BCE echoes the inability to connect these early works to the greater corpus of Greek art. As a result, museum audiences frequently overlook these works. They are too early to fit the mold of Classical or even Classicizing, and critical reception has marginalized them as less advanced, less thoughtful works. Collignon himself considered them akin to simple wood idols, and in this sense, they were deemed "primitive," a word that connoted non-Western art. The same primitive biases that afflicted African masks at the Trocadéro, however, also skew our perception of Daedalic works.

It is difficult to find a unifying thread in the corpus of surviving Daedalic art. While the Daedalic style has certain unmistakable features—large, almond-shaped eyes, U-shaped faces and beaded, Near-Eastern-styled hair—we do not know what, if anything, unifies these works

[224] This is discussed in depth in André Malraux, *Picasso's Mask* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1976).

conceptually. If we consider the best-known works in the Daedalic style— the Auxerre Maiden and statue of Nikandre— we see a heavily Egyptianized style that appears in different regions and contexts. Only the style of these works connects them. Nikandre, for instance, dates to approximately the same period of the mid-seventh century. Like the Auxerre Maiden, she has hair articulated in wig-like beads and her slender waist and frontal profile are characteristic of the Daedalic style. Unlike the Auxerre Maiden, her function was neither funerary nor architectural. The statue of Nikandre was deposited in a ditch at the outskirts of the Sanctuary of Artemis at Delos and bears an inscription that marks her as a gift to the goddess. Diodorus Siculus (1.98) indicates that the use of Egyptian style was a conscious choice. He tells us that Telekles and Theodorus, the sculptors of the famous Apollo at Samos, elected to carve that statue in the Egyptian style, not the Greek one, after visiting Egypt.[225] He does not explain why the Egyptian method was preferred. These distinct examples punctuate conceptual dissonance—there may be absolutely nothing that links Daedalic works other than their style.

[225] Diodorus. *IG* XII. 5, 1425b.

Figure 15 : The Auxerre Maiden (left) beside the seventh century statue of Nikandre (right). Both images labeled for reuse courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Although Collignon saw the Auxerre Maiden as an authentic work of Greek art, he was baffled by its Daedalic style and struggled to place it within the canon as he understood it. Simply put, it was not what was expected of Greek art at the time. In his 1892 history of Greek art, Collignon described the statue as, "Cette informe image, qui trahit si clairement l'imitation de l'idole taillée dans une planche" and placed her stylistically "Entre l'ex-voto de Nicandra et le *xoanon* en forme de planche qui a servi de modèle, il n'y a donc pas d'intermédiaire. Le premier est une transposition en marbre du second."[226] Collignon saw rudimentary techniques—"an imitation of an idol carved from a board"—and a lack of ingenuity in the maiden. Still, the relatively sensitive modeling of the face, with simple, yet expressive eyes, and hint of Archaic smile was for early curators, Collignon included, difficult to reconcile with the reductive style of the maiden's dress. What the Auxerre Maiden's dress lacks in terms of drapery, she makes up for in the intricate geometric pattern that would have looked even more remarkable when painted. Detail, however, is frequently overlooked as evidence of advanced artistic talent, as Naomi Schor convincingly argues. It has historically had a negative association with femininity.[227] It is also associated with the primitive, as is made manifest in the early anthropological work of Franz Boas. *Primitivism* as a movement became popular later in the century with Picasso's revelatory visit to the Trocadéro, but the "primitif" employed by Collignon is not yet this definitively non-Western style. For Collignon, the term is used in its most basic sense to refer to that which is crude or rudimentary, the product of uncivilized society. Detail in these instances is viewed as a poor substitute for more

[226] Maxime Collignon. *Histoire de la sculpture grècque*. Firmin-Didot, 1892. 121.

[227] Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (Routledge, 2013).

complex modes of dynamism and perspective in art. In this milieu, a piece like the Auxerre Maiden—small, intricate, clothed—does not stand a chance.

It is not coincidental that the *primitivisms* of both Collignon and Picasso, by definition, did not belong to the Western canon. This early Greek art was savage and supernatural in a way that alienated it from the Classical ideals that inspired Enlightenment scholars. Collignon considered primitive sculpture, especially, as espousing belief in magic:

> D'après les anciennes idées grecques, la statue du dieu est vraiment animée par une puissance divine; ces idoles sont des êtres vivants. Il est question de statues qui agitent la main, suent des gouttes de sang, communiquent à ceux qui les touchent une vigueur surnaturelle.

He gives the example of a statue of Apollo that was said to have left its post to defend the walls of Corcyra. [228] These views were not limited to Greeks of the Archaic period, and they are often recounted as ancient versions of urban legends. Still, they highlight a disjuncture between the sophisticated, naturalistic sculpture of the Parthenon frieze and the potential for violence and literal blood-sucking inherent in cult statues.

Franz Boas made a living of studying "primitive" societies. In his view, primitive art and primitive ideas—those that involved magic or the supernatural—went hand-in-hand. In his ethnography of native populations of the Pacific Northwestern United States, Boas distinguished between symbolic, masculine art and representational, feminine art. The representational art, produced mainly by women, was typically two-dimensional and highly detailed. These works were crafted in embroidery, basketry and weaving. Symbolic art, on the other hand, was produced by men, and tended to take the form of sculpture. Unlike representational art, symbolic art was thought to have symbolic meaning or value.[229] In other

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[228] Collignon (1892) 8.

[229] Franz Boas, *Primitive Art*, vol. 8 (Courier Corporation, 1955). 183-184.

words, it as not simply a nice design, but an *idea*. This meant that it was intellectually elevated to the realm of thought. Interestingly, Boas noted that a select few realistic carvings showed that sculptors were capable of realism, but did not prefer it. The belief that sculpture is the domain of masculinity, not only in terms of its production and conception, but also its appreciation, is one that remains relevant to the study of Western art. According to Boas' schema, detail is definitively feminine, and inherently less technically advanced than three-dimensional art. In fact, the idea that two-dimensional art is less difficult to produce is not unpopular in contemporary art circles, either, where experiential installations and sculpture reign supreme. The fact that an exhibition on female ceramicists at the Brooklyn Museum was entitled *An Art Of Our Own: Women Ceramicists From The Permanent Collection* as recently as 2008 should quell any suspicion that this idea is outmoded.[230]

For nineteenth century tastes, intricate detail was a lack of moderation and sophistication, and Greek art was the pinnacle of moderation. Charles Blanc wrote that Greek art is "Toujours mesuré dans son élan, toujours délicat dans sa grandeur, l'art grec [. . .] s'est imposé volontairement des limites qu'il est dangereux de franchir même quand on possède le génie d'un Ghiberti, d'un Donatello."[231] For Blanc, imposing limits on one's work (we can only guess what this means) is what makes it great. The avoidance of excess, or detail, seems implicit here. But what exactly is moderation in art? How does one *see* "the voluntary imposition of limits"—restraint—on the part of the artist? Blanc almost certainly refers to Winckelmann's model of progression from primitive to Classical, and finally to decadence and despoliation. Detail may have been associated with femininity in the ancient mind, too. Vitruvius' analysis of architectural orders describes the simpler, staunch Doric columns as the

[230] See details here: https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/exhibitions/women_ceramicists

[231] Blanc, Charles. 1880. *Grammaire des arts du dessin*. Paris: Librairie Renouard. 431.

most masculine, where Ionic and Corinthian styles convey the form of a woman or of a maiden through volutes and scrollwork. Vitruvius avoids value assessment in his characterization. Blanc and even Boas, however, connect detail with excess and feminine frivolity. In Schor's view, this mythology has existed for so long that it has gained the semblance of scientific fact. In one account written in 1929, the historian Jean Larnac writes, "while female students are attentive to their immediate surroundings, the finished product, the decorative, the concrete, the individual, men prefer what is most distant, the constructive, the general and the abstract."[232] It is worth noting that the feminine here is not only related to excessive preference for detail, but also with the decorative arts—a denigration of both. Might the Auxerre Maiden fit into this exact mold: a small, intricate piece that was likely architectural? These ideas, once cemented institutionally, create an appearance of objectivity. As Schor argues, "detail has been traditionally connoted as feminine and devalorized and, further, [. . .] the modern age has witnessed a remarkable transvaluation of the detail accompanied by its no less significant degendering."[233]

The myth surrounding the acquisition of the Auxerre Maiden by the Louvre seems to perpetuate Collignon's practically heroic status as a savant who could see what others could not in the Archaic statue. In fact, one needs to delve into the Louvre's archives to find a note that records the Maiden's acquisition as a trade with the museum of Auxerre, not simply an unceremonious "handing off" as it is often described.[234] In reality the Maiden was exchanged

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[232] Schor discusses this in *supra*, 14. See also Jean Larnac's *Histoire de la literature féminine en France. (Paris: Kra, 1929), 267-268.*

[233] Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine*. 116.

[234] The archival note of June 3, 1909 reads: "Dame d'Auxerre : échange de la statuette grecque du musée d'Auxerre contre une toile de Harpignies, Torrent dans le Var (décret, arrêté, rapport, délibérations municipales, articles de presse, notes, correspondance). 1er juin 1908 au 22 juillet 1939. (137p.). Voir aussi A 4, 17 juin 1939."

for a gray-hued oil landscape, *Torrent dans le Var*, by Henri-Joseph Harpignies. Harpignies was a well-known painter of the Barbizon school, whose work was better known at the turn of the century than an unusual, Archaic Greek statue. That Collignon and Hamiaux thought her face was well modeled in contrast to her overly simplified body and drapery poses a problem for Winckelmann's notion that Greek art progresses towards naturalism.[235] This idea was, and of course continues to be, influential in the hierarchy of aesthetic value. Winckelmann's assessment of the evolution of art treats the earliest art of any culture as a sort of sketch, an early attempt that has not yet been perfected:

> The arts which are dependent on drawing have, like all inventions, commenced with the necessary; the next object of research was beauty; and, finally, the superfluous followed: these are the three principal stages in art.[236]

In this view, early art begins with what is necessary—the simple conveyance of an idea or image—but not with what is beautiful. This notion of inevitable and universal artistic progression is so ingrained that Alice Donohue argues that we still continue to see the Auxerre Maiden as a failed attempt at naturalism. She writes, "None of these statements could be made if the Lady of Auxerre were not being judged implicitly by the standard of later Greek art."[237] And Donohue is right. Daedalic works are defined, even in textbooks, as underdeveloped expressions of what would eventually become Greek art. In fact, a part of the

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See p. 37 of *Archives des Musées Nationaux, Série A: Antiquités grecques et romaines*. Interestingly, this note is just above a note of 1911 that records the gift of commemorative medals to the daughters of Olivier Voutier for his role in the discovery of the Venus de Milo.

[235] Alice Donohue discusses this in (2005) 138-139.

[236] Winckelmann, *History of the Art of Antiquity, I. 29;* trans. Potts, Alex. *Flesh and the ideal: Winckelmann and the origins of art history*. Yale University Press, 2000.

[237] Donohue, Alice A. *Greek sculpture and the problem of description*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. 137. And this idea is so pervasive that it is the subject of a joke in Pixar's *Inside Out*, in which characters proceed through the subconscious thought level of neural pathways only to become increasingly abstracted, more superfluous, less "necessary." This is, of course, a constant refrain of critics of contemporary and abstract art.

definition of the word "Daedalic," even for Greeks, is "very old"—art that was associated with the first sculptor, Daedalus. The difference between the modern adoption of the term and the ancient one is the implied value assessment therein. For Greeks, works of art associated with Daedalus were old and venerable. In her glossary of Greek and Roman sculpture, Janet Grossman writes that Daedalic works are characterized by:

> Triangular faces with low, straight foreheads, balanced on either side by masses of hair with strong horizontal waves. There is little depth to the figures; the bodies are usually planklike, the faces masklike. The emphasis is on the overly large head, often with expressive facial features. Figures produced in this period usually wear tubular dresses without pleats (perhaps meant to suggest wool) and pinned at the shoulders.[238]

While Grossman's choice of words—"planklike" and "masklike"— are not inaccurate, it is difficult to read this description without the suspicion of an implied lack of artistic skill (as opposed to the admittedly ambiguous appellations "formally rigid" or "stylized," for instance). Exaggeration is accentuated here. There are again hints of inability to moderate in the "overly large" qualification of the head. These judgments are subtle, but present. A picture of the Auxerre Maiden appears below Grossman's description, with a note that she exhibits the triangular face and geometric lines of hair that typify the style. Grossman's language is reiterated in countless other descriptions of Daedalic art. Hurwit writes of Nikandre, "Her monumentality and hard stone emulate Egyptian models; her so-called 'Daidalic style' (characterized by a flat-topped, U-shaped face framed by triangular wedges of hair) was adopted from Near Eastern prototypes."[239] Hurwit's language avoids overt value assessments, and instead highlights the Near Eastern origins of Daedalic works. This effectively focuses the

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[238] Grossman, Janet Burnett. *Looking at Greek and Roman sculpture in stone: a guide to terms, styles, and techniques*. Getty Publications, 2003. 39.

[239] Hurwit, Jeffrey M. "The Human Figure in Early Greek Sculpture and Vase Painting." In Shapiro, Harvey Alan, ed. *The Cambridge companion to archaic Greece*. Cambridge University Press, 2007. 271.

reader on the antiquity of Daedalic works, even within the corpus of Greek art, a definition that is likely closer to that of the original Greek.

The term "Daedalic" was used adjectivally in the ancient world to describe objects with detail, but not a specific style of art. Sarah Morris notes that Daedalic does not simply mean "old" but also refers in ancient texts to degree of detail of a work, as in Bacchylides *5*, when Meleager's mother controls her son's fate by means of burnt offerings stored in an "elaborate chest"("δαιδαλέας ἐκ λάρνακος").[240] In each of these examples, Daedalus the man and *Daedalic* as a style are associated with an earlier, undeveloped, primordial period in human history. For the Greeks, this was a period and style of interest, when art was just beginning, and was therefore of an excellent quality. Art historians, on the other hand, have struggled to like Daedalic art. Calling it "old" or "detailed" reads as an apology for what is perceived as stylistically outmoded.

Although Loewy first coined the term "Daedalic" in 1909, it did not become popular as a stylistic categorization until the 1930s when Jenkins published his *Daedalica*. It is, of course, a challenge to assign a label for style and date without also assigning a judgment of quality. In a catalogue for an exhibition on Aegean Island art, Alain Pasquier wrote, "La naissance de la grande sculpture en marbre est précédée d'une sorte de prologue qui occupe la plus grande partie du VIIe siècle avant J.-C.: il s'agit de la plastique dite "dédalique" […]"[241] Pasquier avoids denigratating Daedalic art, but he places it in a stage before "the birth of great sculpture." Here again, it literally falls under the definition of primitive in the sense of underdeveloped and not quite fully evolved.

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[240] Bacchylides, *Ode 5*, 140. See Sarah Morris' discussion in *Daidalos and the origins of Greek art*. Princeton University Press, 1995. 42.

[241] Pasquier, Alain, in exhibition catalogue for *Mer Egée - Grèce des Îles* (Musée du Louvre, commissariat en coll. avec F. Villard), 1979.

The notion of taste seeps through, from Pasquier's simple catalogue entry to Grossman's glossary, all the more potent due to its subtlety. Kenneth Clark said that taste is mysterious, infatuating: "It's something that you like the taste of, something that you like without knowing why…" and which involves both discrimination and restraint, but which also resists simple explanation.[242] What taste connotes, if Clark does not state it explicitly, is a sense of quality that is innate, not learned. It is too mysterious to comprehend; you either have a good sense of it or you do not. In this line of reasoning, tastes simply exist, so the taster is exonerated from evaluating their origins or causality.

The idea of moderation is influential for a view of early, primitive art as lacking sufficient taste. As we have seen, Blanc and others saw moderation as a tenet of fine art, but what was meant by moderation is not easily qualified. To better understand how the feminine, detail, and primitivism became synonymous with a lack of moderation (read: a lack of taste), we should turn back to Collignon's own work on a facet of ancient art that remains controversial: polychromy. In *La Polychromie Dans La Sculpture Grecque*, Collignon argues progressively that primitive works of Greek art, along with architecture and later styles, were painted. He wrote, "Mais la polychromie existe déjà dans la primitive Héllade, bien avant que l'art soit assez avancé pour en raisonner les lois et en analyser les harmonies."[243] In this view early art is not advanced enough for rules or harmonies, but this is seen as a natural progression. He further explains that early Archaic art is a testament to the inadequacy of

[242] Price presents an excellent discussion on this in "The Mystique of Connoisseurship" in Price, Sally. *Primitive art in civilized places*. University of Chicago Press, 2002.

[243] Collignon, Maxime. *La polychromie dans la sculpture grecque*. Vol. 23. E. Leroux, 1898. 6.

tools available to primitive artists.[244] In this way he avoids blaming ancient art for its inadequacy, but it is inadequate nevertheless. That Collignon was a rare proponent of early Greek art is undeniable. Even so, it remained primitive to him, the result of inferior artists, stone quality and tools. Like Goethe and many before him, Collignon's ideas about artistic innovation were anchored in the power of civilization. He argued that the revolution in black-figure vase painting that occurred between 530 and 520 BCE was the result of progress ("progrès") inspired directly by the innovations of Athenian politicians Cimon and Cleon.[245] And Blanc reiterated the bond between art and civilization in *Grammaire des Arts*, a work whose title stresses rules over whimsy in the appreciation of art. Blanc even credited artists, poets and philosophers with the success of nations: "Cette étoile qui doit guider la marché du genre humain est justement l'utopie du philosophe, le rêve du poète, l'idéal de l'artiste. C'est pour la voir que l'homme doit regarder les cieux."[246] For Blanc, artistic merit guides morals. It is both a symbol and driver of advanced civilizations, and it is thus not a choice, but an onus for the artist to produce the highest caliber work.

This moralizing force has dangerous implications for our interpretation of art. In an assessment of the Daedalic statue of Nikandre and the Nike of Samothrace, Alice Donohue writes, "It is the interpretation of the styles that determined the historical positions assigned to these images, because neither can be dated on other grounds. The stylistic comparison is therefore circular, for it serves merely to reconfirm a chronology that was established by the stylistic analysis of the individual works in the first place. What passes for secure information is

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[244] See Collignon (1898). 11: "[…] les monuments eux-memes attestent l'insuffisance des outils maniés par les artistes primitifs."

[245] Collignon. (1898) 19.

