

## **Revolutions of Rotation: Ancient Arts in Modern Art History**

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**Seminar for “The Persistence of Antiquity,” Getty Scholars Program, Getty Research Institute, October 10, 2005**

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### **Lysippan *Apoxyomenos* (bronze, Vienna)**

The defining trait of classicism in the arts of the West, idealizing naturalism, is usually attributed to Classical Greek sculptors, such as the maker of this bronze athlete in the type of Lysippos’ *Apoxyomenos*, or athlete scraping oil from his body, thought to have been made around 350 B.C. At the same time as we see a smooth and sensual perfection of the surface and anatomy of the youthful body, we see normal resting ponderation, or comparative relaxation in the weight-bearing stance, and lifelike expression, gesture, and action, labile if restrained. But relaxed ponderation and open fluid gesture are not universal features of idealizing naturalism—even in Classical Greek tradition.

### **Apollo Belvedere (Phidian ?) – Apollo *Sauroktonos* (Praxitelean)**

Eighteenth-century aesthetics preferred the tense and static works of Greco-Roman *classicistic* style, like the Apollo Belvedere, which Winckelmann associated with the so-called “high style” of Phidias, Lysippos’ fifth-century predecessor, and which he *contrasted* with the “beautiful style” of Lysippan suppleness or Praxitelean easefulness produced in the following century. More important, the Classical Greeks, whether Phidian and “classical” in the narrow sense or fourth-century or later and “Hellenistic” in our sense, had no monopoly on idealizing naturalism—*especially* in the ancient world.

### **Bust of Ankh-haf, Dyn. IV (c. 2500 BC) (Boston)**

The ideal realism of ancient Egyptian art—exemplifying pharaonic canons of rightness and beauty—became known in the modern West not much later than Classical Greek art came to be “reborn”; it had famously been praised by Plato in the *Republic* and the *Laws* for its realism in his sense, that is, for its ideality. To be sure, Ghiberti or Michelangelo never saw the extraordinary painted-plaster bust of the vizier Ankh-haf, veristically showing this high official in the prime of his worldly authority. It was discovered near the Pyramids at Giza in the 1920s. But images of the gods and kings of Egypt were visible on monuments—such as the largest obelisk in Rome, the Lateranensis, erected in the Circus Maximus in 357 and re-erected by Sixtus V in 1587. By 1750 there was a wide diversity of Egyptian art in many European collections. But despite its ontological

intentions as reported by Greek and Latin sources and as visible on surviving monuments, Egyptian art was not seen *as* naturalistic. Rather, it was seen as “abstract” and “symbolic,” like the hieroglyphs to which it was related—not successfully deciphered until 1822.

**Painted “embossed” ceiling at Altamira (detail) (Giedion photo)**

Indeed, when naturalistic ancient arts continued to be discovered in the West, they could not easily be comprehended *as* essentially non-Hellenistic mimesis: the bulls of Altamira, full of dynamism and power, and closely observing their real-world models, were thought on their discovery in 1880 to have been made by local painters influenced by French Impressionism—for no “Paleolithic” painter could command such resources! We could multiply this story across the entire topography of ancient Inner Asian, Near Eastern, North African, and non-Hellenistic European arts—many of which persisted quite as stubbornly as Greco-Roman and “classical” arts but under very different umbrellas of collection, interpretation, and replication.

**The Pyramids (print of 1680, G/D 181) – The Ka’aba (d’Ohson 1790)**

So what gives? As my earlier mention of hieroglyphs suggests, from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century Egyptian images, despite their own kind of naturalism, were understood as quintessentially abstract even when they used the natural shapes of plants and animals—indeed, *because* they used the natural organic forms of plants or animals as well as the inorganic natural forms of crystals and minerals to represent *human* life. The most influential summation of this view was offered in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which such objects as the Pyramids and the Ka’aba at Mecca, illustrated here in prints Hegel could have seen, were said to devolve from a non-self-conscious “artificing” that “does not know itself *as* itself in its objects.” By contrast, Classical Greek art (like Greek literary mimesis, above all Homer’s) constituted its self-conscious naturalism in an *anthropomorphic* theodicy—the representation of gods and other cosmic forces in the form of human beings, intelligible *to* human beings *as* modeled on themselves. (Classical philology did not refute this view until the later nineteenth century in the comparative and anthropological research of Max Mueller, James G. Frazer, and the “Cambridge School” of historians of Greek religion, later abetted by Martin Nilsson’s reconstruction of the Mycenaean cults.<sup>1</sup>) For Hegel, the contrast between the “Egyptian” mode of consciousness—it includes Africa and Islam—and the “Greek” mode was categorical, though both produced persisting styles: the Egyptian mode, now antithetical to modern arts except as a superseded exoticism or archaism, had been overcome by the Greek mode. Of course, Hegel polarized the *non-anthropomorphic* products of Egyptian image making, its “geometric” architecture and theriomorphic icons of certain gods, and Greek sculptures of athletes and victors—mixing apples and oranges in the surviving modern record of ancient Mediterranean art. Winckelmann had already known

