



# The Visual Cultures of Classical Greece

Prof. Dimitris Plantzos

# The Visual Cultures of Classical Greece

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

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# What is “Greek” about Greek art

*Reading:*

Plantzos 2016: 18-29.

[Smith & Plantzos 2018: 3-14.](#)

# https://eclass.uoa.gr/courses/ARCH667/



Εθνικόν και Καποδιστριακόν  
Πανεπιστήμιον Ἀθηνῶν  
— ΙΔΡΥΘΕΝ ΤΟ 1837 —

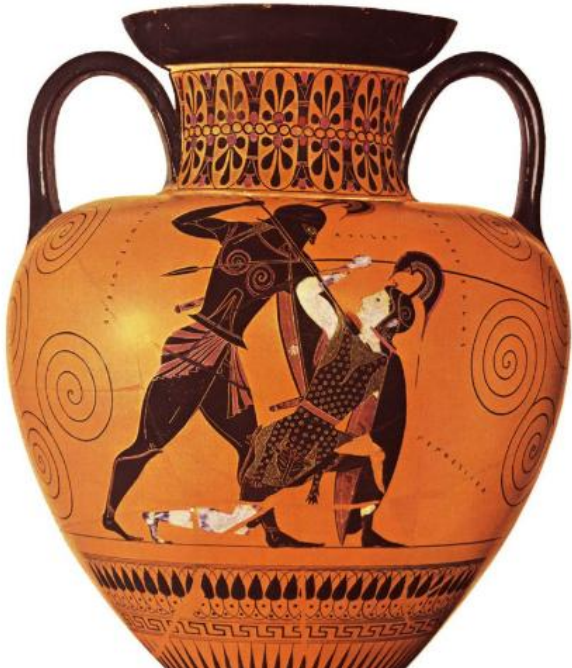
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The Visual Cultures of Classical Greece  
Dimitris Plantzos

Description



*Outline*

This course offers a comprehensive account of ancient Greek art, from c. 1200 to c. 30 BC, with an emphasis on its content, interpretation, and cultural significance. Several key themes will be pursued throughout the course: human figure and its representation; Greek art in its religious and political settings; materials and techniques; pictorial themes; and so on. Besides the better-known monumental arts of ancient Greece (chiefly: architecture; sculpture; painting), and the ever-popular vase painting, the course will also cover some relatively neglected aspects of Greek art such as decorative or luxury arts and coinage. After a short introduction on the arts of the Late Bronze Age (c. 1600-1100 BC), the course will cover the art and archaeology of the Early Iron Age (c. 1100-700 BC), and that of the Archaic (c. 700-480 BC), Classical (. 480-336 BC) and Hellenistic periods (c. 336-30 BC).

*Learning outcomes:*

By the end of this course students should be familiar with

- the main pr

More ↓



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## The Visual Cultures of Classical Greece



### Links

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Dimitris Plantzos Academia Site



Archaeology after the end of History



"For good ye are and bad, and like to coins": Why Bother with Seal-impressions



Nudity in Ancient Greek Art



Recorded lecture (7 December 2020)