[246] Blanc, Charles. *Grammaire des arts du dessin*. Renouard, 1876. 7.

the outcome of intensive interpretation."[247] The result is that subjective style and historical fact become indistinguishable, a problem that is much larger than one of simple chronology, especially given that the past is constructed exclusively of objects that we have deemed important. Perhaps this is what Walter Benjamin meant when he wrote that the past was a memory:

> To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it 'the way it really was (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling class.[248]

What is surprising about Benjamin's statement is not the notion of history as discontinuous, but that memories can be dangerous. And while memory extols the increasingly progressive image of the ideal woman at the turn of the century, the reality was equal parts excitement and contempt. Objects like the Auxerre Maiden were valuable as curiosities and as metrics of prestige for the newly popular Louvre. The Venus de Milo, with its royal heritage and Classicizing appearance, fit neatly into this schema. The Auxerre Maiden did not.

Women And Primitivism At The Turn Of The Century

As we have seen, the Auxerre Maiden is unlike an icon—small, detailed, and fully clothed—and unlike the popular current for women in art. When the Maiden came to light at the turn of the century, the image of the ideal woman in France was heavily influenced by the pure white marble statues of the Louvre. Did this have an impact on the portrayal of women in art and literature? For contemporary art, it did. Zola, Flaubert and their contemporaries

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[247] Donohue (2005) 27.

[248] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn, *New York: Schocken* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968). 255.

were infusing their heroines with passion and impetuosity, traits that had previously been unappealing and inappropriate.[249] There was a depth to women in literature and art that made these heroines the focus of philosophical thought, although this was not always a positive attribute. Zola's protagonist Thérèse Raquin dealt with infidelity, unplanned pregnancy, and murder. It is worth noting that these protagonists were still a far cry from de Staël's liberated Corinne, whose agency is her downfall. The foil to women so dangerously empowered was a woman who exuded sensibility and a Classical aesthetic.

Once again, Greek sculpture provided a model for the perfect woman. It represented democracy and intellectual revolution, but also the superiority of Western culture. Greek goddesses served as fashion templates for French women. Mireille Lee proposes that Classical forgeries, especially an influx of bronze caryatid mirrors produced at the turn of the century by the Gilliérons and other craftsmen, propagated images of the idealized French woman dressed as a Greek goddess. Lee notes that an allegory of Europe at the Palais du Trocadéro took the form of a Classically draped woman in an assemblage of statues designed for the Exposition Universelle.[250] In this series, the Classically-draped Europe is distinctly more civilized than the other continents, whose near-nudity stood out as wild and bucolic. Along with this likening of modern women to the Classical aesthetic of beauty, literary and philosophical currents were promoting women as heroines, seemingly allowing them to play a role conventionally reserved for men.

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[249] The portrayal of women in art and literature hardly followed a linear progression, as is lamented by Germaine de Staël in her memoires. She remarked that women had more freedom in France pre-Napoleon than after. On this subject see Francine du Plessix Gray, *Madame De Staël: The First Modern Woman* (Atlas and Company, 2009). Germaine's own memoires are also telling. In several instances she bluntly states that being a literary woman has earned her nothing but trouble. See here Germaine de Staël-Holstein and Paul Gautier, *Dix Années D'exil* (Plon-Nourrit, 1818). 99).

[250] Lee, Mireille M. *The Gréau Mirror and the Phenomenon of Fakes in Nineteenth-Century Paris*. Proc. of XIX International Congress On Ancient Bronze, Getty Museum, Los Angeles. 2015.

Consider Flaubert's envisioning of a romantic encounter. When in *L'Education Sentimentale*, Frédéric Moreau meets his love interest Mme Arnoux for the first time, she appears in a markedly natural, windblown state:

> Elle avait un large chapeau de paille, avec des rubans roses qui palpitaient au vent derrière elle. Ses bandeaux noirs, contournant la pointe de ses grandes sourcils, decendaient très bas et semblaient presser amoureusement l'ovale de sa figure. Sa robe de mousseline claire, tachetée de petits pois, se répandait à plis nombreux.[251]

This vision of a woman in a windblown, clinging garment calls to mind the drapery of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, who balances delicately on a ship's prow. Women in Impressionist paintings also echo this naturalism. In Monet's *Blanche In the Woods at Giverny: Blanche Hoschedé at Her Easel with Suzanne Hoschedé Reading,* produced in 1887, the subject sits in the grass amidst mottled light, filtered through the leaves of the trees in Monet's garden. In this idyllic pastoral setting, Blanche reads a book while Suzanne paints, both women appearing virtuously unaware of the viewer's gaze and of their role as models in the scene. Pre-revolution female protagonists in literature were rare, and the concept of a woman in such an informal setting would have been noteworthy.[252] Even so, these women, as is the case with Monet's sitters, were not necessarily given agency. Rather, they became a new ideal for male contemplation. Like decorative elements, they are pleasing to look at because they are at once beautiful and are set in a beautiful landscape. Following Monet's women, the women of Greek and Roman sculpture, often partially disrobed with naturally flowing, sensual garments, are a closer parallel to this description of Flaubert's heroine than the rigidity of the Auxerre Maiden, who neither fits the template for feminine ideal pre- or post-revolution. Greek art was

[251] Flaubert, *L'Education sentimentale* (1869).

[252] Of course, Germaine de Stael's *Corinne* is an excellent example of a feminist protagonist in turn-of-the-century literature. While that book was critically praised by her literary contemporaries, it was despised by Napoleon, whose ban on its French publication is likely the reason it is not better known today.

prized for its naturalism, but the Auxerre Maiden provided only a pseudo-Egyptianizing frontality. But while those traits were expected of Egyptian art, they were not an accepted part of the canon of Greek art.

Figure 16: In The Woods At Giverny: *Blanche Hoschedé* At Her Easel With Suzanne *Hoschedé* Reading, Monet, ca. 1887. Los Angeles County Museum of Art M.46.3.4. Image labeled for reuse via Wikimedia Creative Commons.

The odalisque is, of course, the Neoclassical predecessor to women as romantic subjects in art. The odalisque type adopts Near Eastern elements, but unlike in the Auxerre Maiden, these are made overtly erotic. Odalisques meet and encourage the male gaze. In Ingres' painting, the odalisque looks entirely Western; only her nudity is foreign. This contrasts the sensible and demure role of women in Impressionist paintings or in Flaubert's work, in which part of the allure stems from the very fact that the subjects are unaware of it. The viewer has power over the subject through this anonymity, but is simultaneously exculpated from the potential for impropriety. These women were, after all, often real—friends or family members of Monet—as opposed to the fantastical, imagined *Others* in the odalisque style. Blanche Hoschedé, for example, was Monet's step-daughter as well as his daughter-in law. Natural, humanist heroines did not garner universal acceptance. Susan Bernstein traces criticism of romantic heroines to "declining 'family values'" and Margaret

Oliphant, writing in 1867, was already arguing that, "We have grown accustomed to… the narrative of many thrills of feeling… What is held up to us as the story of the feminine soul as it really exists underneath its conventional coverings is a very fleshy and unlovely record."[253] Bernstein and Oliphant recognize that the empowered heroine was both alluring and dangerous. In their view, the moral and philosophical value of these women was made apparent in their physical form. Full figures convey their sensuality and passion, and in this sense they are only empowered as a male fantasy.

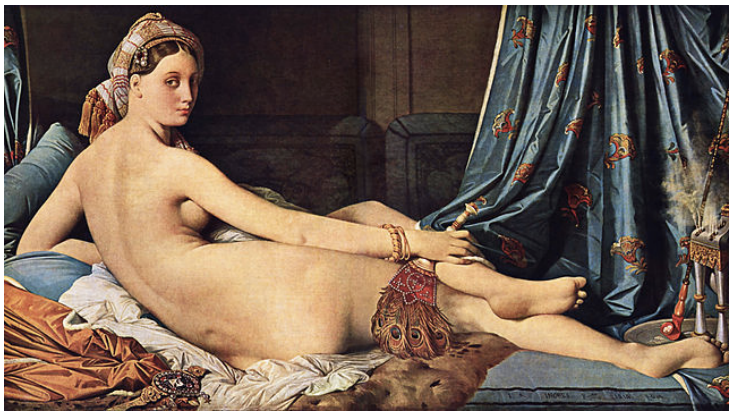

Figure 17: *La Grande Odalisque*, Ingres, 1814. Musée du Louvre R.F. 1158. Image labeled for reuse courtesy of Wikimedia Creative Commons.

Heroines did not just look different. They embodied a change in philosophical thought that was not embraced by everyone. Balzac wrote about passion as the humanistic, driving force behind all art, arguing, "La passion est toute l'humanité. Sans elle, la religion, l'histoire, le roman, l'art, seraient inutiles."[254] This explains what was perhaps the most salient visual shift in this paradigm: the societal acceptance of the smile. With Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloise* the ideal woman had grown more outwardly emotive, demonstrating sensibility through smiling. And perhaps this explains Collignon's preference for the Auxerre Maiden's face over

[253] Sarah David Bernstein, "Dirty Reading: Sensation Fiction, Women, and Primitivism," *Criticism* 36, no. 2 (1994), http://www.jstor.org/stable/23116265?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

[254] Balzac, "Avant-propos" à *La Comédie humaine* (1842).

her conservatively-rendered figure, for despite lacking the flowing drapery of better-known works of ancient art, she does, in fact, smile. The infamous Archaic smile was not that of a Rousseaunian heroine, but suggested vitality, possibly even humanism. The Auxerre Maiden, then, has the face of a post-revolutionary, humanistic heroine, but a figure that alludes to early, primitive art.

Of course more than societal trends come to bear on our notion of the ideal woman. V.S. Ramachandran finds neurobiological rationales for our preference for voluptuous women. They are, he argues, a metaphor for fecundity and fertility in nature. He gives the example of a sandstone nymph from Kajuraho in Northern India. The nymph arches her back to look towards a bough of ripe mangoes that hangs just above her arm, a reference to fertility. The shape of the mangoes also mimics the nymph's breasts, "So there are multiple layers of metaphor and meaning in the sculpture, and the result is incredibly beautiful." Ramachandran further argues that where there is typically a "translation barrier between the left hemisphere's language-based propositional logic and the […] intuitive 'thinking' of the right," great art may bridge the two hemispheres to allow the brain to interpret both logically and oneirically.[255] This would allow multiple levels of contemplation and modes of viewing pleasure. Ramachandran's analysis takes the question of why we like looking at nude, voluptuous women a step further than the traditional argument that it relates to fertility in nature. Further, the more exaggerated the sexual attributes of the figures, the better understood they are by our brains. So a nude woman with an hourglass figure, like the Venus

[255] Vilayanur S Ramachandran, *The Tell-Tale Brain: A Neuroscientist's Quest for What Makes Us Human* (WW Norton & Company, 2012). 237.

de Milo, is read quickly as such, while the plank-like Auxerre Maiden requires more visual interpretation.[256]

In sum, the Auxerre Maiden is not what the viewer wants from a representation of a woman, either in the popular taste of turn-of-the-century France or from a neurobiological imperative. There is clearly a preference for nude women in the art museum.[257] But even if Ramachandran is right that we prefer them and derive more pleasure from viewing them, their nudity is not a tenet of iconicity, or the *Mona Lis*a would not be the most famous painting in the world. The same can be said of size—the Mona Lisa, like the Auxerre Maiden, is small, although it is true that viewers often find this disappointing.[258]

Strangely, Primitive Art (in the true, categorical, sense of that term) was becoming popular at the turn of the century. Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* was painted in 1907, at once primitive and modern. This was nearly twenty years after Collignon discovered the Auxerre Maiden in storage. The primitive female subjects of Gauguin and Picasso's paintings were, however, primitive in a more overtly alluring manner; like Ingres's odalisque, they did not need to adhere to the same social conventions as Western women. They could be topless, nude and erotic without explanation. The Auxerre Maiden, on the other hand, appears primitive in style, but lacks the interpretive and fetishizing Western lens that would make her otherwise appealing to the viewer. However historicizing this interpretation of the Auxerre

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[256] This is called the peak shift principle, or resonance. The key features of anything—the sexual attributes of a naked woman, the hills of a landscape, etc.—are better understood by the brain when exaggerated for emphasis. Ramachandran (2012: 143-145) also argues this is why we like caricatures and derive more pleasure from a beautifully painted landscape than from a picture that exactly replicates the same landscape.

[257] Consider the Guerilla Girls campaign for agency and representation of women artists, which adopted the slogan "Do Women Need To Be Naked To Get Into The Metropolitan Museum?".

[258] In fact, the Trip Advisor reviews of the Louvre give it only three out of five stars, and the top comment states, "Long queue, interesting but Mona Lisa a bit disappointing."

Maiden's iconicity, there is more at play, and more power in expectation than one might think.

Why does it matter that the Auxerre Maiden does not fit within the canon of Greek art on display in museums? These expectations, however culturally dependent, impact in a very real way the manner in which a viewer perceives and experiences a work of art. Gabrielle Starr describes the system of neural rewards related to art. A potential exists for a sensory reward when one encounters something unexpected in art, but also for unpleasant sensory disconnect. Aesthetic experiences that are too unfamiliar, or fall outside of our culturally constructed definitions, might be "forcibly or powerfully excluded from aesthetic experience."[259] Starr gives the example of foreign music, which can sound raucous, unmelodic, and even frightening to an outsider. This means that the Auxerre Maiden, which does not fit our expectations, might fall just outside of our definition of beauty in ancient art. Human beings like to make comparisons—if we have difficulty making these, we also have difficulty rationalizing, connecting, and appreciating what we see. This is not necessarily a bad thing. It also suggests there is plasticity in our definition of art and beauty that allows us to renegotiate what beauty means to us. And within the broader, cultural sphere, there is, of course, room for an individual to learn to derive visual pleasure from a different type of aesthetic, regardless of whether or not it is societally accepted.

Works of art that are unexpected can also be the most surprising, the most pleasurable. Starr argues that a forced reassessment of perspective when looking at a work of art is actually an important part of the creative thought process. There is an emotional driver in the "painful

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[259] Gabrielle Starr, *Feeling Beauty: The Neuroscience of Aesthetic Experience* (Cambridge, London: MIT Press, 2013). 53.

[259] Son Preminger, "Transformative Art: Art as Means for Long-Term Neurocognitive Change," *Frontiers in human neuroscience* 6 (2012).

yet pleasurable revaluation that can come with aesthetic perception or with the struggle to view and re-view the work of art [that] points once more toward the ever-present potential of aesthetic experience to take us out of one set of ideas into another—and from one medium to another."[260] There is more concrete evidence for the transformative ability of art, too. Son Preminger demonstrates that the experience of art is capable of producing long-term change in brain circuits that can affect cognition, emotion and behavior, a process called experience-dependent plasticity.[261] Another study of artists, dancers and musicians found that long-term engagement with art caused a unique neural setwork system present also with virtuosos—a type of "resilient plasticity."[262] These studies as a whole suggest both that looking at art has a measurable impact on the brain, both on our way of thinking, and on our way of *seeing*. We have emotional responses to art that increase with our exposure to it.

Exit Through The Gift Shop: Display And A Hierarchy Of Value?

All of this suggests that although the Auxerre Maiden falls outside of the canon for both Classical and "primitive" early works of art, it would be possible to recast her as a significant work, and one that could be valued by visitors. What is the museum's role in this narrative of iconicity? Should museums strive to highlight a more diverse range of iconic works from different periods and cultures, or should they present objects in a minimalist white cube environment, allowing the works to speak for themselves?

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[260] Starr, *Feeling Beauty: The Neuroscience of Aesthetic Experience*. 144.

[261] Preminger, "Transformative Art: Art as Means for Long-Term Neurocognitive Change."

[262] Chia-Shu Lin et al., "Sculpting the Intrinsic Modular Organization of Spontaneous Brain Activity by Art," *PloS one* 8, no. 6 (2013).

As this chapter has shown, works of art like the Auxerre Maiden, which are unconventional by museum standards, do not speak for themselves. Everything, from a collection's scope to the public perception of a specific museum alters the visibility and readability of works of art. These factors shape our perception subtly, so much so that we do not think of how we might see differently under other circumstances. This was the case with the reconfiguration of the German museum collections. In *Antiquity On Display,* Can Bilsel examines the process of museum categorization and the manner in which the scope of a museum's collection changes the perception of cultures and their history. Prior to the twentieth century the material culture of the Germanic people was either presented as ethnological or as local heritage. This remained the case until Wilhelm von Bode divided the collection into two sections: a "German museum" collection that combined German and Dutch art, and a Medieval and Renaissance collection that was comprised of material from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum. The Medieval and Renaissance material also included the "art of the Germans from the Stone Age to the migration period," expanding the scope of this period far more broadly than in modern scholarship.[263] The inclusion of "primitive," tribal Germanic art constructed a narrative of a single, unified Germany, so that hunter-gatherers transitioned smoothly into the Flemish and Dutch masters, a myth that "conveniently captured the nationalist fervour of Germany under Wilhelm II."[264] The German Museum did not invent the nationalist narrative, but they did present it as unqualified fact. The role of museums in shaping our perception of history and in constructing value has been well

[263] Wilhelm von Bode. *Messels Pläne fur die Neubauten der königlichen Museen*. (1910). 246.

[264] Can Bilsel, *Antiquity on Display: Regimes of the Authentic in Berlin's Pergamon Museum* (Oxford University Press, 2012). 127.

documented by Bilsel and many others.[265] Bode's decision to include Stone Age art with Medieval and Renaissance works edified a collection of objects previously considered ignored.

Including the Auxerre Maiden in the Louvre's galleries, when it had previously been useful only as the backdrop to the action occurring on the Auxerre stage, made it prescient. As with the Stone Age material in Bode's far-reaching history of German art, however, the Auxerre Maiden seems to be lumped in as a prelude to the true masterpieces—the Venus de Milo and the Winged Victory of Samothrace. On its own, it is merely set up as a precursor to the galleries with Classical art. This unintentional, the result of traffic-flow in the galleries, where visitors seek first and foremost only the most iconic works of art in the museum. They are aided by maps that indicate where to find these specific pieces, and gallery signs also direct them towards what they want—the Mona Lisa, the Venus de Milo, and the Winged Victory (See *Fig. 18* below).

Visitors entering the Denon wing of the Louvre have three options at the top of the staircase: they can proceed straight ahead, they can turn right towards Italian and Spanish sculpture, or they can turn left into the gallery that contains early Greek art, from Neolithic through Archaic. This setup was certainly designed to showcase Classical art chronologically, from its earliest phase through the Hellenistic and Roman periods. This is not the narrative that visitors experience, though, because they follow the most obvious path that leads straight ahead.

[265] In addition to Bilsel here, see also the works of Tony Bennett, *Pasts Beyond Memory: Evolution, Museums, Colonialism* (Psychology Press, 2004).; Jenkins, *Archaeologists & Aesthetes: In the Sculpture Galleries of the British Museum 1800-1939*.