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<sup>1</sup> Especially *The Mycenaean Origin of Greek Mythology* (1932) and *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and Its Survival in Greek Religion*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1968). Of course, Nietzsche’s investigations should also be recalled here; Nilsson’s 1900 dissertation dealt with the Attic Dionysia.

better—for he knew that Egyptian art shaded into Greek art in the sixth century B.C. and that a good deal of surviving “Egyptian” art in European collections was actually “Greek,” that is, Ptolemaic or Roman in vintage. Still, Hegel knew that early Doric architecture was geometricized or technically quite “Egyptian” in his terms even if the temple, as an image or representation, was supposedly “Greek” in spirit.<sup>2</sup> And to give him his due, Hegel’s categorical distinction between Egyptian and Greek modes of *consciousness* identified a fundamental difference in the ancient modes of *representation*. Egyptian images were founded in a direct, axial relation to each distinct facet of an object—as ancient art historians say, in “frontality.” Frontal images tend to be laid out side by side across the plane of the format in “hieratic” and “paratactic” fashion—above and below and side by side or in rows according to rank or importance. To observers educated in Classical style, frontality appears non-naturalistic—for what we call Classical style always involves the *rotation* of frontality. But this rotation is a matter of degree. Indeed, it is *only* a matter of degree.

The persistence of virtualizing naturalism in images, ancient and modern, can be defined as a recurring tendency to rotate frontality—*whether or not* actual historical models of Classical Greek art, that is, sculptures or paintings showing the relaxed ponderation and labile gesture of partly rotated figures, were used replicatorily to make the image. In fact, Classical Greek art has *itself* been conceived to devolve from rotation—not, as might be assumed, rotation from Classical Greek art. For this reason, it is possible for a naturalistic and virtualizing style to emerge simply in the rotation of “Egyptian” or frontal images, whatever their historical location or whenever their historical recurrence—not, or not specifically, in the imitation of pre-existing Classical Greek models (i.e., mimesis in Winckelmann’s special sense of *Nachahmung*). Failure to appreciate this crucial point has led to many deeply misguided attempts to derive modern naturalisms—especially in perspective configurations that could never have been produced by Classical Greek artists—from Classical Greek naturalism, with all the attendant and often artificial problems of finding the supposed ancient “sources” or linking “survivals.” By the same token, but conversely, the rotation-inducing role of the many historical arts of frontality—Egyptian and Near Eastern, late Roman and Byzantine, Pre-Columbian and Amerindian, African or Hibernian—has simply dropped out of account, even though, to repeat, it is rotation in relation to frontality, not specifically the mimetic reproduction of Classical Greek rotations, that makes new mimesis. Ancient art history explored the history of rotation—in so-called art-historical

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<sup>2</sup> Needless to say, this has become one of the most exciting areas of research in ancient art studies—see, for example, Robert Hahn, *Anaximander and the Architects: The Contributions of Egyptian and Greek Architectural Technologies to the Origins of Greek Philosophy* (2001), for an ambitious effort, and the exciting—though highly technical—papers published in Manfred Bietak, ed., *Archaische Griechische Tempel und Altaegypten* (2001). Nannos Marinatos’ essay “Medusa on the Temple of Artemis at Corfu” in that volume addresses the “Egyptian” frontality of the famous iconography of the pedimental reliefs. Some of my own studies of Egyptian art have been devoted to the problem of the trans-Mediterranean mediation of these techniques and ideologies: “Plato and Egyptian Art,” *JEA* 65 (1979), “Ancient Naukratis and the Cypriotes in Egypt,” *GM* 35 (1979), “The Cypriotes at Naukratis,” *GM* 41 (1981), and “Egypt, Samos, and the Archaic Style in Greek Sculpture,” *JEA* 67 (1981). But they are now out-dated by the recent spate of publications.