Before mimesis



#### Categorised links



- There are no link categories -

# Art and archaeology of the Greek World:

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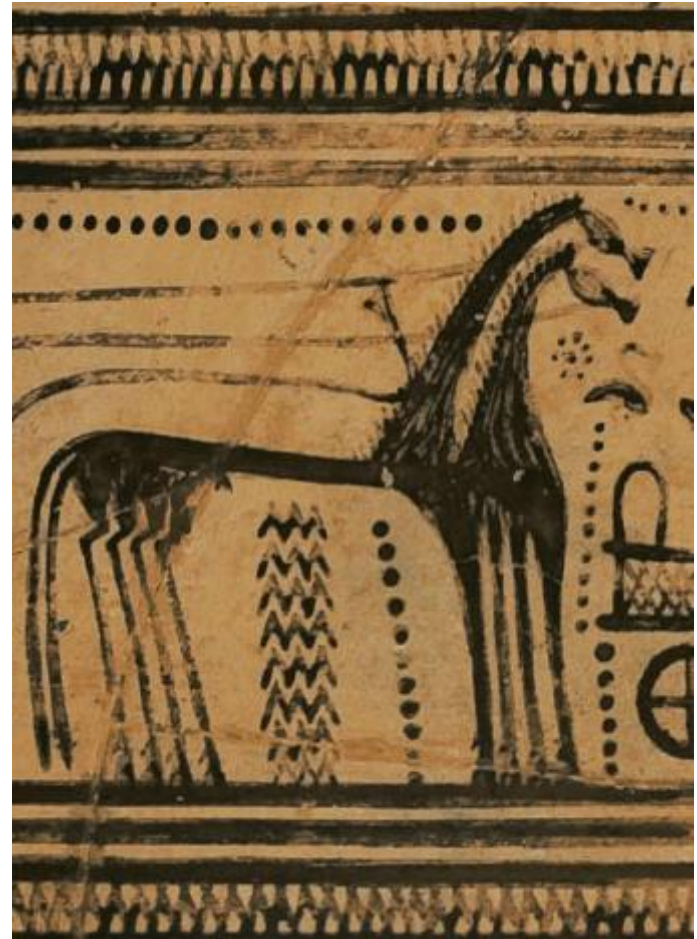


# Art and archaeology of the Greek World:

- Area today occupied by the modern Greek state
- With the addition of regions outside modern Greece:
  - Asia Minor in present-day Turkey
  - Southern Italy and Sicily
  - Black Sea area (present-day Ukraine, Russia and Georgia)
  - North Africa (present-day Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and so on)
  - As well as all the other areas where the Greeks of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC came into contact with different cultures (such as the vast regions of Central Asia for the Hellenistic period).

# Iconography:

- **ICONOGRAPHY** studies the form, content and meaning of images as they appear on monuments and every type of object created by any particular cultural group
- Images may be **pictorial** (or *iconic*), that is rendering recognisable forms or compositions of a narrative nature, or **aniconic**, i.e. simple abstract shapes and patterns.



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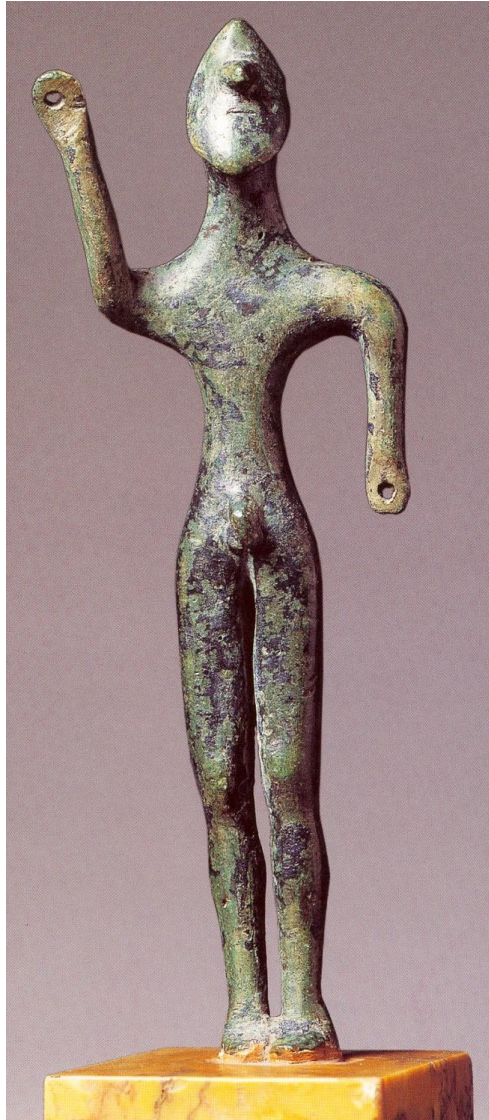
# “Style”:

- **STYLE** is the system of all particular technical and formalist elements, frequently idiosyncratic in nature, which differentiate a work of art from the works of other cultures, periods or workshops.
- In classical archaeology style is frequently used as a tool for the chronology and interpretation of the artefacts it studies.