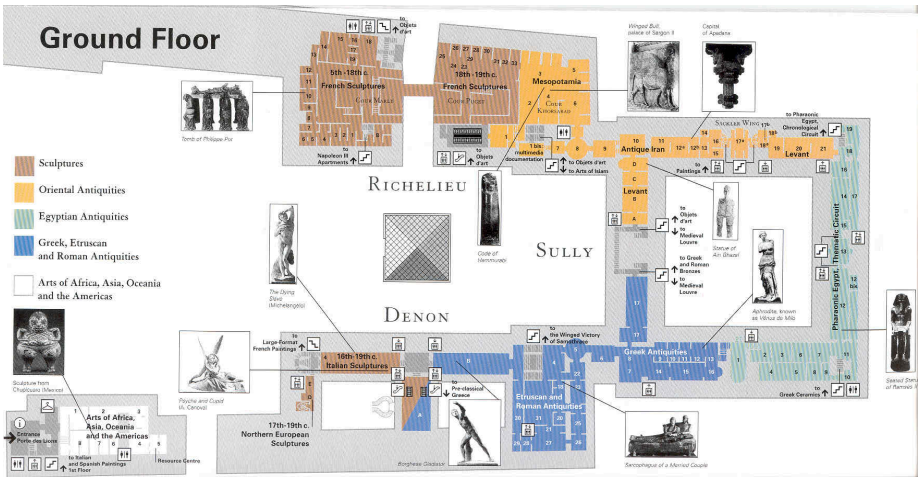

Figure 18: Map of ground floor of the Denon wing of the Louvre. , showing the entrance from the central court and the location of the Venus de Milo.

The Auxerre Maiden is on display in the left-most gallery, along with Cycladic figurines, Neolithic pots, and Archaic dedications from sanctuaries. She is placed in the center of this long gallery that moves toward the galleries of the Venus de Milo and other Classical works. Visitors typically do not take the left entrance to the Denon gallery; proceeding straight is the obvious and most common choice. If they do find themselves in the early Greek art gallery, it is typically as they exit the Venus de Milo room. The result is that they encounter this material from the back, rather than from the front. From the rear angle, the Auxerre Maiden is indistinct: a small stone monolith that is easily ignored.

The problem with the Auxerre Maiden is more than inconvenient display. As a stand-alone work of art, she is disingenuous—she belongs, likely, within a much greater whole, and was never meant to be admired in the round. This context is everything. In their now quite famous discussion of embedded rituals in universal survey museums, Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach address the monolithic nature of ritual art and architecture. "In a church, temple, or palace," they state, "paintings, statues and reliefs affixed to or embedded in the walls

constitute an integral part of the monument; they are, in a sense, its voice."[266] Would a different display help to highlight the Auxerre Maiden? Possibly. A redirection of traffic from the front entrance of the gallery would increase her visibility. Displays and layouts that place objects in dialogue with one another encourage visitors to think of works of art as narratives with multiple nodes, rather than as one-offs existing in a vacuum. More important, however, is the stigma of iconicity that occludes all other works of art. Encouraging visitors to look more closely at objects that are not traditionally considered masterpieces, as the British Museum has done with its *History Of The World In 100 Object*s podcast, is a much more effective and enduring means of getting audiences to look more closely. [267] Their list of significant works includes Olduvai Gorge stone tools, a Hawaiian feather helmet, and the bronze Ife Head from Nigeria, all of which had traditionally been overlooked by visitors. Even more, projects like *The History Of The World* break down the notion of a masterpiece in order to expand its definition across media. More than monumental marble statues and oil paintings, the British Museum's list of masterworks included stone tools, Chinese prints, Macedonian coins and decorative arts.

Greek marble statues in the Classical style are exactly what we anticipate from a visit to an encyclopedic museum. Svetlana Alpers alludes to the museum lens through which we see Greek sculpture: "Though as an issue of national property some Greek statues may be returned to their place of origin, no one would deny—and I think no one has thought to protest—the museum effect through which Greek sculpture has assumed such a lasting place

[266] Duncan and Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum." 451.

[267] Originally aired as a podcast, which has now been compiled as a book: Neil MacGregor, *A History of the World in 100 Objects* (Penguin UK, 2011).

in our visual culture."[268] Alpers suggests here that Greek sculpture would never have attained its status were it not for large museums and she is probably correct in that assumption. But the elevation of Greek sculpture did not just happen. It was institutional, and propagandistic in its intent. A series of publications in the mid-nineteenth century encouraged the public to appreciate Greek sculpture, including the *Handbook to the Antiquities of the British Museum,* a guide published by the museum itself. By merely learning to appreciate Greek sculpture, the general public would be "elevated" in their taste.[269] That these works were thought of as precursors to the modern, Western heritage is also evident. One guide describes works of antiquity in their setting along with the décor of the museum. A Greek faun in Pentelic marble is introduced with this note: "The ceiling of this room, by Romanelli, displays paintings of the Seasons, that reunite ancient statues of Greek bucolic divinities with those relevant to the seasons."[270] The Greek sculpture referred to in these guides, of course, bore little resemblance to the Auxerre Maiden, and much of it was likely Roman, not Greek.

These attitudes towards Greek art existed early in the history of major European museums. They structured values through literature and education, and were reinforced in

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[268] Svetlana Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing," *Exhibiting cultures: The poetics and politics of museum display* 29 (1991).

[269] See Kate Nichols' discussion here: Kate Nichols, *Greece and Rome at the Crystal Palace: Classical Sculpture and Modern Britain, 1854-1936* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2015). 126. The handbook is one of many published during this period (a similarly moralizing guide exists for the South Kensington Museum). See William Sandys Vaux, *Handbook to the Antiquities in the British Museum* (Nord Press, 1851).
For further museum guides of this nature see also: Edmond Du Sommerard, *Catalogue Et Description Des Objets D'art De L'antiquité, Du Moyen Âge Et De La Renaissance Exposés Au Musée* (hôtel de Cluny, 1881); Musée du Louvre, *Notice Des Statues, Bustes, Bas-Reliefs, Et Autres Objets Composant La Galerie Des Antiques Du Musée Central Des Arts : Ouvert Pour La Première Fois Le 18 Brumaire, an 9* (Bibliothèque Centrale des Musées Nationaux, 1800); Étienne Michon, "Les Marbres Antiques De Délos Conservés Au Musée Du Louvre," *Bulletin de Correspondance hellenique* 35, no. 1 (1911).

[270] Louvre, *Notice Des Statues, Bustes, Bas-Reliefs, Et Autres Objets Composant La Galerie Des Antiques Du Musée Central Des Arts : Ouvert Pour La Première Fois Le 18 Brumaire, an 9*. (1800). 6. It should be noted that this guide is dated to 1800, although Napoleon did not acquire the Borghese collections until 1807. While the dates given on the guide itself are according to the French Republican calendar, a handwritten note confirms the 1800 date, and the Republican calendar stopped being used in 1805. It is thus unclear whether the faun referred to was another copy in the sleeping satyr type, or whether that piece traveled to the Louvre earlier.

the museum's layout. While the layout of galleries may have changed over time, the principles that produced them remain. The Auxerre Maiden lacked the iconicity or pride of place within the museum narrative that would allow her greater visibility. While it is true that making works visible in the worlds' largest museums will always be a challenge, there is also no better place to highlight the diversity of Greek art from the Neolithic through the Hellenistic. Changing how audiences look at works like the Auxerre Maiden is about more than bringing attention to little known works of art. It is about changing narratives of Western identity, the portrayal of women, and the construction of value in the museum context.

V.

The Cheramyes Kore

Classification and Obfuscation: What's In A Portrait?

Figure 19: Cheramyes Kore, Louvre Ma686. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and labeled for reuse via Creative Commons.

When the Cheramyes Kore (*Fig. 19*) was first discovered in 1875, by a villager named Leonidas Kydonieus from the village of Pagoda on the Greek island of Samos, the cache of statues called korai had only just come to light on the Athenian Acropolis. The statue was unearthed near a large sanctuary to Hera, the epicenter of the sacred landscape of ancient Samos, and was originally believed to be a representation of the goddess. Paul Girard acquired the statue for the Louvre in 1881 during his direction of the Heraion excavations

under the École française d'Athènes. The kore is larger than life-sized at 1.92 meters, but in the gallery of the Salle Diane where she stands, she barely garners a glance from passerby. Tour groups might stop to admire the Auxerre Maiden that is displayed directly in front of the kore, but even their guides overlook the Cheramyes Kore.

The kore was discovered during a prime era for Greek art in museums, but never achieved the level of popularity of the Venus de Milo or the Nike of Samothrace. For those who argue that famous works of Greek sculpture appeal through their monumentality, the larger than life-sized Cheramyes Kore certainly meets that requirement. For those, like the romantic poet Shelley, who make a case for the whimsical allure of fragmentation and ruin— the Cheramyes Kore, like the Nike of Samothrace, is fragmentary.[271] For those who argue that famous works of art must be *good*—the kore was skillfully produced for a wealthy Samian elite. In spite of meeting these requirements, the kore seems, in sum, *strange* to most modern viewers. Her size, the frontality of her composition, and the subtle carving of her clothing, which at times appears almost as thin as silk across her body, look more Egyptian than Greek. More than this, however, the Cheramyes Kore resists categorization. She confuses traditional museum labels: "Greek," "Egyptian," "portrait" and "abstraction" could all apply to the kore in various ways, making her a categorical chimera.

Even so, the kore objectively makes a significant contribution to the Greek art collection of the Louvre. It is an exceptional representation of East Greek sculpture. The Ionian style of the chiton— the long, woolen tunic worn by women in Greece— is characteristic of Archaic korai of that region. She also wore a veil, only part of which is still visible on her shoulders, a marker of the goddess Hera or her worshipers. Her pose is a pious one: one hand is at her

[271] See Shelley's sonnet "Ozymandias".

side, and the other, crossed over her chest, was originally holding an attribute that was a visual clue to her function. A tiny remnant of metal remains in the fist of that hand, and was initially thought to be a product of nineteenth century restoration, but is probably the mortise to a bronze key that would symbolically grant access to the Temple of Hera.[272] There are very few other works of art in the museum's collection that are still connected so intimately to their past.

If the Cheramyes Kore is not better known, that is perhaps because viewers do not know how to interpret it. Korai—the modern name given to a category of statues of women that was first discovered on the Athenian Acropolis at the end of the nineteenth-century—are difficult to classify in the terms of modern scholarship and in the jargon of art museums.[273] It is possible that the korai are early portraits of actual Greek women, but they predate the traditional Western canon of the portrait genre, which only gains notoriety in when the bust type becomes standardized in the Roman period.[274] They follow their own set of rules for representation, falling somewhere in between our idea of a portrait and a stylized ideal. The term *Korai* means "maiden" in Greek, but the korai themselves are ambiguous in age; some appear quite young, while others seem more maternal.

Each kore was a votive dedication left at a sanctuary as a gift for a god, except when, in rare cases, they served as grave markers. Like the Cheramyes Kore, many of these statues

[272] See Louvre labels on the kore and online description here: http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/kore-cheramyes-group.

[273] On the subject of korai, their interpretation and the ensuing problems, see the important contributions of Catherine M. Keesling, *The Votive Statues of the Athenian Acropolis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Mary Stieber, *The Poetics of Appearance in the Attic Korai* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004); Katerina Karakasi, *Archaic Korai* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2003).

[274] Certainly portraits existed prior to the Roman period, such as the famous portrait of Perikles by Kresilas, but as a genre, portraiture gains distinction with the Roman bust type. On the vital role that portraits played in the social lives of Romans, see Jane Fejfer, *Roman Portraits in Context* (New York and Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008)..

bore inscriptions that commemorated the person who dedicated them. An inscription along the left leg of Cheramyes' statue reads, "Cheramyes dedicated me to Hera as a pleasing gift". As a headless representation of a hypothetical precursor to portraiture, the Cheramyes Kore provides only monumentality and the detailed but stylized carving of her garments as a means of decipherment to her viewers. So while she offers a direct, personal engagement with the Greek past through Cheramyes' inscription and her local style, she does not fit neatly into any single category of art as defined by the museum.

Samian Style, Ionian Identity

The umbrella term "Greek art" is applied to a number of objects with complicated histories and identities, with the result that every regional style is compared to Athenian art. In reality, regional workshops developed their own styles that reflected their unique identities. Samos, the ancient home of the Cheramyes Kore, is one such example. Samos is an island located near the Ionian region of modern Turkey. It was established as a Greek polis around 1000 BCE and was colonized by Ionians sometime thereafter.[275] Pausanias described the first meeting of the Ionians and the autochthonous inhabitants of Samos as one of reluctant cooperation, in which "The inhabitants of the island received the Ionians as settlers more of necessity than through good will."[276] The Ionian identity of Samos, then, was a confluence of these two groups, both of whom would eventually fall under the category "Greek", although little is known about the identity of the pre-Ionian Samians.

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[275] Michaēl B Sakellariou, *Between Memory and Oblivion: The Transmission of Early Greek Historical Traditions* (Athens: Research Centre For Greek And Roman Antiquity,
National Hellenic Research Foundation, 1990). 148. See also Rich and Shipley, *War and Society in the Greek World*; Graham Shipley, *A History of Samos, 800-188 BC* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1987).

[276] Pausanias, VII 4,2.

Regional style, however, distinguishes the art of these Greeks from that of Athenians. Herodotus also connected the Athenians and the Ionians in a common, but diverging identity. He wrote, "When the region that is now called Hellas was held by the Pelasgi, the Athenians were Pelasgians, and were named Cranaans; but they were called Cecropidae under King Cecrops. When Erechtheus gained the kingship, they changed their name to Athenians, and when Ion, son of Xuthus, became their general, they were named Ionians after him."[277] Herodotus was probably not an expert on the transmission of pre-Athenian tribal names, as W.R. Connor points out. In fact, studies suggest that the Ionians were not closely related genealogically to the Athenians, and probably migrated from the East.[278] Certain aspects of the Samian cult of Hera, such as the imagery of peacocks and an armed festival procession along the Sacred Way, point to an Argolid ancestry. In both places Hera was worshiped as a warrior goddess, an interpretation that is broader than her traditional marriage-childbirth purview.[279]

The kore dates to the Archaic period. It does not look Classical, but its failure to achieve iconicity is not due to that fact alone. Like many Archaic works of Greek art, the carving is not in high relief, and the elaborate patterns are not as visible at a distance. An observant viewer might notice that the interplay of angled and straight lines created by the drapery of her garments creates a complex visual effect, but one that is easily overlooked. These garments are an integral part of the kore's identity. She wears three items of regional, Ionian clothing: the chiton, an intricately pleated linen tunic, the himation, a cloak draped around the shoulders,

[277] Herodotus, *Histories* 8.44.

[278] See Sakellariou, *Between Memory and Oblivion: The Transmission of Early Greek Historical Traditions*., specifically "Migrations to Ionia", 133-150.

[279] Ibid. 149.

and the epiblema, the veil that also connects her with the cult of Hera. The label reads, "These superimposed fabrics are the pretext for subtle decorative play of lines and folds, originally highlighted by polychrome pigment (now gone)."[280] Paint emphasized a contrast between the textures, folds and weight of these garments, making the entire composition more legible. Without this paint, the kore is extremely difficult to read. Many of her features are subtle, a testament to the skill of the artist, but also a feature that requires close viewing to really see in the gallery.

From the Renaissance, when the standard was set, looking at sculpture in galleries was about holistically taking in an entire composition. Statues were displayed in elite private homes, such as the Palazzo Barberini (then the Palazzo Sforza) or in religious structures, where they stood out staunchly from their surroundings by virtue of their material and form.[281] Marble used for sculptures was perfectly white, unpainted, and although many pieces had detailed surfaces, they were legible through the dynamism of their poses and the expressions on their faces. Renaissance artists revolutionized modes of viewing through a new interest in perspective, which was anchored in Platonic thought. Brunelleschi's "peepshow," a prototype camera obscura that made painted scenes look real through the illusion of depth, is representative of this trend.[282] This neoclassical tradition has been more influential for our modern mode of viewing than any other, and it has shaped the way we look at Classical works, too. Statues that cannot be viewed according to these rules meet challenges in galleries. The Cheramyes Kore combines two typically opposed design features: monumentality in size

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[280] "Kore From The Cheramyes Group", http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/kore-cheramyes-group

[281] Consider, for example, Michelangelo's Moses in the Basilica San Pietro In Vincoli in Rome, which serves as the dramatic focal point at the end of the long nave.

[282] For more about the perspectival revolution in the Renaissance and Brunelleschi's techniques, see Michael Kubovy, *The Psychology of Perspective and Renaissance Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

and intricacy of detail.

These details may have been the single most important aspect of this statue in its original Samian context. In addition to her Ionian clothing, the kore has several specifically Samian features. She was, essentially, a demonstration of status in a typically regional stylistic language. In fact, every aspect of this sort of dedication—from the type and location of the monument to its style and inscription—was an intentional, personal choice. Much of this is lost in translation in museum galleries. Some dedicators were actually quite well known—quasi celebrities, perhaps, of their era. A group of wealthy landowners called *geomoroi*, for instance, were known for making their living farming rather than seafaring, and their dedications reflected that fact. More than just farmers, the geomoroi were said to have owned their land since the initial Ionian settlement, so considered themselves a part of a long traditon.[283] Farms depended on fertility, one of Hera's spheres of influence, so they had a more immediate connection to the Heraion. Kolaios, an aristocrat mentioned by Herodotus, who had made his money in seafaring, not farming, may have made the largest contribution to the sanctuary.[284] He chose to dedicate a massive bronze cauldron, which may have measured as much as six meters in height, rather than a kore. An overt measure of his success and wealth, that cauldron was only a tenth of his profits from his trade trips to the Iberian Peninsula. Karakasi suggests that Kolaios' choice of dedication was appropriate for a sailor-merchant, who had less of a need to display devotion to Hera as a marriage and fertility goddess.[285]

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[283] On the influence of the Geomoroi, see Barron J. Penrose, "The History of Samos to 439 BC" (University of Oxford, 1961). The original name comes from Thucydides (8.21) and literally means "the land-sharers".

[284] Herodotus (4.152).

[285] Karakasi, *Archaic Korai.* 33.