*Strukturforschung*—between the 1880s and the 1930s, and I want to relate this historiography to our theme of persistence.

**Ptolemaic queen (c. 100 B.C.) (Berlin) – sculptural technique**

Heinrich Schaefer and other Egyptological art historians reconstructed the ancient Egyptians’ management of frontal imaging: in three-dimensional production, their method of laying out frontalized plans on all sides of the block to be cut down and then “rounded off” in making the finished piece.

**Section-contours – canon of proportions (painting and relief in the tomb of Hesy-Re, Sakkara, Dyn. III, c. 2620 B.C.)**

Various principles regulate these frontal images in Egyptian art: the principle of section contour, in which each frontal image must present the surface details of the object laid out across its widest section perpendicular to the axis of direct observation, so-called *Geradansichtigkeit*; and a canon of proportions for the human figure, giving the ratios of the heights and breadths of these section-contours to one another in collating a two-dimensional image, a “frontal-profile view” as it is sometimes called—combining the two or more planes of frontally-oriented section-contours used in three-dimensional sculpture on the *one* plane of two-dimensional representation.

**Panel of Hesy-Re (Kielland analysis) – detail panel of Hesy-Re**

Within this system, the characteristic “geometry” of Egyptian art can be defined. The frontal plane of the format, though it is not a projection plane in the perspectival sense, becomes coincident and co-extensive with the movement and expression—the represented lifelikeness—of the frontalized depicted figure. Simple proportional and geometrical relations organized on the plane of the format (distinct from the canon of proportions of the *depicted* human figures) inhere intrinsically *in* the well-proportioned depicted figure and vice versa. And the characteristic verisimilitude of Egyptian art conforms to this frontality: the depiction of virtual pressure, occlusion, motility, etc., occurs within its field, and no turn out of it suggests *hidden* aspects or *surrounding* space.

**Development of *kouroi* – Lysippan *Apoxyomenos* (Vatican)**

Sigmund Freud’s lifelong friend Emanuel Loewy pioneered the study of the rotations—there were several major episodes—that established the Greek style (or, better, styles) later identified as the Classical style of idealizing naturalism. A developmental sequence takes us from the late sixth-century *kouroi* through the mid-fifth-century “Kritios Boy” to the *Doryphoros* or *Spearbearer* of Phidias’ contemporary Polykleitos, that is, from the Archaic Style as more frontal and “Egyptian” through the Severe Style to the Classical Style as more rotated and “Greek.” But these neat Hegelian supersessions are misleading: questions persist about the relative frontality or rotatedness of each stage. Some of the *kouroi*, as surviving bases attest, must have been approached off-axially—constructing orthogonal access, virtually a “perspective,” in relation to the Egypt-derived frontality of the figure. Moreover, the more immense figures—some more than twice lifesize—required a “looking up” that also disrupts strict on-axis frontality. For his part, the Kritios Boy—he’s about *half* life-size—could be approached by an observer who probably could look right over his shoulders and down to his buttocks,

securing a multi-sided perspective on, over, and around the figure at one single standpoint. (In context, he was, of course, a figure of—and for—homoerotic envelopment.) In other words, the Kritios Boy rotates the observer *back* to the standpoint on the frontal axis of direct observation out of which certain *kouroi*—superficially they appear to be *more* frontal—had been rotated in off-axial and above-eye-level approaches. (The figure reduces the “aristocratic” remove of the *kouroi*, as Rainer Mack put it in his dissertation, to erotic-sexual subordination—desirability *as* accessible, we might say.) This mid-fifth-century reconstitution of “Egyptian” frontality as it had previously been replicated by the Archaic sculptors incorporates a collated multi-aspectivity (around the sides and over the top of the figure) that could only have been seen in actual Egyptian sculpture, such as the Archaic sculptors had replicated, by moving around it—an actual circumambulation the incipiently “classical” artist didn’t need here. But circumambulation *returned* in the *Doryphoros*—a Polykleitan re-rotation of the Severe Style’s de-rotation of the Archaic rotation. And so on. Loewy saw this history summed in the school of Lysippos. The *Apoxyomenos* integrated frontality *and* rotation—a frontality and a rotation that were at once depictive, in the steady forward gaze (frontal) and the ponderation (rotated) of the figure, *and* architectonic, in the on-axis approach (frontalizing) and the address to circumambulation (rotational). This Polykleitan and Lysippan *Vielansichtigkeit*, as Loewy called it, represented the technical and conceptual zeniths of the classical style in Classical Greece, probably accepted *by the Greeks* as “classic” (as *kanon* or rule)—classicism *as* frontalized rotation and rotated frontality in a stable détente.