***“style is any distinctive, and therefore recognizable, way in which an act is performed or an artefact made”.***

**Ernst Gombrich**



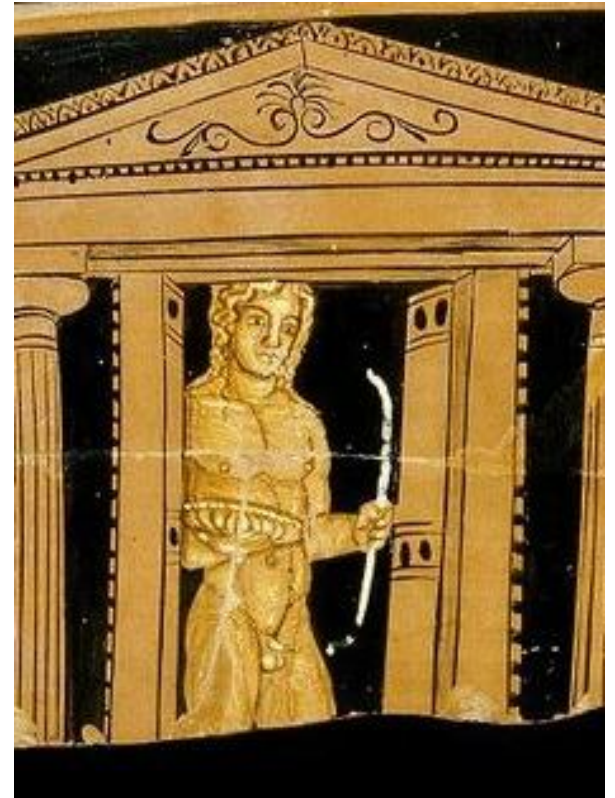












# Greek art's inherent qualities:

- **Anthropocentrism:** ancient Greek art shows a primary interest in the human form and its actions. By 'human form' we mean every manifestation, real or imaginary, and every human-like figure, mortal or immortal.