As personal as they were, these dedications also echoed the extent of Samian trade and influence in the Mediterranean. Samian statues were known for their Egyptian borrowings: Egyptian-style frontality, architectural, columnar forms and dress styles. The Cheramyes Kore exemplifies all of these features, and in many ways has more in common with Egyptian art than Greek. Diodorus proposed that the idea of representing the human form in an Egyptianizing-style came first to Samos via two sculptors—Telekles and Theodoros, who had visited Egypt. They were the sons of Rhoikos, the famous architect of the large, Archaic temple at Samos.[286] On their return from Egypt, they made the Samian Apollo in the style of Egyptian sculpture, which was unheard of by their Greek contemporaries.[287] Initially, as we have seen with the Auxerre Maiden, the denial of Egyptian influence in Greek art was anchored in an inherent racism. George Laurence Gomme cited that same passage of Diodorus when he wrote a telling review in 1889 of the Archaic Egyptianizing style:

> Some account must be taken of Egyptian influences, though even here these have been exaggerated and misunderstood […] The barbarous semi-articulate forms of the Delian figure would be inexplicable if the primitive sculptor had been attempting, however falteringly, to reproduce the severe conventional and mathematical scheme of the ordinary Egyptian statue.[288]

Gomme refused to believe that "the nascent Greek Sculpture, attempting to attain a human image in marble, took its cue from the art of Egypt or Assyria."[289] This sentiment is not surprising for its time. A number of scholars have examined the ways the influence of

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[286] Kyrieleis, Heraion ch. Telekles and Theodorus, as Carol Mattusch points out, they are mentioned by several ancient sources, and there is general agreement that they came from Samos. Pausanias (8.14.8) agrees they are Samian, but does not agree that they are the sons of Rhoikos. See here Carol C Mattusch, *Greek Bronze Statuary: From the Beginnings through the Fifth Century BC* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988). 46.

[287] Diodorus Siculus, I, 98.

[288] George Laurence Gomme, *Archaeological Review*, vol. II (London: D. Nutt, 1889). 175.

[289] Ibid.

Egyptian and Near Eastern cultures was downplayed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.[290] Even when Bernal published his controversial *Black* Athena in 1987, however, many scholars denied that Greece was indebted to Egypt at all.[291] Bernal's opponent Mary Lefkowitz leaves little doubt as to how she views the possibilities: "Afrocentrists are not content with establishing a special relationship to the ancient Greeks. Instead, they seek to remove the ancient Greeks from the important role they have previously played in history, and to assign to the African civilization of Egypt the credit for the Greeks' achievements."[292] Through this lens, Greek culture impossibly exists in a vacuum. Any acknowledgement of foreign contributions to Greek art negates their supremacy. But while Egyptian art is now a staple of universal museum collections, art that looks part Greek and part Egyptian is still a visual conundrum. Unfortunately for Gomme, Egyptian and Near Eastern influence were an important facet of Samian culture.

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[290] A far from comprehensive list includes the following: Ian Morris, "Mediterraneanization," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 18, no. 2 (2003); Sarah P Morris, *Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Rudolf Anthes, "Affinity and Difference between Egyptian and Greek Sculpture and Thought in the Seventh and Sixth Centuries BC," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 107, no. 1 (1963); Charles Penglase, *Greek Myths and Mesopotamia: Parallels and Influence in the Homeric Hymns and Hesiod* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997); Paul Cartledge, *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785-1985* (Rutgers: Rutgers University Press, 1987).

[291] This debate centers around the work of Martin Bernal Bernal, *Black Athena: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece, 1785-1985*. and Mary Lefkowitz Mary Lefkowitz, *Not out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History* (New York: Basic books, 1996); Mary R Lefkowitz and Guy MacLean Rogers, *Black Athena Revisited* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press Books, 1996).

[292] Lefkowitz, *Not out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History*. 6.

Figure 20: (Left) Portrait of Maya and Merit, now in the collection of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, AST 3. (Right) Cheramyes Kore. Both images labeled for reuse via Creative Commons.

A limestone portrait of Maya, director of the treasury under the pharaoh Horemheb, and his wife Merit was made nearly seven hundred years earlier than the Cheramyes Kore (See above). Found in Maya's tomb at Saqqara, the portrait shows the couple magically receiving food offerings in the afterlife. In function the two statues had very little in common. But the principles of style in each warrant comparison. Like the Cheramyes Kore, the folds of the clothes worn by Maya and Merit are expressed more through two-dimensional line than three-dimensional relief. The tiny, closely spaced pleats of Merit's dress are similar to those on the lower portion of the kore's chiton, and a dynamism is created in both statues through the contrasting directions of the folds in the dress and the folds of the sleeves. Both statues have a rigid frontality that is highlighted by the carefully placed arms that fall in line with the figure. It is difficult to look at these two statues side-by-side and question, as André Malraux did, how anyone could "assimilate the Delphi charioteer, the figures in the Acropolis, or the 'Boy of Kalivia' to an Egyptian or Mesopotamian statue?"[293]

[293] André Malraux, *The Voices of Silence*, *Bollingen Series* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954). 75, 81.

In answer to Malraux's question, Whitney Davis proposes that Greece and Egypt have a lot to do with one another, and, specifically, that Samos and Naukratis were responsible for the development of the Archaic style of Greek art. There is a long history of trade between Samos and Egypt. Samos was one of the original Greek cities to establish an emporion at Naukratis, and Herodotus and Hecataeus both describe Samos as an important trade center there. Polycrates, a sixth-century tyrant of Samos, was also said to have been friends with the Egyptian pharaoh Amasis; the two apparently corresponded via couriers.[294] There is more concrete evidence for this connection, too. Sir John Pendlebury, who was both an Egyptologist and a Classicist, published the Egyptian finds from Samian excavations in a volume called *Aegyptiaca*.[295] The evidence of a strong connection between the two regions is incontrovertible. Pendlebury's compendium includes figurines of Egyptian gods—Bes, Horus, Osiris—Egyptian and Syro-Palestinian ware, and several Egyptian bronze figures. One, a statuette of Neith, wears the red crown of Lower Egypt, a symbol of her Saite connection and purveyance over trade and traffic in that region. The goddess may have been especially important to Samians in Egypt for this reason.[296] In examining this surplus of evidence, there is no question that Greek art of the Archaic period is indebted to Egyptian art. The ways the Samians borrowed and adapted Egyptian fashions, however, created a unique style that is not immediately accessible to the modern museum visitor. The result is that statues like the Cheramyes Kore remain difficult to interpret visually.

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[294] Herodotus (3.40-43) tells the story of Amasis (Ahmose II of the twenty-sixth dynasty) and Polycrates. The details may be fanciful, but there is no reason to doubt that the two were, as he writes, "friends and allies".

[295] Whitney M. Davis, "Egypt, Samos, and the Archaic Style in Greek Sculpture," *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 67 (1981). 70. See Herodotus (IV. 152) and Hecataeus (*Fragmenta I,* F.310). Pendlebury's *Aegyptiaca* (London, 1930).

[296] Ibid. Interestingly, Bernal also discusses Neith in support of his thesis, although this evidence was systematically rejected by his opponents.

Samian identity cannot be summarized as simply "Greek with Egyptian influence", though. The Samians constructed a unique identity for themselves that was one-part mythology and one-part history. They brought with them traditions from Argolis and Ionia, imported others from Egypt and the Saites, and eventually developed a sanctuary to Hera that was a forum for international artists working in different regional styles to display their work. Although it was once thought that territories outside of Athens emulated its style, the opposite may have actually been true. Connor proposes that the Athenians were the ones who borrowed from the Ionians in language and art. Herodotus relates that Ionian styles of clothing were popular in Athens until the mid-sixth century, although according to his story, the style originated as a punishment.[297] In that account, a single, ill-fated Athenian returned home from the conflict at Aegina, only to be greeted by the jealous wives of his deceased comrades, who stabbed him to death with the brooch long-pins of their Doric clothing. Brooch-less Ionian clothing was thereafter deemed a safer choice of garment for women. Here, Herodotus draws yet another parallel between the Ionians and the Near East, by postulating that this style of linen tunic originated not in Ionia, but in Caria.

If chronology is any indicator, korai as a type may have actually come from Samos. This would make the Cheramyes Kore, dating to 570 BCE, one of the earliest examples.[298] Samian korai predate the Athenian ones by at least a decade. The first examples were made as early as the seventh century.[299] Acropolis Museum 619 is the earliest of the Athenian korai, dating to the beginning of the sixth century, making it very close in date to the Cheramyes Kore. In

[297] W Robert Connor, "The Ionian Era of Athenian Civic Identity," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 137, no. 2 (1993). 198; Herodotus 5.87.3.

[298] The Louvre label, "A Kore From The Cheramyes Group" supports this claim as well. Karakasi also supports this claim.

[299] Karakasi, *Archaic Korai.* 13.

fact, it looks very much like the Cheramyes Kore in dress and stance, and has been labeled "Samian Kore" by the museum. The small-pleated chiton and angled himation, also worn by the Cheramyes Kore, are the markers that lend Akropolis 619 its Samian title. It is carved from a coarse-grained marble that Brouskari calls Naxian.[300] These early examples are Daedalic in style, and closely resemble the Auxerre Maiden. After their creation, there seems to have been a gap of approximately fifty years until the next korai are produced, although this may be a coincidence. The first korai made after this gap have the sleeved chitons that the Cheramyes Kore wears.

The Cheramyes Kore is not the only large-scale dedication that has been found in this area. Samian dedications have a characteristic height and monumentality that is rare elsewhere. The Kouros of Isches, for instance, is a full 4.8 meters tall. The Samos-Istanbul Kouros, discovered nearby and also probably dedicated by Isches, is 3.2 meters high. Taken as a whole, these larger than life-sized sculptural groups lining the entrance to the sanctuary of Hera would have produced a striking visual effect. Karakasi tallies the number of life-sized Samian korai at thirteen, and the number of larger than life-sized ones at seven, and this represents only the number of excavated works.[301] Including kouroi and other statue types, and on the assumption that more statues existed than have been found, we can estimate that there was an impressive number of large statue dedications in Samos. The majority of Samian korai, like the Cheramyes Kore, were found at the Heraion.[302] Cheramyes is among a group of several Samians who were most prolific in their offerings.

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[300] Maria Brouskari, "A Dark Age Cemetery in Erechtheion Street, Athens," *The Annual of the British School at Athens* 75 (1980).

[301] Karakasi, *Archaic Korai.* 15.

[302] Ibid.

The assessment of works of art according to pre-existing categorizations drives definitions of style. Like the Auxerre Maiden, the Cheramyes Kore has been compared to a *xoanon*, a term for the plank-like wooden statues that served as cult foci, and the earliest form of Greek sculpture. These labels—"xoanon," "kore," "Ionian"—are intended to clarify, but they also mystify.[303] Culling disparate works dedicated by individual donors together under the umbrella term "korai" creates an illusion of similarity that glosses over the individual differences in the statues. While it is true that many korai look similar, Eleanor Guralnick cautions against seeing them as the same. Differences express themselves through dress, facial features and the treatment of anatomy, but are masked by the categorization of the korai type, which causes these features to be summarily dismissed as "stylizing," "religious," or "dedicatory". She writes, "A classic example of illusionism at work concerns a comparable set of korai, Nikandre and the Dame d'Auxerre. We see them as similar, except perhaps for an almost subliminal awareness that Nikandre looks tall, the Dame d'Auxerre short."[304] So while the Cheramyes Kore may initially look like any number of other korai statues, she was a personal dedication, tailored to the demand of a local audience. The columnar shape of her body, for example, is a trait that has been associated with Samian works.[305] But these subtle traces of identity are difficult to glean from a museum display. The original, painted, color and sanctuary context that would have made the kore stand out to the ancient viewer are irretrievable except through reconstruction. Perhaps the most salient, surviving aspect of individuality is the dedicator's name—"Cheramyes".

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[303] The term "xoanon" alone had multiple meanings in antiquity, as Alice Donohue shows in *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture.* See Alice A Donohue, *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture*, vol. 15 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988).

[304] Eleanor Guralnick, "Profiles of Korai," *American journal of archaeology* (1982). 173.

[305] Various sources connect Rhoikos and Theodoros to Samian works, and they may have been the originators of this style. Herodotus (3.60) reports that they were natives of Samos.

In spite of the fact that Cheramyes must have been important for his dedications at the Heraion, nothing is known about his identity aside from this legacy in sculpture. Along with the Cheramyes Kore, three other dedications on Samos have been linked to Cheramyes, suggesting that the Louvre's kore may come from a larger statue group. A virtual twin of the Louvre's kore was found in 1984, and remains in the local Vathy Museum (see below). A base found near these korai with indentations for two statues almost certainly belonged to them in antiquity, making the Cheramyes Kore in the Louvre only one half of a small group.[306] While this discovery might have altered the perception of the Louvre statue entirely, the fact that the two are not displayed together means this goes unnoticed by visitors, in spite of the fact that the twin is mentioned in the Louvre's label. The existence of a twin also means the Cheramyes Kore is exactly that—a kore—and not a representation of Hera.

When she was first discovered, there was some debate over whether the Cheramyes Kore was a representation of the goddess Hera.[307] Lauren Adams Gilmour, writing in 1978, called the statue a kore[308], but occasionally she is still called "Hera".[309] A report published by the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in 1939 stated, "the chief product of Ionian sculpture is the

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[306] For more details of the base, see Alain Duplouy, "Le Prestige Des Élites: Recherches Sur Les Modes De Reconnaissance Sociale En Grèce Entre Les Xe Et Ve Siècles Avant J.-C" (Université Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2003).

[307] See, for example, Edmund Von Mach, *A Handbook of Greek and Roman Sculpture* (Bureau of University Travel, 1905). 19. A study of Archaic Greek art carried out by the Louvre Jean Charbonneaux also calls the kore a "Hera". See Jean Charbonneaux, Roland Martin, and François Villard, *Archaic Greek Art (620-480 BC)*, vol. 14 (Paris: G. Braziller, 1971). 135.

[308] Lauren Adams and Lauren Adams Gilmour, *Orientalizing Sculpture in Soft Limestone from Crete and Mainland Greece*, vol. 41 (British Archaeological Reports, 1978). 56.

[309] See deGruyter's *Jarbuch* of 1998: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, *Jahrbuch Des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts*, vol. 5 (Berlin and New York: Georg Reimer, 1998). 15, Llewellyn-Jones' *Aphrodite's Tortoise*: Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Woman of Ancient Greece* (London: Classical Press of Wales, 2003). 47.

incomparable Hera statue from Samos, dedicated by Cheramyes".[310] While the existence of a twin statue makes the statue's identification as Hera untenable, there has been minimal response, scholarly and otherwise, to that discovery. This perhaps explains why some recent publications continue to call the statue "Hera". The confusion would undoubtedly be alleviated were the two statues to be displayed together, as was intended.

Figure 21: The Vathy Museum Cheramyes Kore and the Louvre's Kore. Vathy Kore reproduced courtesy of AICT/ Allan T. Kohl.

The Geneleos group (see *Fig. 22* below) provides a potential comparison. It is also a multi-statue dedication, but the entire group has survived with its original base. It is much larger than the Cheramyes base would allow, with six statues total, both men and women. Like the bulk of Samian dedications, the Geneleos Group was set up along the Sacred Way, near the entrance to the Heraion. Stylistic analysis indicates that it is probably later than the Cheramyes dedications: it is less rigid, and the stone more formally transformed. Rather than bodies shaped like columns, these figures have striding poses, suggesting a date closer to 560

[310] *From The Collections of the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek*, vol. 2. Levin & Munksgaard (1939). 108.

BCE. The group is composed of stand-alone statues and reclining banqueters, which may distinguish the function of the Geneleos dedication from that of Cheramyes. Called a "status symbol" for East Greek men, the patriarch of the Geneleos Group sits at the head of the composition, reclining like a symposiast at a drinking party.[311] Elizabeth Baughan cautions that this interpretation of "elite male" is too simplistic; more is at stake in these dedications than male status. Still, these groups are both testimonia to the religious inclinations of their patrons, as well as permanent, monumental records of their monetary contributions to the sanctuary.

A central feature of these types of banqueting groups is the presence of a corpulent, reclining male figure, a reference to a time when feasting may have taken place directly at the site of the sanctuary.[312] Cheramyes' dedications had no such figure (or at least none that survives), complicating the interpretation of the statues as a family group. A decade after the Geneleos Group was dedicated, several other reclining groups were set up outside of the Samian Heraion. These survive only in fragments, but suggest that groups of this type played a special role in Ionian culture, and became popular after the Cheramyes Kore was dedicated. In support of this notion, Baughan proposes that the reclining symposiast trend is a local one that mirrors the preference for equestrian votive offerings on the Athenian Acropolis. In each case, there was a clearly defined status type that spoke to the display of wealth and power in those regions.

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[311] Elizabeth P. Baughan, "Sculpted Symposiasts of Ionia," *American journal of archaeology* 115, no. 1 (2011). 19.

[312] On feasting in the sanctuary see Ernst Buschor, *Heraion Von Samos: Frühe Bauten* (Dt. Archäologisches Inst., 1930); Johannes Boehlau and Karl Schefold, *Larisa Am Hermos Iii: Die Kleinfunde* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1942); Baughan, "Sculpted Symposiasts of Ionia."

Figure 22: Geneleos Group (in situ reconstruction) outside of the sanctuary at Samos. The base includes space for two more statues, one of which is missing, and one of which partially survives. Photo labeled for reuse via Wikimedia Creative Commons.

Four statues have thus far been discovered that were dedicated by Cheramyes at Samos, although their original proximity to one another at the Heraion is unclear. These are: the Berlin Cheramyes, the Louvre statue, the Samos dedication that is the twin of the statue in the Louvre, and a fourth kouros that has a partially preserved inscription reading "-MYEΣ".[313] All of Cheramyes' dedications are written in Samian letterforms, which suggests that they were produced, or at least inscribed, locally.[314] Although the dual-statue base was found nearby, Alain Duplouy argues that we cannot show that all of these works belonged together, even if they were all gifts of Cheramyes.[315] What is clear is that Cheramyes was an individual with sufficient status and finances for making several large dedications at an important

[313] It is assumed, but very probable that the "--MYEΣ" inscription referred to Cheramyes when complete. He is so far the only Cheramyes whose name has shown up in the Samian record, and the only one making these types of dedications under that name.

[314] This is one of the factors Pedley believes is evidence of a regional workshop JG Pedley, *Greek Sculpture of the Archaic Period: The Island Workshops* (Mayence: Ph. von Zabern, 1978). 53-54. Olga Palagia suggests, alternately, that Naxian artists may have traveled with their sculptures to the site of dedication, and put on finishing touches under the guidance of the commissioner. See Palagia, Olga. "Early Archaic Sculpture In Athens" in Gianfranco Adornato and Pisa Scuola Normale Superiore, *Scolpire Il Marmo: Importazioni, Artisti Itineranti, Scuole Artistiche Nel Mediterraneo Antico; Atti Del Convegno Di Studio Tenuto a Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore, 9-11 Novembre 2009* (LED, 2010).