Greek-classic *Vielansichtigkeit*, “canonical” for the Greeks, depends on many-sidedness—on actually moving around an object that presents a balance of frontalized and rotated images at any one of successive standpoints. Therefore it cannot be constructed in two-dimensional image making. Indeed, two-dimensional *Greek* image making—for example, in vase painting—remained more “Egyptian,” for despite its use of foreshortening it depended heavily on the paratactic juxtaposition of “frontal” and “profile” shapes. When *modern* painters began to replicate Greek vase painting, then, and despite their self-congratulatory rhetoric of new classicism, they actually participated in the long-term “Egyptian” persistence in ancient Greek art; despite a naturalism secured in classicizing imitation, their pictures had fundamentally “frontal-profile” visibility and section- or outline-contour definition. In turn, modern painters trained in this two-dimensional (graphic) pseudo-classicism could come to terms quite readily with the pre- and post-Classical arts of frontality if and when they became aware of them—making a seamless transition from classicism to, say, Assyrianism (e.g., Sascha Schneider) or Japonisme (e.g., Aubrey Beardsley). In Loewy’s terms, their pictorial procedures had never been truly Classical anyway—even if they were archaistic or “ancientist.”

**Painting in the Tomb of Nakht, Dyn. XVIII (c. 1500 B.C.) – An Architectural Prospect (c. 1460?, attrib. Laurana) (Baltimore)**

The Polykleitan and Lysippan rotations of Egyptian and Archaic Greek frontalities—the Classical styles of many-sidedness—were re-rotated toward the plane of the format when

“haptic” replaced “optic” configuration in the late Roman period. Alois Riegl’s analysis of immediately *post*-Classical art is the theoretical and historical twin of Loewy’s analysis of immediately *pre*-Classical art: the “Egyptian” mode of representation, intricately routed through the mediating “classical” rotations, de-rotations, and re-rotations, persisted in Byzantine and medieval styles—although these did not, of course, replicate actual Egyptian images in the way that Archaic Greek sculptors had done. For this reason, Erwin Panofsky’s comparison between “frontal-profile” composition in the painting of a pond in the Egyptian tomb of Nakht and linear-perspective projection in the Italian Renaissance, as in the Walters “Ideal City,” was not a mere world-historical contrast. Panofsky wanted to recognize interwoven ancient persistences as they had been defined in *Strukturforschung* from Schaefer, Loewy, and Riegl to Panofsky himself—research carried on by younger scholars of the relations between medieval and modern art, notably Meyer Schapiro, and between Western naturalism and non-Western frontality and “planarity,” notably by George Boas (*Primitive Art*), George Kubler (*Religious Architecture of New Mexico in the Colonial Period, Art and Architecture of Ancient America*, etc.), and recently David Summers (*Real Spaces*).<sup>3</sup>

Perspective preserves the axis of direct facing, or frontality, in the straight line of sight between standpoint and vanishing point that runs perpendicular to the plane of the format—the plane in relation to which the depicted objects are more or less frontal, as in Trecento configuration (more “Byzantine”), or more or less rotated away, by Giotto and the later Italian artists (more “classical”)—though certain purported replications of artifacts of Classical Greek art by these artists were, I think, legends projected backward by Vasari from a mid-sixteenth-century moment in which idealizing naturalism was imitated from surviving Classical Greek models as much as recreated in new rotations of persisting frontal figuration. Of course, the rotations of depicted objects in linear perspective are regulated by its naturalistic construction of the objects in virtual space. Similar constructions were sometimes essayed in Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman art (as Gisela Richter and others showed), but, as Panofsky emphasized in his firm contrast between ancient and modern perspective, precisely without the modern element of “Egyptian” *frontality* in perspective—the axis from the standpoint to the vanishing point perpendicular to the unified “projection plane.”