# Greek art's inherent qualities:

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



ΕΡΧΕΤΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΕΛΠΙΔΑΝ

ΑΤΙΝΕΥ

ΠΕΤΟΠΙΔΕΣ ΚΑΛΟΣ

ΜΕΝΔΕΣΙΕΑ

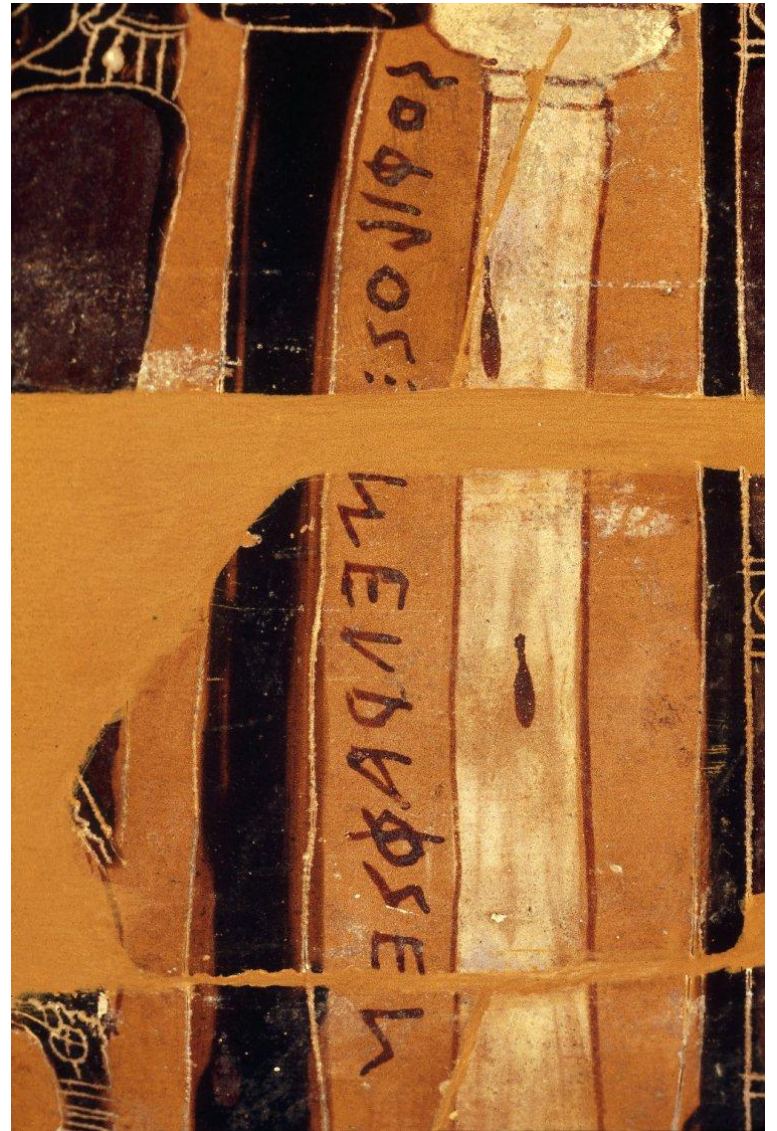












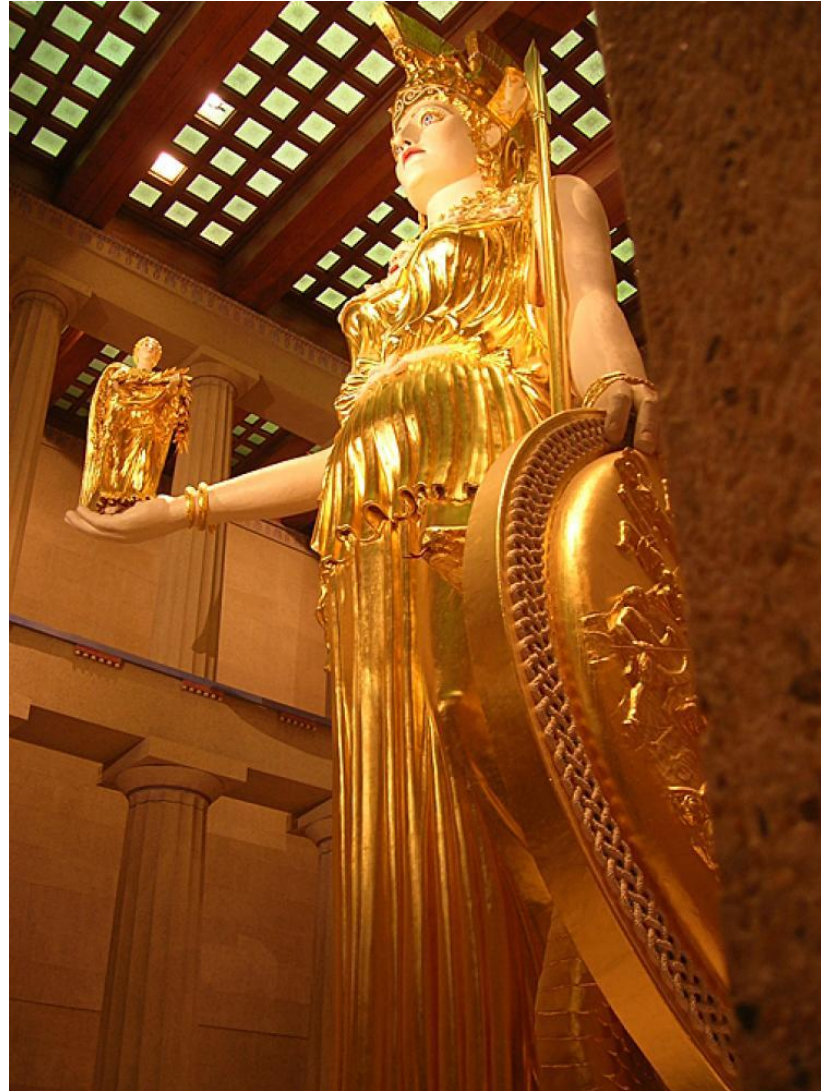
**Attic black-figure lebes.  
c. 580 BCE**