[315] Alain Duplouy, "La Sculpture Grecque Est-Elle Un Objet D'histoire? À Propos De Deux Ouvrages Récents," *L'Antiquité classique* 74 (2005). 278. Also (Duplouy, 2006) 197-203.

sanctuary.

In light of the fact that no other dedications by Cheramyes have been found elsewhere, he was almost definitely a resident of Samos. His dedications reflect that local identity through their Samian and Ionian features. Because of this, the Cheramyes Kore is a very personal monument, more directly connected to a real person than many works of ancient art on display in museums. Over the millennia, and with an unavoidably myopic perspective, it is hard to see individuality in "types" such as these. But Baughan is right about the fact that the type itself may be an important identifier. Consider a modern parallel: the evolution of the modern portrait in the twenty-first century. When looking at a group of portraits produced around the same period, it becomes evident that there is a type here, too, and although they may appear uniform at first glance, there is nevertheless room for the expression of individuality in the details.

Figure 23: (Top left) Grace family portrait, 1917, and (Top right) unattributed family portrait, ca. 1910.(Bottom left) Stapleton family portrait, 1914, and (Bottom right) author's own family portrait, ca. 1896; Thorntown, IN. All images except for the last now in the collection of the John Oxley Library, State University of Queensland and labeled for reuse via Wikimedia Creative Commons.

The four family portraits shown above, for instance, were taken within twenty years of one another. The first three show families in the early twentieth century in Australia, and the last shows the author's own family in the late nineteenth-century in rural Indiana. If the viewer looks closely, individual details stand out: a military uniform, the formality of the setting, or the clothing worn by the subjects, for example. As a group, however, these portraits look very similar, except for the last photograph of the family on a farm. All of them show large, unsmiling families. Nearly all of them have a neoclassical, pyramidal composition. The last photograph shows how conventions change over time, and across socio-cultural boundaries. Although taken only a decade prior to the Australian portraits, it represents a very different cultural norm. Even so, many of the same issues are at stake in these portraits. Large families were a symbol of success and prosperity, and status is expressed in the details of clothing, the setting, or official uniforms. But while some of these things may be obvious, it

takes an informed viewer to decipher the value hierarchies of these images. Like these portraits, korai superficially look very similar to one another, but that is simply because they are a type. We should not assume that an effort to communicate through the dominant mode of the time precluded an expression of individuality.

IV. Labels And The Limits Of Language

The language used to describe stylistic developments in art and archaeology is inevitably a function of the existing intellectual framework. When the Cheramyes Kore and the statue of Nikandre were discovered, they were logically held to the standards of naturalistic art, according to the dominant perspective of that era. The first jargon associated with the Cheramyes Kore came from Brunn's lectures, which treated the korai as stylized interpretations of the natural world.[316] Brunn's writings have been greatly misunderstood by modern scholars, who excerpt the sections on Nikandre and Cheramyes as "decontextualized and reduced to a bald derivation of the former from a squared plank and the latter from a rounded tree-trunk." In fact, as Donohue argues, Brunn's analysis was never so simple.[317] It through this misconception that the stylistic analysis of two of the earliest representations of the female form in Greek art evolved. Their jargon ("plank" and "tree-trunk") connoted an unworked piece of wood rather than a work of art. The terminological struggle to define works of art like the Cheramyes Kore gave rise to oversimplification and a lack of understanding on the part of the viewer: The statue is not especially naturalistic, but it is also not entirely abstracted; it may have been a stylized portrait; it does not look Athenian, but it

[316] Heinrich Brunn, *Heinrich Brunn's Kleine Schriften Gesammelt Von Hermann Brunn Und Heinrich Bulle*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: BG Teubner, 1898). 122.

[317] Donohue, *Greek Sculpture and the Problem of Description*. 75.

does not look Egyptian, either.

Terms appear suddenly, whether intentional or reappropriated, and become cemented into the jargon where they attain legitimacy. Adolf Borbein investigates a single, powerful instance of this phenomenon: the term "tektonik", which derives from Karl Otfried Muller's *Handbuch der Archäologie der Kunst,* first published in 1830. Tectonic, from the Greek verb τέκτω—"to build"—literally means something that has been built, initially connoting a positive quality associated with early Greek art.[318]Although the Greek noun τέκτων refers generally to a carpenter, it was often used to refer to a skilled worker in any craft, from physicians to gymnasts. In *Nemean 5*, Pindar's victory ode for a wealthy patron's son, poets are called *τέκτονες σοφοὶ*—"the wise creators".[319]

Here the term is an attribute. Over time, however, the materiality of wooden objects begins to be associated with primitivism or artistic underdevelopment. That metaphor was literalized in the interpretation of the torso of the Cheramyes Kore as an actual tree. Edmund von Mach, German-American art historian and nemesis of the Macmillan Publishing Company, wrote that "advocates of the theory that early statues are influenced by wood images see in this 'Hera' [the kore] the reproduction of the second traditional type of wooden statues, those carved from the round trunk".[320] Mach's language limits the kore to a stylistic analysis, glossing over ancient identity and context in favor of surface treatment. His discussion of Nikandre leaves little room to doubt his sentiments regarding Archaic art. "In no

[318] See Donohue's discussion in Supra (72).

[319] Liddell and Scott define the noun as "a worker in wood, carpenter, joiner", but also "master in any art", and, metaphorically, "maker" or "author". Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. revised and augmented throughout by Sir Henry Stuart Jones, with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1940. The verb is first attested in Homer (*Iliad*), where it means builder or craftsman.

[320] Von Mach, *A Handbook of Greek and Roman Sculpture*. 19.

other extant figure," he wrote, "has the artist so completely been the slave of his material and of the conventional shape of his block, as here."[321] At face value, this statement seems reasonable. Nikandre and the Cheramyes Kore both have forms that reference the organic world, and the raw materials from which they were made—wood and stone. Neither Mach nor anyone else, however, knew the original shape of the block from which these statues were carved. If formal parallels for the Cheramyes Kore suggest anything, it is that this shape was a choice, not an accident of circumstance. The Berlin variant has the same, columnar shape, as does the twin statue from Samos.

Style is more than an argument for ancient identity; it also informs modern ones. In his lectures to the Bavarian academy of sciences in 1883 and 1884, Heinrich Brunn argued that the Archaic features of Greek sculpture are the manifestation of tectonic beliefs, what he called a "*tektonischer stil*".[322] Heinrich Wölfflin later picked up on this term—the tectonic—in his critique of Renaissance art to refer to closed compositions, those which are self-composed as opposed to extending outwards towards the viewer. For Wölfflin "tectonic" was particularly architectural, and the Cheramyes Kore, with its monumentality and weight, meets these requirements. What this means, Wölfflin clarifies, is "a style of composition which, with more or less tectonic means, makes of the picture a self-contained entity, pointing everywhere back to itself, while, conversely, the style of open form everywhere points out beyond itself and purposely looks limitless."[323]

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[321]Ibid. 16.

[322] Adolf Heinrich Borbein, "Tektonik: Zur Geschichte Eines Begriffs Der Archäologie," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 26, no. 1 (1982)., 84. Brunn's original lecture is reproduced in Brunn, *Heinrich Brunn's Kleine Schriften Gesammelt Von Hermann Brunn Und Heinrich Bulle*., vol. II, 139.

[323] Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History* (London: Courier Corporation, 2012). 124.

Wölfflin's classification was not intended as a value assessment. In his field of Renaissance art, the concept of architectural style was simply a means of distinguishing between the most common compositions.[324] As with any classification, assumptions abound. Wölfflin noted that for some, "the tectonic style is always the ceremonial style, and will always be adopted when an impressive effect is aimed at." Western viewers associate closed forms with religious art, which had been the pillar of that style until the nineteenth century. Taking Wölfflin's theory one step further, Carl Einstein directly connected tectonic art with the earliest phases of civilization. For Einstein, the style was incipient, proceeding the hunter-gatherer stage of of human development. This tectonic art was made up of "primitive architectural forms, used to exclude or tame, animist forces threatening to undermine the more regular patterns necessary for raising crops."[325] A connection is implied here between tectonic compositions and superstition, yet another layer of value-laden classification. Einstein was an art critic and art historian, and one of the earliest proponents of primitivism and Cubism in the avant-garde movement. These views alone were progressive for the 1930s, during which time communist-sympathizing Einstein had already fled Germany for Southern France. Even more revolutionary, perhaps, was Einstein's dismissal of naturalism in Classical art in favor of the tectonic austerity of Egyptian sculpture, which he aptly viewed as a precursor to Cubism.[326]

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[324] In the distinction between Renaissance and Mannerist styles, open (a-tectonic) versus closed (tectonic) forms are an important distinguishing feature.

[325] Conor Joyce, *Carl Einstein in Documents and His Collaboration with Georges Bataille* (Philadelphia: Xlibris, 2003). 200.

[326] For an in-depth discussion of Einstein's criticism, see Sebastian Zeidler, "Life and Death from Babylon to Picasso: Carl Einstein's Ontology of Art at the Time of Documents," *Papers of Surrealism* The Use-Value of *Documents*, no. 7 (2007).

Einstein's art theory was tied to his political and philosophical views. A rejection of the naturalism that other critics prized in Greek art was not simply a stylistic objection, but a step toward progressivism in art and reality. He summed up his own stance thus:

> In the hands of most people the tectonic will petrify into a hopelessly repeated schema; understandably so, given that it is a sign of fear [of death] and an expression of the desire for permanency. Originally a means of power employed against nature, the tectonic in due course turns against man himself.[327]

This visual training that causes us to see so-called "tectonic works" as monuments to religion and ceremony comes to bear on Greek art, too. Just as Einstein saw tectonic art as the antithesis of naturalism, so viewers expect Greek art to have naturalism and Egyptian art to have a tectonic monumentality. When the two strains meet, classification becomes a challenge.

Korai have been the victims of the limitations of descriptive language because, while they were often given specific, dedicatory labels in Greek, they defy classification according to modern jargon. Within the realm of the ancient sanctuary, the language of dedications was precise: a "first-fruits" offering was *aparchê,* and a tithe—a tenth of that person's earnings—was *dekatê.* An *agalma,* the most commonly used term, was simply a pleasing gift. So when an ancient viewer looked at a statue whose inscription labeled it a "tithe," they would know exactly how significant of a contribution it was. Only *agalma* left the type of offering to the

[327] Translation from ibid. 7. Originally 'Den meisten erstarrt das Tektonische zu hoffnungslos wiederholtem Schema, begreifbar, da jenes als Zeichen der Angst und des Wunsches nach Dauer erfaßt wird. Das Tektonische, dies Machtmittel gegen die Natur, wendet sich dann gegen den Menschen, der, wenn einmal die Sebastian Zeidler, 2007 Papers of Surrealism Issue 7, 2007: The Use-Value of Documents 25 schützende Beschwörungsformel Erfolg brachte, sklavisch sie wiederholt und zum Fetisch seiner formalen Riten erhebt' (Einstein, Die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts [3/1931], reprinted in Werke, vol. 5, eds Uwe Fleckner and Thomas W. Gaehtgens, Fannei & Walz, Berlin, 1996, 123).

viewer's imagination.[328] Of course none of these labels have relevance in museums. But once something has been established as a type, the existing parameters of that group define every other member. As Siapkas and Sjögren phrase the problem:

> Studies that focus on a particular type of sculpture often follow a strict empirical approach, where it is the material, and our delimitations of that material, that dictates the analysis. A category of sculpture can be restricted in form, time and space, for instance, the archaic korai from the Athenian Acropolis.[329]

The authors remark that korai are not part of the canon of Classical sculpture, which is largely limited to works that are Classical, or were believed to be Classical at the time of their discovery.[330] This means they were already not central, but marginal. In spite of their nonconformity to that aesthetic, the korai have received ample attention, both in scholarship and in pop culture. The most popular by far is the Peplos Kore, which garnered attention in modern culture by virtue of the colored reconstructions propagated by Vinzenz Brinkmann. Even so, the Peplos Kore was not immune from the same linguistic confinement that plagued the Cheramyes Kore, and like that statue, it was compared to Nikandre. A comparison to Nikandre infers an inability to transform the organic state of the raw material, and although the Delian statue has been integrated into scholarship, it is far from attaining notoriety in the museum. Attempts to classify the Peplos Kore also reverted to pre-existing terminology. Ridgway writes that "Even scholars who perceived the subtleties of some of her features could only conclude that, if not totally a xoanon, she was at least a 'demi-xoanon' or, to coin a term,

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[328] Day suggests that for this reason *ägalma* are entirely different, categorically, from the other two designations. See Joseph W Day, *Archaic Greek Epigram and Dedication: Representation and Reperformance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). 85.

[329] Johannes Siapkas and Lena Sjögren, *Displaying the Ideals of Antiquity: The Petrified Gaze* (London: Routledge, 2013). 63.

[330] The Venus de Milo, Apollo Belvedere and Discobolus are all prime examples of this phenomenon.

"une statue xoaniste."[331]

Although Nigel Spivey argued that if not for the famous Egyptian statue of Nefertiti, now in Berlin, the korai would be "the first female beauties in the art world", they rarely attract public attention.[332] At the Acropolis Museum the korai are displayed as a group, giving the appearance, as they would have in situ, of a collective identity. Without a face or identifying attribute, the Cheramyes Kore is formally like a kore but has none of their idiosyncratic features. Even within the type, then, she is difficult to assess. This is especially important if the korai were early, stylized portraits. In a sense, it does not matter whether they were or not. It does, however, affect the manner in which institutions (and viewers) classify them and, in turn, how they are evaluated. Should they be naturalistic? Should they be idealized? Should they be erotic? A resolution to the question of the korai's identity has never been reached, and therefore we do not know whether they are goddesses, young women, perpetual dedicants, or some combination thereof. Perhaps a conclusion is out of reach. If so, what is the best way to present korai to a museum audience?

Korai As A Category: What's In A Portrait?

Such an abundance of kouroi and korai-type statues merits its own categorization, but this requires contextual display. As of 1974, there were 27 korai as opposed to 20 kouroi, to which Keesling adds the Cheramyes Kore and her twin, still in Samos.[333] In spite of the fact

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[331]Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, "The Peplos Kore, Akropolis 679," *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 36 (1977). She cites here an early twentieth century review by Lechat H. Lechat, *Au Musée De L'acropole D'athènes*, vol. 674 (Lyons/ Paris: 1903). 326.

[332] Nigel Jonathan Spivey, *The Ancient Olympics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). 76.

[333] Keesling, *The Votive Statues of the Athenian Acropolis*. 104.

that the kouroi and korai are wide in their geographic distribution, and unique in their dress and features, few of them are individually well known outside of scholarship. In museums, with the rare exception, they are separated from their counterparts and so seem like awkward one-ofs.[334] Cheramyes' two korai, originally displayed side-by-side on a single base, are now 3,000 kilometers apart. Given that these works cast a very personal glance on the past through the diversity of draped garments, jewelry, hairstyles and attributes, it is curious that they have not attracted a similar public interest as Egyptian mummies. The reason for this is likely that mummies have come to be a distinctive type in the museum: audiences see them and immediately understand aspects of their origins and significance. Whether appropriately or misappropriately informed, this knowledge derives from pop culture, education, and personal experience, and allows audiences to mentally classify what they see.

Mummies embedded themselves in modern psyches after Napoleon's 1798 invasion of Egypt, a campaign that was responsible for an influx of Egyptian antiquities into European museums. Howard Carter's discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922 simultaneously brought mummies to the forefront of the popular imagination, and also fueled superstitious interpretations through the supposed curse that affected excavators. Hollywood capitalized on this stereotype by making mummies de facto villains, "soulless automatons directed by High Priests, their gait robotic and stiff." Jasmine Day argues that museums often exploit these popular stereotypes of mummies, which reinforce visitors' association of mummies with decay, "abhorrence and derision." [335] These notions of what a mummy is, what it represents, and how it is valued are already thoroughly entrenched in visitors' minds. They are a recognized

[334] The Acropolis Museum is an exception. Here the korai are displayed as a group, which enables viewers to compare them, and gives a sense of their original sanctuary context.

[335] Jasmine Day, "Mummymania: Mummies, Museums and Popular Culture," *KMT: A Modern Jounral Of Ancient Egypt* 17, no. 2 (2006).

category, such that it no longer matters to audiences whether the stylized representations of human faces on sarcophagi are real portraits.

While categorization in museum collections is yet another layer of jargon, it is nevertheless one that comes with a specific set of rules for interpretation. These rules may not be explicit, but they are generally understood, or gleaned through the language of labeling, the context of the object within the museum and external, cultural biases. The categorically obtuse korai do not evoke such a set of rules for interpretation. If Stieber is correct that an object's appearance "speaks first and most authentically about any artifact," how can museums alter that projection?[336] One possible solution is to establish korai as a unique type, like mummies, so that their features can be appreciated as something like a portrait, rather than as a failed attempt at a naturalistic likeness.

Both Karakasi and Stieber believe the korai are, in fact, a type of portrait. Richard Brilliant defines portraiture as representations associated with a specific person:

> To real persons we tend to give names, and to portraits we also try to give names. A real, named person seems to exist somewhere within or behind the portrait; therefore any portrait is essentially denotative, that is to say, it refers specifically to a human being[…][337]

The korai occasionally, but not always meet these requirements.[338] The grave marker of Phrasikleia, for instance, reads, "Grave marker of Phrasikleia: I will forever be called kore, the gods giving me this name instead of marriage." Although they do not always name their

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[336] Stieber, *The Poetics of Appearance in the Attic Korai*. 42.

[337] Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture* (New York: Reaktion books, 2013). 46.

[338] Usually this is the case when the subject and dedicator are believed to be the same person, as is the case with Nikandre, whose inscription reads, "Nikandre dedicated me to the far-shooter of arrows, the excellent daughter of Deinodikes of Naxos, the sister of Deinomenes, the wife of Phraxos". (See Hopper translation: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/artifact?name=Athens,+NM+1&object=sculpture). In some cases, for instance with the statue of Phrasikleia, the inscription leaves no doubt: ΣΗΜΑ ΦΡΑΣΙΚΛΕΙΑΣ· ΚΟΡΗ ΚΕΚΛΗΣΟΜΑΙ ΑΙΕΙ ΑΝΤΙ ΓΑΜΟΥ ΠΑΡΑ ΘΕΩΝ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΛΑΧΟΥΣ' ΟΝΟΜΑ.

subject, however, they never fail to name the person who matters: the dedicator. Stieber points out that modesty and anonymity were not qualities that were praised by Archaic Greeks. The korai, "are symptomatic of Archaic individualism; they would never be mistaken for products of democracy."[339] So, while the korai may represent real women, this aspect of their identity was generally less important to the Greeks than who paid for them. After all, they were dedications intended to bring about divinely positive outcomes for their commissioner; it was important to commemorate *that* name above all else.