### **Panofsky’s reconstruction of Albertian perspective – White’s reconstruction of three Renaissance pictorial rotations relative to the projection plane**

In modern times Italian Renaissance pictorialists attained this naturalistic perspectival frontalization—not available to the Classical Greeks—because they reconstituted the persisting “Egyptian” problem of combining frontal and profile views that Classical

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<sup>3</sup> I am well aware of the partiality of this historiographical genealogy. In a full account, I would want to recognize the (under-recognized) contributions of Gerhard Kraemer (e.g., *Figur und Raum in der ägyptischen und griechisch-archaischen Kunst* [1931]), Friedrich Matz (e.g., *Early Greek Art*), Guido Kaschnitz von Weinberg (e.g., *Mittelmeerische Kunst: eine Darstellung ihrer Strukturen* [posthumously pub., 1965]), and others. In *The Vienna School Reader*, Christopher Wood has gathered and translated some salient texts, but the presentation to some extent suffers from its bias toward the “Vienna School” and Riegl’s version of *Strukturforschung*.

Greek art had already superseded in the Polykleitan and Lysippan rotations constituting its *ancient* naturalism. In refining Byzantine and medieval configuration, Brunelleschi and Ghiberti devised what Alberti and other theorists called the *intersection*—the method that integrates plans and elevations on the plane of a format to be addressed frontally but which depicts objects in orthogonal rotations (i.e., “recession”) relative to that plane.

**Florentine Baptistery (seen from Duomo) – Krautheimer’s reconstruction of Brunelleschi’s plan and elevation of the Baptistery in their “intersection” (first stage)**

The plans and elevations must have been constructed separately, and could have been disposed side-by-side—as in Krautheimer’s reconstruction of Brunelleschi’s procedures. **Panofsky’s reconstruction of Brunelleschi’s intersection (final stage) – Paronchi’s reconstruction of the finished “perspective”**

But as Panofsky’s diagram shows—I’ve added color so you can see what’s going on—the intersection *mutually rotates the plan and elevation into each other*, creating a virtual space that confronts us frontally on, and as, the projection plane. If Brunelleschi learned this from an ancient model, it was *not* naturalistic Classical sculpture—though Italian craftsmen as far back as Nicola Pisano had reproduced that style (imitating, for example, the “survivals” of sarcophagi and sculpted urns in the Campo Santo at Pisa). He learned it from *Romanesque* experiments, visible in the mosaics in the Florentine Baptistery itself, in unifying frontality and rotation—the *post*-Classical equivalent, we might say, of the original Greek canonical détente between frontalization and rotationality.

**Ghiberti, Isaac, Jacob, and Esau, Gates of Paradise, Florentine Baptistery (1429-52) – Kemp’s reconstruction of perspective**

But the late medieval invention of the intersection, an inflection or variation in Byzantine, Romanesque, and Trecento Italian pictorialism, did welcome the replicated *Classical* figure—for its rotation *away* from “Egyptian” aspective was perfectly equivalent, at this point in the historical persistence of the two great naturalistic styles of ancient art, to rotation *into* the orthogonally organized space of perspective. Indeed, perspective allows the classicistic figure to be *turned all the way around itself*, and to *face entirely away* from the observer, without violating the primary condition of frontality in that rotation—namely, that we directly face the image on a line of sight perpendicular to the forward plane of the projection of depicted objects. In perspective, the classicistic human figure can be freely pivoted, and differentially pivoted, in endlessly naturalistic permutations unified in a constant virtual space. This is an entirely modern construction. It is not a structural persistence of Classical Greek art, despite replicating Classical (rotated) figures when suitable—just as it replicates non-Classical (frontal) figures when *they* are suitable. Rather it is the outcome of the complex interweaving of several persisting antiquities—pre-Classical, Classical, and post-Classical.