# **Greek art as social function:**

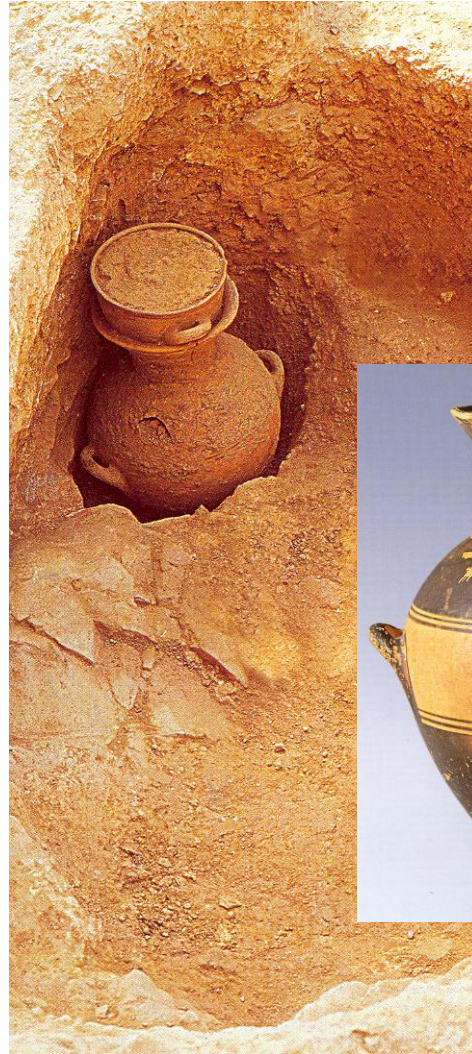
# Greek art as social function:

- Cultic



# Greek art as social function:

- Cultic
- Ritual



# Greek art as social function:

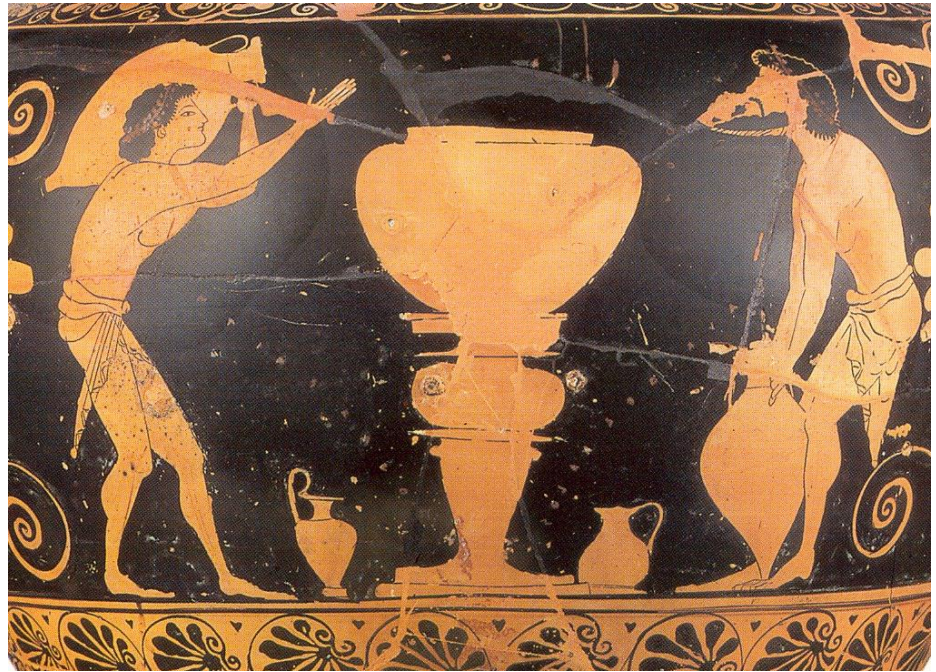
- **Cultic**
- **Ritual**
- **Political**





# Greek art as social function:

- **Cultic**
- **Ritual**
- **Political**
- **Utilitarian**



# Narrativity and story-telling

## *Reading:*

D. Plantzos, *The Art of Painting in Ancient Greece* (2018): 34-39.

T. Rasmussen & N. Spivey (eds), *Looking at Greek Vases* (1991): 37-56; 79-102.

A.M. Snodgrass, *Archaeology and the Emergence of Greece* (2006): 381-406.

A.M. Snodgrass, *An Archaeology of Greece; The Present State and Future Scope of a Discipline* (1987): 132-169.

Reading:

Plantzos 2016: 43-63

Survey:

Kaltsas 2007: 153-173