Irene Winter argues that the demand for naturalism in the portrait genre is an unfair demand imposed by the Western tradition and influenced by the supremacy of the modern photograph. Winter dislikes this narrow definition, and instead proposes that royal likenesses from the Near East, such as the images of Assurnasirpal II from Nimrud, are portraits that would have been recognized as such by contemporary viewers.[340] Consider a frame of a relief, now in the British Museum, of Assurnasirpal conducting a review of prisoners. He is shown greeting a high official to discuss the logistical details of a recent victory. Assurnasirpal is at the center of the frame, accompanied by a man who shields him with a parasol to his left. He holds a bow and arrow that symbolize his victory, and a winged deity (probably the sun god Shamash) presides over the meeting from the sky, another symbol of Assurnasirpal's divine favor.

[339] Stieber, *The Poetics of Appearance in the Attic Korai*. 115.

[340] Irene J Winter, "What/When Is a Portrait? Royal Images of the Ancient near East," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 153, no. 3 (2009). 254.

Figure 24: Assurnasirpal II, from the Northwest palace at Nimrud, ca. 865-860. British Museum 124537. Image labeled for reuse via Wikimedia Creative Commons.

Assurnasirpal himself does not look especially naturalistic—the side-angle perspective corresponds with the Near Eastern and Egyptian tradition, while the eyes are shown as perfect ovals, unadjusted for contraction. The eyes of all of the figures in the relief are unnaturally large, dominating their faces. Assurnasirpal's beard is formed of rows of perfectly aligned, circular beads, that create a repetitive pattern. His body, out of sync with the direction his face turns, is mostly frontal, providing an opportunity to showcase his robes and muscular arms. This is not a realistic portrait. But recognizing Assurnasirpal at the center of the relief's composition is essential to understanding its meaning. While Assurnasirpal's features may be stylized, they are nevertheless unique to him—the beaded beard, exaggerated brow and royal, conical hat— mark him as king. In conjunction with the royal and divine iconography, a contemporary viewer would not have had trouble identifying Assurnasirpal in these reliefs. In fact, a lack of clarity would render them ineffective.

Recognition is about more than mere status display, though. Winter remarks that likeness was emphasized to negate any question of a ruler's legitimacy or inheritance. As with

the korai, Winter argues that a failure to acknowledge Mesopotamian art as a portrait type or a historical likeness prevents it from being integrated into mainstream art historical discourse. "At issue," she writes, "is whether the identification of the images with names of known, historical personages, and their endowment with purposeful, culturally-valued properties, is sufficient to warrant referring to these images as royal 'portraits.'"[341] In both cases, we are essentially trying to force ancient art to fit a modern mold.

The features we see may not be the realistic, perspectival depictions of Assurnasirpal's actual hair, nose and eyes, but they are the features deemed most important for his likeness as king, and this, as Winter sees it, is the crux of the image. And although we may not immediately recognize the iconography of kingship in ancient Assyria, we recognize it when it is revived, however anachronistically, in our own culture. Consider Horatio Greenough's 1832 portrait of George Washington, enthroned and shirtless (see below). Greenough drew inspiration from Phidias's Olympian Zeus for his portrait of Washington, choosing to depict him half-nude and Classically draped. One hand points upwards towards the sky as in religious iconography, and the other holds a sword, intended as a symbol of power restituted to the American people following the Revolutionary War. In more ways than one this image is reminiscent of Kafkaesque absurdism. Greenough produces a somewhat fantastical, unrealistic portrait of Washington, although few visitors to the National Museum of American History would fail to recognize him in it.

[341] Ibid. 256.

Figure 25: Horatio Greenough's statue of George Washington, 1832, now on display in the National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. Image labeled for reuse via Wikimedia Creative Commons.

Washington's face is hardened and stern, boasting a square jaw and a youthfully smooth complexion that do not appear in contemporary portraits. The perfectly muscled torso looks like that of a twenty-five year-old. Granted, Washington was notoriously fit, although it is improbable that he would have wanted to be depicted publicly shirtless, an inappropriate level of intimacy for the eighteenth century. His adjutant, George Mercer, reported that Washington was known for his vigor, his "Well-developed muscles indicating great strength. His bones and joints are as large as his hands and feet."[342] This portrait is part reality and part myth, drawing more on the symbolic legacy of the first president than his real appearance. Greek statues of the Archaic period, including korai, operate on a similar principle, combining elements of reality and idealism in a single work. While we, as modern viewers, are close enough culturally to the symbolic imagery of Greenough's portrait to sift the myth from the

[342] James Thomas Flexner, *George Washington* (Boston: Little Brown, 1965). 191. This contradicts the common theory that Washington suffered from Klinefelter's syndrome, which is often cited as a cause for his infertility. Amory shows this is an improbable diagnosis in John K Amory, "George Washington's Infertility: Why Was the Father of Our Country Never a Father?," *Fertility and sterility* 81, no. 3 (2004).

reality, we have difficulty doing the same for works of ancient art.

Some of the most iconic portraits have little to no basis in fact, but we have no trouble associating them with the intended subject. None of the portraits identified as Shakespeare have securely been dated to his lifetime, and he probably did not sit for any of them. The two most prevalent portraits of Shakespeare are the Droeshout portrait, an engraving done for the First Folio in 1623, and the Chandos portrait, painted by actor Joseph Taylor in the early eighteenth century, and the first portrait to be acquired by the National Portrait Gallery in 1856. Michael Neill reminds us of Duncan's statement in *Macbeth* that, "There's no art to find the mind's construction in the face," and perhaps that is a useful way to approach these portraits, which mythologize their subject in a way that tells the viewer more about the values of the artist than the bard.[343] Katherine Duncan-Jones traces the history of Shakespeare portraiture, which has dressed many famous men in his guise, but has failed to produce an authentic likeness. The Cobbe portrait, for instance, is actually a painting of Sir Thomas Overbury, a poet and near contemporary of Shakespeare. Like Greenough's Washington, these portraits do not realistically capture Shakespeare's image, and that was probably never the point.[344] In the case of the famous bust of Shakespeare by Roubiliac in Poet's Corner in Stratford, the actor David Garrick, who had played Richard III, was said to have modeled for the artist himself. In spite of the fact that none of these examples was an actual life-drawing of Shakespeare, we still call them "portraits" because they symbolically, if not realistically, represent the man.

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[343] *Macbeth.* I.iv. See also Michael Neill, "Glimpsed in the Glare," *London Review of Books* 37, no. 24 (17 December, 2015 2015).

[344] Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Portraits of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Bodleian, 2015). argues, convincingly, that the Cobbe portrait is Overbury.

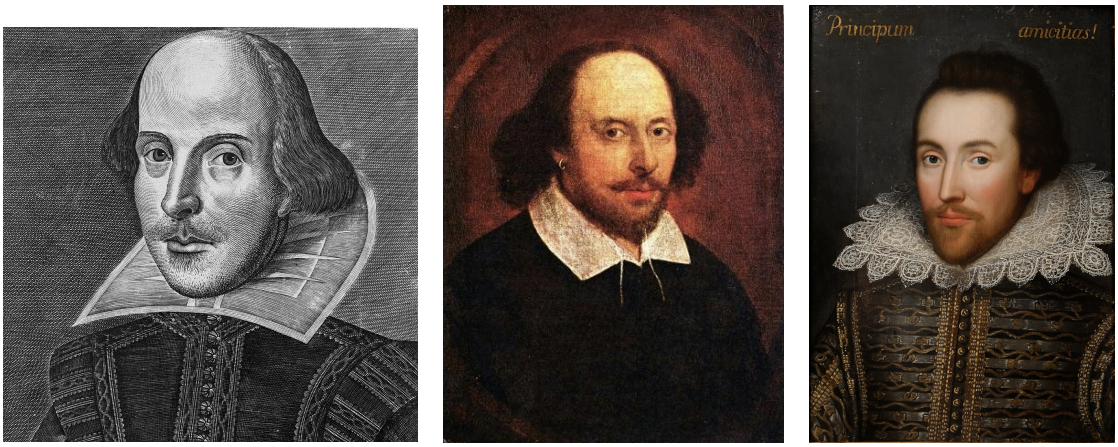

Figure 26: (Left) The Droeshout Shakespeare; (Middle) the Chandos Shakespeare; (Right) the Cobbe Shakespeare. Images labeled for reuse via Wikimedia Creative Commons.

Although scholarship almost unanimously points to the absence of any true Shakespeare likeness, that fact is not widely known, or liked, by the public. In her review of Duncan-Jones' book, Rosemary Hill suggests that we ignore the improbability of those portraits because we simply *want* them to be genuine. The tourism board of Stratford, which benefits from visitors feeling that their trip there has yielded authentic insights into the past, is one of the most vocal proponents of these portraits, using them unreservedly for publicity and education purposes.[345]

The korai, the Greenough Washington and Shakespeare's portraits are symbolic likenesses. These require interpretation on the part of the viewer, who is expected to have enough familiarity with the stylistic language used. While the Greenough Washington is accessible to us because we are equipped to interpret its visual language, the portraits of Shakespeare miss the mark in many ways because they are taken, literally, at face value. This is where classification is important. It is what guides our initial assessment of a work of art, consciously or not. As Stieber phrases this problem, "What we seek in the korai is no less than

[345] Rosemary Hill, "Short Cuts," *London Review of Books* 38, no. 1 (7 January, 2016 2016). The Cobbe portrait, for instance, shows up on posters in Stratford, and the Shakespeare Trust has newly been endowed with significant funding to enhance the site for visitors.

a semiotics of physical appearances."[346] It is a bottom-up approach to visual assessment, which relies on our ability to break down the most important components of korai to construct their value as a whole.

Figure 27: (From left) Peplos Kore, Lyons Kore, Kore 673, Acropolis Museum; Kore 670, Acropolis Museum. All images labeled for reuse via Wikimedia Creative Commons.

If korai were recognized as a separate type—their own style of symbolic portraiture—we would perhaps notice more about their individual traits. The Peplos Kore and Lyons Kore, for example, have very similar hairstyles, but their faces are very different. The Lyons Kore has a stouter neck and the heavy arms of a wrestler, while the Peplos Kore is more gracile in form. All four of the korai above wear unique garments, and have differently-styled headwear. Many of the facial features are distinctive, too: Kore 673 has an especially ovoid face, with round, full cheeks, and Kore 670 has a softer, youthful looking chin. Stieber notes that when painted, the korai would have further stood apart from one another.[347] All of these korai have the Archaic smile that is often explained as an attempt at imbuing sculpture with life, implying that attempt has been unsuccessful. Instead, that smile should be read as a marker of type, a component of Stieber's "semiotics" of korai, and Archaic art as a whole.

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[346] Stieber, *The Poetics of Appearance in the Attic Korai*. 43.

[347] Ibid.

The failure to classify korai and interpret them according to their own set of rules makes them difficult to appreciate in an art museum. Category-based neural responses to what we see are inevitable; they are simply the most immediate way that we assess visual information. In some cases, as with the recognition of gender, we categorize quickly and effortlessly, but in other instances, we struggle. This first stage of impression-forming is also the most important. We tend to categorize first, which then determines other influences and value assessments.[348] In reality, the process of evaluating a work of art visually is more complex. Freeman and Ambady suggest that when we look at people, the process of recognizing faces and categorizing them according to social taxa is a mix of top-down and bottom-up thought. In other words, when you see something, there is "an intimate interplay between bottom-up sensory cues and top down social factors [read: prior knowledge] in driving the process of categorizing others."[349] This means that when you look at a kore, you are simultaneously evaluating it according to the sum of its parts, while also trying to categorize it according to what you might already know. Museums are the ultimate authority in this sphere, and have the power to counteract stereotypes through display and policy.

Why Objects Do Not Speak For Themselves

What does this mean in the context of a museum? Visitors come to museums with the

[348] Jeffrey W.; Gawronski Sherman, Bertram; Trope, Yaacov, ed. *Dual Process Theories of the Social Mind* (New York: Guilford Publications). 235.

[349] Freeman, Jonathan B. and Ambady, Nalini, "The Dynamic Interactive Model of Person-Construal : Coordinating Sensory And Social Practices", in ibid. 237.

assumption that what they see on display is significant, authentic, and valuable.[350] This works in the museum's favor. Even when encountering unusual works of art like the Cheramyes Kore, there is a prevailing perception of importance: a valuable, ancient artifact is on display in a major museum. Other cues also inform perception, however. The Cheramyes Kore is not in a central gallery, and is not displayed like a masterpiece, at the center of an empty room, like the Venus de Milo. It is in a gallery filled with many, smaller objects, including the Auxerre Maiden. This display tacitly suggests to viewers that these pieces are less important.

If a visitor did choose to examine the kore more thoroughly (a very rare occurrence), they would attempt to interpret it accordingly. But here, as we have seen, the kore also does not make the viewer's task easy. It is essentially a symbolic portrait, but the head is missing. The garments are uniquely Ionian, but that is not something that can be determined without reading a label. The hand held a key, but, again, it is barely visible. In order to even understand the most basic information about the kore—whether the style is Greek or Egyptian, for example—viewers must consult the labels. But this is not simply a eulogy for labels in art museums.

Objects do not speak for themselves. This is true of all objects, including iconic ones, but especially for objects with complex visual cues like the Cheramyes Kore. Obviously not every object in an encyclopedic museum can be displayed in its own gallery, and perhaps not every object merits that distinction. There are different ways of encouraging visitor engagement, however. Guided tours, podcasts, and self-tours through visitors' own phones or museum devices are all opportunities to increase interest in less-famous works of art. These exist at the Louvre, but still are generally formatted according to the "icon template," or the highlights

[350] Consider Packer's recent evaluation of value-construal in museums: Jan Packer, "Beyond Learning: Exploring Visitors' Perceptions of the Value and Benefits of Museum Experiences," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 51, no. 1 (2008).

tour, to the exclusion of all other works.

One of the most interesting aspects of Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's book on how audiences learn in museums is her discussion of interpretive communities. She points out that meaning-making is both a personal process and a social one. As she terms it, "Our individual strategies for making sense of experience are enabled, limited and mediated through our place in the social world."[351] These communities inform the way we interpret what we see, how we read labels, and what we take away from a museum visit. Further, when visitors feel they are excluded from the relevant communities in a museum—if the barrier to entry, so to speak, is too great—they may leave feeling ostracized, and without having learned anything of import. If you filter online reviews of museums in the Los Angeles area, for instance, positive reviews abound, in spite of the fact that some visitors remark they have waited for upwards of three hours to see certain exhibitions. Yayoi Kasuma's *Mirrored Infinity Museum* at the Broad Museum allowed visitors into the space for a mere 45 seconds, while they often had to wait for hours to see it. But reviews are generally still very positive, stating that the experience is worth the wait.[352]

The rare negative review surfaces when visitors feel they have been excluded somehow, and this feeling is especially marked for museums without modern collections, like the Getty Villa. These museums, perhaps, are already less accessible to the public, presenting themselves as more serious, less fun. While many museums have made themselves accessible and less formal through selfie opportunities, visitor engagement events, and untraditional tours,

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[351] Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *The Educational Role of the Museum* (Psychology Press, 1999). 49.

[352] See, for instance, one Yelp user's review with attached Selfie in Kasuma's installation: "2.5 HR wait to get in, another hr wait inside, for 45 seconds in The Infinity Room. #worthit". (http://www.yelp.com/biz_photos/the-broad-los-angeles-4?select=nBX4ChJJDEkiX3QO7L9s-Q&reviewid=WBH2L6ynF5feuLHplFvVkA)

ancient art is often excluded from the scope of these.[353] The Getty Center, for instance, has many more visitor engagement programs than the Getty Villa. In reviews of the Getty Villa, the branch of the museum dedicated to ancient art, several visitors cited unfriendly guards as making them feel unwelcome, or rigid museum policies that they felt belittled them.[354] In these cases, visitors' negative experiences have nothing to do with the art itself, but with their perceived relationship to the museum.

The collection itself also includes some and excludes others. As Hooper Greenhill writes, "Canons create order by giving authority to certain texts, figures, ideas, problems, discursive strategies and historical narratives. This is a strategy of boundary maintenance through which some are enabled to speak and are empowered but others are silenced and marginalised."[355] Practically, this means that works that seem less significant within the scope of the canon, such as the Cheramyes Kore or the Auxerre Maiden, aren't only marginalized themselves, they also marginalize certain audiences. Is it a coincidence, for instance, that the most iconic statues of women—the Venus de Milo, the Winged Victory of Samothrace, the Medici Venus, or the Sleeping Hermaphrodite—are all nude? This is communicating a very specific message to museum audiences: that women are to be admired as aesthetic objects. Further, because these sculptures cater to the male gaze, they exclude women from their intended audience. As Robin Osborne argues, Greek statues were never meant to speak to women. "The premium

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[353] See Mark Whittaker's New York Times review of nude museum tours in "New Tour At Museum Reveals All" (http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/02/arts/design/australian-museum-offers-tours-in-the-nude.html).

[354] One user notes that she was "scolded for not checking [the museum's website]", for example (http://www.yelp.com/biz/the-getty-villa-pacific-palisades?hrid=xMe9XRs09nnJucTqF13G4w&utm_campaign=www_review_share_popup&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=(direct)). Another review states, "The guards scared the living daylights out of me." (http://www.yelp.com/biz/the-getty-villa-pacific-palisades?hrid=L_lhKkWzqHaq-vlaLIcBQQ&utm_campaign=www_review_share_popup&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=(direct)).

[355] Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004). 21.

put upon *man's* self-understanding," he states, "and the focus of reflective questioning on 'the connection between *politics* and the human good' […] eclipsed and silenced women as much in life as in art."[356]

This is why it is important to contextualize works of art in museums within historical or art historical narratives, rather than presenting them as masterpieces that can speak for themselves and whose value should be self evident. The value of icons only seems self evident because it has been reinforced over time by the museum. This assumption not only alienates certain visitors, but reinforces the initial stereotypes which are entwined with iconic works. Further, encouraging active engagement with works of art on display, through educational programs, digital media, even the occasional selfie opportunity, makes visitors feel included in those narratives. That feeling is not simply a matter of generosity, but an important factor in enabling them to gain something of value from their visit.

[356] Robin Osborne, "Looking on-- Greek Style. Does the Sculpted Girl Speak to Women Too?," in *Classical Greece: Ancient Histories and Modern Archaeologies*, ed. Ian Morris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). 95.

VI.

Charting Iconicity
The Metrics Of Taste

This investigation shows that while there is not a single cause for iconicity, there is a common, institutional, thread that transforms works of art into icons. In some instances, a prominent display may contribute to the power of an image, in other cases works of art become famous as they are integrated into a cultural ethos. The common thread that unites these case studies is not beauty. There is no evidence to suggest that icons are more beautiful than other, lesser known works, although audiences may believe this to be the case by virtue of the fact that those works are iconic. This is not to say that some people do not genuinely find iconic works of art beautiful. Arguments about the subjectivity of beauty have been made for millennia. And beauty is certainly subjective, but more than this, the actual manner in which visual data is interpreted by the brain varies by individual. One study postulates that individuals' propensities to interpret optical illusions relate to a top-down or bottom-up processing mechanism in the brain.[357] fMRI scans taken during this study suggest that perception is not a simple act, but involves frontal and parietal brain areas involved in higher cognition. In other words, a glance is not just a glance; conscious or not, it is an analysis that draws on knowledge, past experiences, emotions, and a slew of other factors.

[357] Lara Schlaffke et al., "The Brain's Dress Code: How the Dress Allows to Decode the Neuronal Pathway of an Optical Illusion," *Cortex* 73 (2015).

The internet has provided an unprecedented Big Data testing ground for the many ways that we are affected by what we see. One such example is the case of #TheDress, also known as Dressgate. Caitlin McNeill first posted a picture of the dress her mother planned to wear to her wedding on Tumblr, asking a simple question: What color is this dress? That question catalyzed an internet-wide debate over what color the dress really was; everyone saw it differently. In reality, it was made of alternating stripes of blue and black lace. In the photograph, however, it appeared blue and black to some, white and gold to others, and variants of those combinations to a smaller number of people. The Dress immediately became a viral phenomenon, generating worldwide internet traffic, and encouraging scientists to propose possible explanations for why the same photograph could be seen in such vastly different ways by the population.

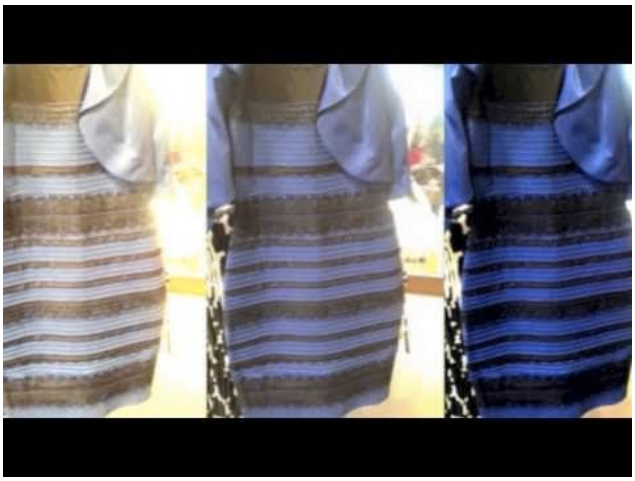

Figure 28: The Dress that launched a thousand Tweets: (Middle) Caitlin McNeill's original photograph of #TheDress, and the two most common interpretations of its color scheme on either side.

Preliminary studies suggested that unconscious interpretations involving time of day and type of light used— natural light or artificial— caused the dress to look different to different people. Several authors proposed that women and older people were more likely to see the dress as white and gold because they are more likely to have daytime chronotypes, where those who saw the dress as black and blue were more likely to have nighttime

chronotypes and to be adjusted to artificial light sources.[358] The different perceptions of the dress indicate that "we make assumptions about the world that guide the interpretation of sensory data, and these assumptions can be quite different for different individuals."[359] Part of this has to do with our past experience of objects. Andrew Hanson, a psychophysicist at the National Physical Laboratory, and also a former chairman of the Colour Group of Great Britain, notes that perceiving colors is not just about how they look in the moment; it is also about how they have looked in the past. He explains, "We all have memory colours. We know that bananas are yellow for example. Similarly, we know that shadow should be blue. It's nothing to do with colour blindness, it's all to do with colour perception."[360] It is often said that past experiences inform our present, but Hanson's statement further suggests that past experiences directly shape our perception in a measurable way.

Although certainly not controlled, The Dress phenomenon provided the largest-scale study of diversity in perception to have ever been carried out. Not only did it demonstrate that people see differently, it also showed that the spectrum of possibilities is much wider than we might think. In addition to blue, black, white and gold, some people saw the dress as brown and white, brown and periwinkle, or other slight variants on these themes. Further, culture did not seem to play a role in perception, but gender did. More men saw the dress as blue and black than women, for example.

How does a viral phenomenon translate into iconicity? The internet is now the primary locus for the consumption of visual culture. This is not revelatory, of course. There

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[358] Rosa Lafer-Sousa, "Striking Individual Differences in Color Perception Uncovered by #the Dress Photograph," *Current Biology* (2016).

[359] Karl R Gegenfurtner, Marina Bloj, and Matteo Toscani, "The Many Colours of 'the Dress'," *Current Biology* 25, no. 13 (2015).

[360] Marcello Moccia et al., "The Dress: Transforming a Web Viral Event into a Scientific Survey," *Multiple Sclerosis and Related Disorders* 7 (2016).

are many limits to big data; in many ways it is too big and difficult to define. Numbers can potentially be skewed by these too-large sample sizes, which fail to eliminate outliers, for example. At its simplest, big data analytics is the application of analytic techniques to very large, usually internet-generated, data sets. Data from these sources is not just big, however. Phillip Russom notes that one of the defining traits of big data is also variety, the varying scope of data, which can potentially alter the quantification of results. Russom admits that in this sense this type of data is "messy," but that this can also be useful: "discovery and predictive analytics depend on lots of details—even questionable data." As with normal data sets, big data does not speak for itself. But while algorithms used in the assessment of big data may be complicated, gauging something simple, like interest, is not necessarily.

Google Trends is useful here. Trends is a feature of Google that tracks search volume for terms or concepts over time, with the option of narrowing to regional interest, and adding additional search terms to refine parameters. Increasingly, Google Trends is being used as a predictive tool, from tracking interest for marketing strategies to tracking disease outbreaks. In some cases, trends clearly reflects a pattern in interest, but the cause of that interest is elusive. Consider the example of the Peplos Kore, which received the most search engine traffic in the fall of 2007. There is a clear correlation in interest in the Peplos Kore and the national exhibitions during which it was modeled in color, probably due to popular media coverage of those exhibitions. The Sackler Museum's show, "Gods In Color: Painted Sculpture Of Classical Antiquity," opened in late September, 2007, and "Peplos Kore" reached its height as a search term during that time. (See graph, *Fig. 29* below). Similarly, the Mona Lisa, already a famous work of art, spiked in search popularity following Dan Brown's popular Da Vinci Code was released (2004), and subsequently declined until the release of the movie by the same name, released in May 2006, when it peaked again. These examples show

that interest in works of art are not static; it can be affected by anything, from museum exhibitions to popular literature. While it is not necessarily surprising that the already-iconic Mona Lisa gained attention because of Brown's conspiracy theory novels, it is perhaps surprising that a museum exhibition has the potential to measurably increase interest in a lesser known work of art like the Peplos Kore.

Figure 29: Google Trends chart for interest over time in the Peplos Kore. Note the spike in interest in the fall of 2007.

This data suggests that, at least in the short-term, it is fairly easy to alter the perception of a work of art. Maintaining that interest over time, however, may be more difficult. The chart shows that in between periods of media coverage of exhibitions, interest declines. The problem remains, then: how does one alter the perception of a work of art long-term? In order to address this problem, we need to understand more about how works of art become iconic in the first place. The trends show that popularity can be highly volatile—it can come and go quickly, as in the case of The Dress. They also show that popularity is not evenly distributed geographically.[361]

[361] Certainly there are other factors at play here, too. Trends are likely not given equal attention amongst social classes, across cultural divides, and amongst every community, but the Trends function only allows for an examination of regional interest over time.

Why is location a factor in iconicity? For the Peplos Kore, all of the interest stemmed from searches within the United States (there was insufficient data to pinpoint more precise, regional interest), even when the term was altered to compensate for language differences. Of course, this does not mean that no one searched for the kore in other countries, only that there were not enough of those searches to factor into Trends data. When we compare searches for the male counterpart—the term "kouros" is searched most frequently in Greece. This is a misleading statistic, however, because those searches are not always about the sculpture; Kouros is also a popular cologne produced by Yves Saint Laurent. Fortunately, Google Trends differentiates between the work of art and the cologne based on subsequent traffic—most searches for "kouros" continue to retailers of Yves Saint Laurent, not to art museums.

This data hints at the influence of major museum exhibitions and the potential they have to increase interest in lesser known genres and works of art. The Peplos Kore is housed in the Acropolis Museum; only the painted model appeared at the show in Boston, but the search interest was still concentrated in the United States. This is unusual for works of art, which typically generate the most interest in the country in which they reside. The Venus de Milo, for instance, receives the most online attention in France, as we might expect.

Figure 30: Google Trends regional interest in the Venus de Milo

If we compare interest in the Parthenon marbles, we see that most interest stems from the United States and the the United Kingdom. Altering that search to "Elgin marbles" expands regional interest to include Australia and Canada, perhaps an indicator that awareness of the ownership conflict is more prevalent in the United States and the United Kingdom than in other English-speaking nations. Taken as a whole, this data is more than a graph of popularity over time; it is a means of charting changing interpretations, and, possibly, values.

Figure 31: Regional Google Trends graphic showing the areas generating the most Google searches for the term "Parthenon marbles".

When possible— a minimum of interest is necessary for Google Trends to generate city-specific search information— regional interest is also quite indicative. Keith Haring is almost exclusively searched for in New York, where most of his work is, with London ranking second most interested, with one-eighth of the total interest. *Fallingwater*, Frank Lloyd Wright's chef-d'oeuvre in rural Pennsylvania, generates nearly all of its interest in Pittsburgh, with Philadelphia ranking second. This regional interest makes sense. People know about famous works of art in their area, are more likely to visit them, and take pride in art that they feel represents them. There is an element of cultural ethos that develops around famous works of art. When audiences feel ownership of a work of art, it is much more likely to be considered

iconic, regardless of whether or not it is displayed in a museum. There are important implications here for conservation and preservation practices, since iconicity is akin to value. These drivers might be used to encourage communities to better preserve cultural heritage sites, for instance. This further suggests that while the institutional system of values established by museums is still the force majeure in creating icons, it is not the only force.

Consider the case of Love Park and its namesake statue, both of which are an important aspect of Philadelphians' identity. Because of the prominent location of Robert Indiana's LOVE sculpture in Philadelphia's John F. Kennedy Plaza, many viewers here mistakenly believe that this LOVE is the original. In fact, the original sculpture is located at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. Regional interest for the term "Robert Indiana," which one might expect to correspond with searches for his work, is neither concentrated in Philadelphia or New York, where another LOVE resides near the Museum of Modern Art, but in Indiana. New York is closely behind Philadelphia in terms of regional interest in the LOVE sculpture, but not in searches for its artist, clear evidence of the disassociation in both of these places of artist and work. In each of these locations, few visitors seem to know the name Robert Indiana. For them the statue is a photo opportunity. Robert Indiana was rarely recognized or credited for his works. He does not generate the appeal, for instance, of Keith Haring, who himself became a symbol of 1980s counterculture in downtown New York.

In these cases, iconic works of art might not be iconic through their own virtues, but because of how audiences perceive them in connection to themselves. In Philadelphia, Indiana's LOVE is a fitting tribute to the City of Brotherly Love. In Indiana, it is a facet of local culture— hence the popularity of "Robert Indiana" as artist, but not specifically his sculpture. None of these preserve the original holiday context of the graphic, which was designed for a Museum of Modern Art Christmas card in 1964, and the intended meaning of

the graphic has had a negligible impact on its popularity. Instead, audiences have appended their own interpretations, encouraged, perhaps, by the apparent accessibility of a work of art that they see as popular, not institutional. In fact, Indiana's work became so popular that it essentially evolved into an autonomous being, independent of the artist. In an interview with Karen Michel of the National Public Radio, Indiana says of his work's initial success, "*LOVE* bit me. It was a marvelous idea, but it was also a terrible mistake. It became too popular; it became too popular. And there are people who don't like popularity. It's much better to be exclusive and remote. That's why I'm on an island off the coast of Maine, you see."[362] Indiana refers here to the fact that his work became so popular for adaptations and memorabilia that he was almost never credited for it, and, as a result, never profited from it.

Indiana's story is a cautionary tale that meaning and context do not automatically follow iconicity. A report in the Pheonix *New Times* on the acquisition of another copy of *LOVE* suggests that public interest is often much simpler than the complex meanings assigned to works of art in museums. In fact, meaning may be completely insignificant. As the *Times* reports, "Visitors to Scottsdale flock to the sculpture because it is one of only a handful of them in the country. It is large and, unlike most pieces of art, you can touch it and climb on it. This makes for a perfect picture-taking opportunity. We can't wait to see your Valentines."[363]

Not surprisingly, people value what they relate to. Famous works of art are best known and generate the most interest in the part of the world in which they reside. This suggests that places that are the most visited, are also the most influential in the construction of aesthetic value. This should not be an argument against small, regional collections,

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[362] Robert Indiana, interview by Karen Michel, January 5, 2014, 2014, Weekend Edition Sunday, National Public Radio.

[363] See the report here: http://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/best-of/2011/people-and-places/best-public-art-as-tourist-attraction-6470143 ("Robert Indiana's *Love* sculpture, Scottsdale Civic Center Mall" in Best Public Art As Tourist Attraction/ *Phoenix Sun Times, 2011.*

especially in the case of antiquities. Rather, it shows that iconicity is dependent on exposure. But that exposure need not necessarily be tangible. The dispersal of digital images is equally as powerful in establishing iconicity as the experience of visiting a museum or gallery, but the interest generated tends to be short-lived due to the overwhelming quantity of material unless continuously reinforced. In February 2015, the photograph of the lace-striped dress went viral on social media. It became the most recognizable image in the world within a single day, receiving hundreds of thousands of views per minute. It was not beautiful, or historically important, or inherently valuable, but it generated interest. The difference between a digital image of this sort and a work of art in a museum is that the interest is extremely widespread for a very short period of time— in this case, enduring for several weeks before dissipating. There was a personal factor at play here: everyone who looked at that dress was interested in how it would look *to them*. So while optical illusions had always existed, they had rarely been so personal. As a result, an entire online community and sub-communities developed based on how individuals saw the colors in the photograph.[364]

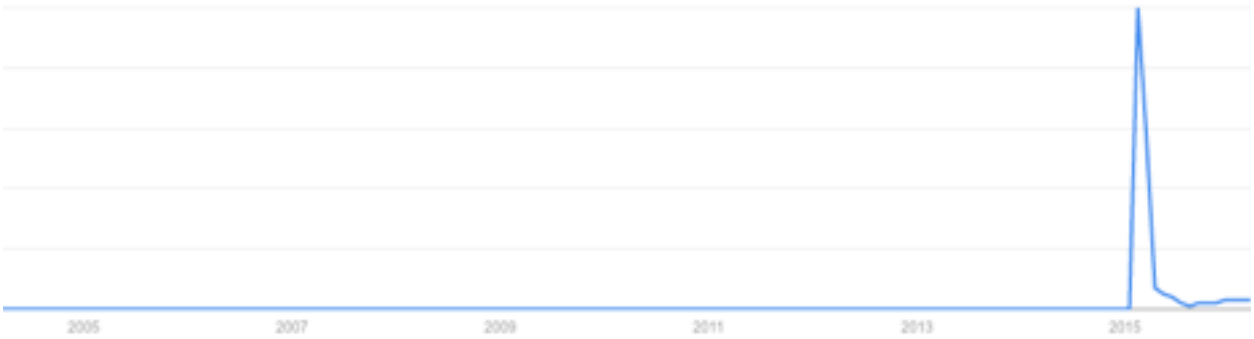

Figure 32: trend chart for #TheDress

364 There was significant social media activity over the "what color is the dress" camps—white and gold or black and blue. Taylor Swift tweeted on February 26, for instance, "I don't understand this odd dress debate and I feel like it's a trick somehow. I'm confused and scared.PS it's OBVIOUSLY BLUE AND BLACK".

These associations were short-lived, however. The trend chart for #TheDress (see above, search term in English), for example, spikes on February 26, 2015 and tapers by April of the same year. Although there is more to this story than internet virality, we might learn something about generating public interest in previously unpopular works of art, and why objects become popular in the first place. While exposure is inevitably the first, initial step in this process, relatability and the formation of identities and communities are equally as important for sustaining engagement. People cared about the photograph of an unknown woman's dress for a wedding because it could tell them something about the way they themselves perceived the outside world.

Standing Room Only

How might this information shape our understanding of the ways visitors engage with what they see on display in a museum? This study adopts both macro- and micro-lenses in order to take into account both the broader social spectrum of engagement and individual behavior. Ethnography, surveys, and big data synthesis through social media platforms helped shape these results. Methods included simply observing visitors and their general trajectories through the Classical galleries, measuring the time spent by lone visitors, couples, friends and tour groups, and monitoring traffic-flow from icon to icon. The behaviors visitors performed while in the presence of what they considered a masterpiece were also recorded.

Visitor observation was carried out systematically at five separate junctures throughout the museum: at the Venus de Milo gallery, at the Auxerre Maiden, at the Cheramyes Kore, at the Winged Victory, and at the Mona Lisa. In addition, for six weeks, a social media data-net was "placed," so to speak, over the Louvre, so that every Tweet, Instagram post, and Facebook mention of the works of art discussed here—The Venus de Milo, the Nike of

Samothrace, the Cheramyes Kore from Samos, and the Auxerre Maiden—could be tabulated and ranked by location, popularity and sentiment (positive, negative or neutral).[365] Sentiments were assigned using a standard sentiment analysis algorithm that takes into account the language used while controlling for other factors, such as whether a sentence is subjective or objective, the frequency of words used, the presence of negations, etc. All of this data was automatically Geo-tagged within 3-90 feet of the location posted, which allowed for a precise indication of where visitors were when they made their posts. This also means that posts that were not tagged with a location at the Louvre did not show up in the data-net, and were discounted from the data set. Up to 12% of people geo-tag their Tweets, but notably more (up to 75% of people) tag their Instagram posts.[366] While these data sets are not comprehensive, they allow for a bigger picture analysis than would otherwise be possible through ethnographic surveys. The techniques allowed a metric for tracking which works of art were the most engaging to visitors, and the modes of engagement most commonly employed.

The results clearly showed which works of art visitors were most interested in. While there had been mentions in the media about the restoration and reinstallation of the Nike of Samothrace, the majority of visitors were still primarily interested in the Venus de Milo. Out of 2, 646 total Tweets tagged at the Louvre, 23 were about the Venus de Milo, and only 8 were about the Winged Victory. Out of 20,363 Instagram posts, 172 were about Venus de Milo, and 31 were about the Winged Victory. It is worth noting that while the Venus de Milo received the most posts of any piece from the Classical galleries, the Mona Lisa received more tags in a single day than the Venus did in a month (see below).

[365] This is essentially a social media analytics platform that enables the processing of larger data sets. For this project, the platform was hosted by Welink, a tech startup based in Silicon Valley.

[366] Numbers based on analytics from the Welink data-net at the time of this study (July through September, 2014). The actual percentages of geotags across platforms is disputed, and more difficult to tabulate, so these numbers represent estimates.

Figure 33: Numbers of posts about the Venus de Milo, Winged Victory and Mona Lisa over the course of a six week period from August to September, 2014. Note the absence of any social media interest in non-iconic works such as the Cheramyes Kore or Auxerre Maiden.

No study of modes of viewership can be totalizing, and these numbers are not meant to show statistical rigor. They do show, however, where interest lies: which pieces visitors most wanted to be seen with, which pieces were worth documenting. In-gallery observations confirmed this data: the Venus de Milo gallery was more crowded than other Classical

galleries, and this was the space in which the most different types of engagement took place, whether photography, audioguide, sketching, or pantomime. For instance, in the Venus de Milo gallery 34% of visitors observed engaged with the statue through photography, audioguides, sketchbooks or other means (aside from simply looking). At the top of the Daru staircase, where the Nike is on display, only 20% of visitors performed these actions.

One reason for this difference is that the Nike is located en route to the Mona Lisa, and some visitors may only coincidentally cross paths with the statue. Another reason, though, is doubtlessly the difficulty in viewing the statue in the space given. The staircase is one of the most trafficked sections of hallway in the Louvre, which makes it challenging to actually spend time looking at the Nike. There is no place to sit, and only a limited immediate space for standing. The grueling museum experience has existed as long as the museum itself. In his autobiography, Henry James describes visits to the galleries of the Crystal Palace that might just as easily describe a battlefront: "I remember being very tired and cold and hungry there". No one is stopping to read labels in a space where they are constantly being ushered on by guards, and where they cannot comfortably observe the work of art on display, and the social media data reflects this fact.

In addition to getting less social media attention, the Nike also is looked at for less time by the average visitor. The average time spent looking at the Nike was only 48 seconds compared to the Venus de Milo's 74 seconds (see below). Would audiences benefit from more labeling explaining the extent of the restoration? Perhaps. First, however, they would have to be able to find a place to stand in order to read those labels. In spite of the difficulties in looking at the Nike, visitors still pay far more attention to iconic works than to those that are unknown, and evidence suggests that they may actually enjoy them more. The Cheramyes Kore and Auxerre Maiden were almost completely ignored by visitors to that gallery, with the

exception of the odd tour group. In some instances, these groups included the Auxerre Maiden in their gamut, but in many they did not.

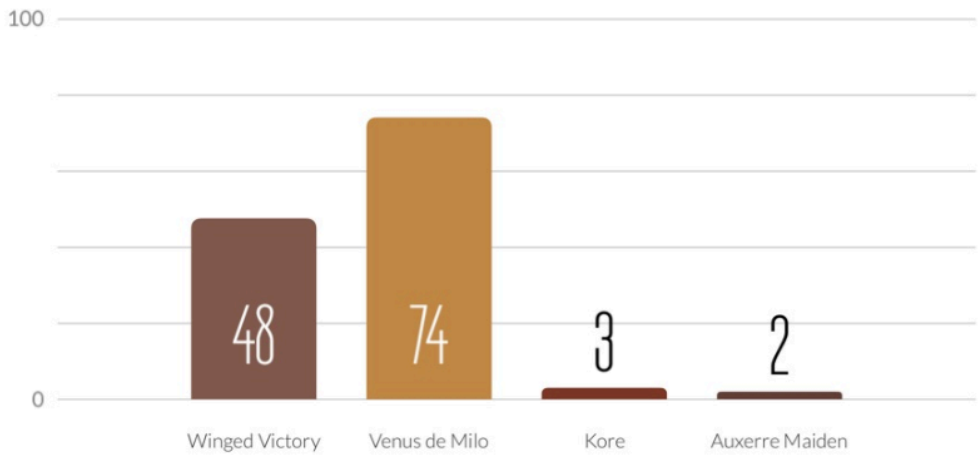

Figure 34: Amount of time in seconds spent with objects in the antiquities wing of the Louvre. These numbers include only observations of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, the Venus de Milo, the Kore from the Cheramyes Group at Samos, and the Auxerre Maiden.

Visitors might spend more time with the Nike of Samothrace under more favorable circumstances. Beyoncé and Jay-Z, in fact, recently visited the Louvre on a Tuesday, when the museum is closed to the public, and did much the same thing as every other visitor: take selfies of their highlights. Their highlight works, based on these pictures, included the Winged Victory and the Mona Lisa, but not, surprisingly, the Venus de Milo. Although there are many possible reasons for why this might be—taste, whim, etc.—the most obvious explanation is that the Daru staircase with the Nike at its peak simply provided a better backdrop for their family photo. Here is another pattern that emerged throughout the Louvre, and spanned cultural, generational, and class demographics. That is, interacting with iconic pieces through the lens of a camera (or an iPhone, iPad or other device) was more common than simply looking with the naked eye. This was only true for iconic works, however, such as

the Venus or Winged Victory. When confronted with a piece they did not recognize immediately, most visitors were more inclined to look but not to document their interaction. Even so, allowing visitors to engage with works of art on display through these literal lenses gives them ownership of works of art that may otherwise seem inaccessible.

While it is impossible to gather real data on first impressions and expectations of a museum experience, some of these metrics speak to that problem. Of the objects in the Louvre's ancient art collection, the Nike also received fewer references in Twitter and Instagram posts than the Venus de Milo, but both of these combined could not rival the Mona Lisa, which exceeded every work of ancient art in social media mentions. While the Mona Lisa garners most of the Instagram attention, like the Nike of Samothrace, visitors do not spend much time actually looking at the painting. That gallery is the most crowded space in the museum, and getting close enough to look at da Vinci's work requires patience and determination. This, of course, is not surprising. What is, however, is that both the Mona Lisa and the Nike suffer from audience misconceptions of their authenticity.[367]

In the case of the Nike, audiences generally like what they see. But with the Mona Lisa, they often do not.[368] Layers of applied, modern varnish, cleaning and the inevitable darkening of paint pigments over time have produced an entirely different Mona Lisa than the one painted by da Vinci.[369] In both the case of the Mona Lisa and the Nike, there is little

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[367] See here Chapter Two in this volume on the Nike of Samothrace.

[368] See, for example, *The Guardian*'s "Smile Please" (http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2004/oct/19/art.france) about how the *Mona Lisa* is the most disappointing work of art in any museum collection. It also appears on various lists of most disappointing works (i.e., "Nine Most Disappointing Attractions In Europe [http://www.bootsnall.com/articles/09-03/nine-most-disappointing-attractions-europe.html], "The 10 most overrated and disappointing landmarks [http://www.europeish.com/overrated-disappointing-landmarks/]).

[369] Laurence de Viguerie et al., "Revealing the Sfumato Technique of Leonardo Da Vinci by X-Ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy," *Angewandte Chemie* 122, no. 35 (2010).

awareness that what audiences see has been modified by modern restoration. Past restorations may be irreversible, and it is unrealistic to adhere to the notion that works of art must remain unchanged over the centuries. The early restorations of the Nike of Samothrace do not diminish her importance as an exceptional victory monument of the Hellenistic period. For an iconic work with such a dramatic display, however, it is unfortunate that visitors do not spend more time with it. This is likely due to the lack of viewing and sitting space around the installation on the Daru staircase. Lack of comfort, in this instance, translates into less looking and less label-reading.

The sum of this data suggests that icons garner more attention in the art museum, but they are also held to higher standards. When an audience's expectations are not met, they experience dissonance and disappointment. So while icons are a means of getting visitors to museums, they may or may not enhance the viewing experience depending on their display. Even so, visitors do not just spend more time with iconic works of art to the exclusion of others; they may actually enjoy them more. This becomes a self-enforcing paradigm, then: they like iconic works because their value has already been established, and they actually experience more pleasure when seeing those works of art because they are iconic. A Stanford study showed that when subjects knew they were drinking more expensive wine, their brains actually registered a more pleasurable experience though blood-oxygen-level-dependent activity in the medial orbitofrontal cortex. This was true even when a cheap bottle of wine was

said to be expensive.[370] Further, there is a correlation between a neural rewards-processing response and the perception of value.[371]

Thus far this data has largely been applied to marketing strategies, but museums could learn something from it as well. When an object is set up as most important, visitors expect to enjoy it more. The Louvre's guided tour of Classical art introduces the collection in this way: "Of all the works in the Louvre, the Winged Victory of Samothrace and the Venus de Milo are among the most admired: in their striking depiction of the human form they encapsulate the 'Greek spirit.' This circuit traces this artistic quest of sculptors who had an indelible influence on Western art."[372] So from the outset, visitors are told which works of art are the most important.

Another way to interpret this evidence is that perhaps visitors simply want to assign greater value to these iconic works in order to justify their visit to the museum. Several studies of visitor engagement carried out at the British Museum reported that visitors were "highly motivated" to reach "deep levels of engagement" with the exhibitions. For Inside The Minds Of The Masters: An evaluation of *Fra Angelico To Leonardo: Italian Renaissance* Drawings at the British Museum, Morris Hargreaves and McIntyre noted a "growing appreciation for [the educative and informative] style of curating amongst visitors.[373] Further, many visitors became

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[370] Hilke Plassmann et al., "Marketing Actions Can Modulate Neural Representations of Experienced Pleasantness," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 105, no. 3 (January 22, 2008 2008), http://dx.doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0706929105.

[371] Rebecca Elliott and Bill Deakin, "Role of the Orbitofrontal Cortex in Reinforcement Processing and Inhibitory Control: Evidence from Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Studies in Healthy Human Subjects," *International review of neurobiology* 65 (2005); Morten L Kringelbach and Edmund T Rolls, "The Functional Neuroanatomy of the Human Orbitofrontal Cortex: Evidence from Neuroimaging and Neuropsychology," *Progress in neurobiology* 72, no. 5 (2004).

[372] http://www.louvre.fr/en/routes/greek-sculpture

[373] Report of Morris Hargreaves McIntyre: "Inside The Minds of Masters: An Evaluation of Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance At the British Museum." Presented in August, 2010. 7.

increasingly interested in the subject after viewing the exhibition, and reported continuing their research in other sections of the museum's collection.[374] Not only did this include similar works of art—in this case prints and drawings—but also entirely dissimilar subjects such as an exhibition on West African sculpture.[375] Director of Research Jeremy Hill stated that the museum receives more complaints that there are not enough labels in their exhibitions than that there are too many, reflecting a strong desire to learn and engage with the material.[376] This suggests that there is a different means of engaging with material depending on the manner in which a museum presents its collection. If it purports to be the home of select masterpieces, which are presented as aesthetic contributions, visitors focus solely on those works. But when a collection is presented as educational or revelatory, visitors approach with a more open frame of mind.

This explains why, while the Louvre is the most visited museum in the world, the bulk of visitors remain only in sections of the museum that contain iconic works. The Islamic art gallery, for example, is almost entirely vacant, a matter made more difficult by the fact that it is almost impossible to find. In this way museums are themselves the victims of their own iconic works of art, which concentrate visitor engagement in a small section of the collection to the exclusion of all other works and narratives.

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[374] Ibid.

[375] Ibid. 17.

[376] In conversation with the author, 13 August, 2014, at the British Museum.

VII.

Conclusions

Iconic works of Greek art arrive at their status because museums required them and because they fit the model of what was valued at the time those museums were solidifying their positions as public institutions. For this reason, icons of Greek sculpture generally have several things in common. First, they tend to have women as their subjects, in spite of the fact that the nude male form was more common in ancient Greece. There are exceptions to this rule, such as the British Museum's Discobolus, but the female form—the Nike of Samothrace, the Venus de Milo, the Capitoline Venus—prevails. In Renaissance art, the male form is more emulated because the ideals of the supremacy of the male body were borrowed from the Greeks.[377] Statues like Michelangelo's *David* or *Dying Slave* are better known. Simon Goldhill traces this idealization of the male form to Athenian ideals of heroism and the culture of the gymnasium.[378]

Second, these women are often nude or partially nude, like the Venus de Milo and Nike of Samothrace. They are also naturalistic, Classical or classicizing in style and white. This is in keeping with the perception of Greek art prevalent at the time. Again, there are exceptions. There are works of Greek art that depict nude women naturalistically that are not as well known, as is the case with the Crouching Aphrodite. Purchased from the Borghese Collection in 1807, prior to the major Louvre restoration of 1814-1830, Crouching Aphrodite was too early to be presented as a part of that debut. The project, led by Louis XVIII and Charles X, added many new works of art to the museum's collection, and created a

[377] Simon Goldhill, *Love, Sex & Tragedy: How the Ancient World Shapes Our Lives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). 3.

[378] Ibid.

department for Egyptian antiquities under the supervision of Jean-François Champollion. Louis XVIII needed a boost in popularity after the events at Waterloo and the restoration of the art looted by Napoleon. In his *History Of The Reigns Of Louis XVIII And Charles X*, British historian Eyre Evans Crowe wrote, "If these acts of recrimination and vengeance [the repatriation of looted art], just or unjust, were confined to the capital, they would have done less serious injury to the cause of Louis XVIII; but all France came in short to be occupied by foreign armies."[379] Restoring a newly public museum as a national treasure, then, may have been a matter of life and death for Louis. Nationalism was at its peak during this time; Russians who invaded the cellars of Epernay were found drowned in barrels of champagne, and many small towns revolted against foreign occupation.[380] The Louvre represented the shift from monarchy to republic. It needed iconic works of art in this schema, to emblematize the national ethos, and to maintain the grandeur of what was formerly a palace.

The most prominent iconic works of art were displayed following this transformation, and were selected because they fit the aesthetic ideal of the time. Visitors see museums as authorities of taste and value, so when something is called "iconic," it plays a pivotal role in the socio-cultural narrative presented. This process of value assignation does not mean that iconic works of art are more popular; it means they were in the right place at the right time.

Understanding how people relate to the most famous works of art can help museums reevaluate the way they design exhibitions. Although Baudelaire found sculpture boring, re-contextualized it can be a powerful communicative tool. Contemporary artist Edward Allington writes, "It can be said that a large part of the pleasure, the sheer beauty, of sculpture

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[379] Eyre Evans Crowe, *History of the Reigns of Louis Xviii and Charles X: In Two Volumes*, vol. 1 (London: Bentley, 1854). 270.

[380] Ibid.

lies not within what Lucy Lippard has described as its classical sense – 'Sculpture, in the classical sense, is like architecture, necessarily stable (statue, as in stasis and status quo)' – but in its very instability, its almost sexual ability to reproduce."[381] Allington's approach is similar to the ancient Greeks'. For them, statues might have a real power over viewers. Tiberius, for example, was so taken by a statue of a young, post-workout athlete on display in the Baths of Agrippa that he had it moved to his own bedroom, and returned it only after there was a public outcry.[382] The Athenians were devastated by the theft of the *Tyrannicides* by Persia during its sack of the city, so much so that Alexander the Great vowed to return those looted statues more than a century later.[383] In novel contexts, it is perhaps possible to envision Classical sculpture in this light.

This was the case in the late 1970s when two nearly complete bronze statues of warriors were discovered off the coast of Italy. The bronzes are larger than life-sized, nudes, dating to the mid-fifth century BCE. They are housed in the regional museum of Reggio-Calabria in Southern Italy, where from the outset they sparked national interest (see the two statues below). Since their discovery they have sparked all manner of controversy regarding their origin, identification, and whether they can be attributed to the workshop of an artist.[384]

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[381] Edward and Dhaliwal Allington, Ben, "Reproduction in Sculpture: Dilution or Increase?," *Henry Moore Institute Online Papers And Proceedings: Sculpture and Its Reproductions* 1500, no. 1900 (1994). 1.

[382] Pliny, *Natural History*, 34.62.

[383] Arrian, *Anabasis.* 3.16. See also Pausanias 5.1-15.

[384] See the initial volume published on the symposium that was held in Reggio Calabria Luigi M Lombardi Satriani, Maurizio Paoletti, and Elena Lattanzi, *Gli Eroi Venuti Dal Mare* (Rome and Reggio Calabria: Gangemi editori & Casa del libro Roma, 1986).

Figure 35: Riace Bronzes on display in Calabria. Foreground is Warrior A; background is Warrior B. Image in the public domain.

The bronzes became so popular that they were adopted pop-culturally as sex symbols. They served as characters in a series of pornographic comics called *Sukia* about a young woman who loots art and resells it internationally. The comic's plot "documents the enormous phallic power of one of the Riace Bronzes [Warrior A]—right from the very first where he is seen in a vigorous embrace with the heroine."[385] Following the popularity of these comics, a line of erotic, life-sized blowup dolls of the bronzes was produced by a company in Milan.[386] This is certainly not the disinterested, Baudelairean approach to sculpture, but one more akin to Lucian's account of a love-struck admirer attempting to copulate with the statue of Aphrodite of Knidos.[387] As the authors of this volume (*Gli Eroi Venuti Dal* Mare) note, the fame of the bronzes was not just regional, but Italian. The statues became such symbols of national

[385] Ibid. 133.

[386] Satriani illustrates these in supra 136.

[387] Lucian or imitator, *Amores* 13-15.

pride that there was significant public dissent when they were temporarily removed from view in 2009 for conservation work.[388]

However popular they became in Italy, the Riace bronzes did not attain iconicity elsewhere, likely because they were simply not seen by enough people. They did not have the primacy of time and place that famous works of art in the post-revolution Louvre had. They are proof, however, that ancient sculpture—even unknown works—can spark imagination and public engagement under the right circumstances.

Although there is not a single definition of what an iconic work of art is, the range of iconic works is relatively narrow within each field. These narrow categories tailor the historical narrative of the museum to a predominantly white, Western male audience. It is possible to alter the perception of these icons and rewrite these narratives to be more inclusive, but this would require museums to change the way they present themselves and their programs to the public, as the British Museum has.

Beyond the art museum, there are greater implications here for the way we assign value to everything we see. Broadly, we assign value based on pre-existing cultural norms, which are partly determined by our own experiences, but strongly shaped by authorities in those fields. This is significant because it means that while the way we see things seems normal, our tastes may largely be arbitrary—the result of opportunism or chance.

[388] See Johnston, Alan. "Italy's 'abandoned' Riace bronzes back on show in Calabria". *BBC*, 21 December, 2013. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-25468964.

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