## Revolutions of Rotation: Frontality and Mimesis in the Persistence of Antiquity Whitney Davis

I review a historiographical construct. Since Winckelmann (1763), ancient art of the West—material and visual culture from ancient Inner Asia, the Near East and Egypt, the Mediterranean world, and Europe—has been thought to persist in (or, better, *as*) two modes of perceptual consciousness and of visual imaging or representation. The first is defined as “schematic” or “conceptual”; it relays what Hegel (1805) called the “Abstract form of the Understanding.” Winckelmann identified it historically with ancient Egyptian image making (as did Plato) and with Etruscan and late antique (Byzantine) styles in the Greco-Roman tradition. But it includes many—if not all—non-naturalistic arts of the ancient world, that is, all arts unaffected by the so-called “Greek revolution.” In these arts, pictures of objects (including human figures) were constructed “frontally” (or, to use different art-historical terms, in *Geradansichtig-vorstelligkeit* [Schaefer], “aspective” [Brunner-Traut], or “on the axis of direct observation” [Summers]); non-depictive configurative interests—for example, aniconic pattern and “decoration”—play a constitutive role. The second mode is defined as naturalistic or mimetic—thus essentially involved with imagistic virtualizing, whether in painting or poetry—and it is identified historically with Classical Greek and descendant “classicisms” in the Hellenistic, Roman, medieval, and early modern and modern worlds. For Hegel, the contrast between the “Egyptian” and “Greek” modes was absolute and categorical, though both were ancient and persisting styles: the Egyptian mode, now antithetical to modern arts, was superseded by the Greek mode, which remains ancestral to modern arts—at least in Hegel’s day. But the development or transition from “frontal” to “mimetic” image making and (equally important) *vice versa* occurred in or as the persistence of antiquity, as Hegel’s dialectical philosophy suggests: that is, in the history of *rotation*—ancient, medieval, *and* modern. First, ancient art was characterized by a “rotation away from frontality” in the modulation of Archaic Greek pictorial modes (indebted to ancient Egyptian techniques) in *contrapposto* and chiasmus in Classical representation—most notable in the “many-sidedness” of later fifth and fourth century sculpture (Loewy 1900). But second, a “rotation away from multiplanarity” (i.e., a rotation of the earlier Lysippan rotation) defined the end of classicism *in* ancient art—the rise of “haptic” and re-assertion of “abstract” and “frontalized” images in the art of the later Roman and Byzantine empire (Riegl 1901). And third, a “rotation toward the unity of the plane” (i.e., a rotation of the Justinianic rotation of the rotation) defines the end of medievalism in the arts and the “renaissance” of a classical naturalism of objects and figures in the spatial framework of perspective (Panofsky 1925). Still, frontality can never disappear; mimetic naturalism or classicism is always a turning-away from objects or figures that must always be constructed in part to face us. Many different kinds of artistic archaisms and modernisms can be defined in relation to the putative classicisms constituted in rotations away from frontality (naturalism) and toward the projection plane (perspective); at the same time, inherent tensions or contradictions of modern

classicism—perspectival projection, despite its mimetic power, is also a planar image, and thus “frontal”—can also be identified.

**Seminar reading:** G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind* [1805], trans. J. B. Baillie (NY: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 704-12 (“Egyptian” artificer contrasted with “Greek” religion of art); David Summers, *Real Spaces: World Art History and the Rise of Western Modernism* (Phaidon, 2004), pp. 371-76 (description of “frontality”); Emma Brunner-Traut, “Aspective,” in Heinrich Schaefer, *Principles of Egyptian Art*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., trans. J. R. Baines, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1986), pp. 421-31 (frontality or “aspective” depiction in Egyptian art); Emanuel Loewy, *The Rendering of Nature in Early Greek Art*, trans. J. Fothergill (London, 1907), pp. 45-75 (classic discussion of rotations of frontality in Archaic and Classical Greek sculpture); Denys Haynes, *Greek Art and the Idea of Freedom* (London, 1981), 17-22, 33-37 (typical analysis of naturalism—in terms of non-frontalization—in Classical Greek art); Nikolaus Himmelmann, “The Stance of the Diadumenos,” in *Reading Greek Art*, ed. William Childs (Princeton, 1998), pp. 156-86 (subtle and specialized study of non-frontalizing differentiations in Classical sculpture); Benjamin Rowland, Jr., “Classicism in Byzantine Art” and “Nicola Pisano,” in *The Classical Tradition in Western Art* (Cambridge, MA, 1963), 88-95, 133-36 (typical discussions of classical naturalism in post-Classical art as non-frontality and para-perspective); Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, trans. Christopher Wood (New York, 1997), pp. 41-50 (the perspectival “rotation”).

**N. B.** Although there’s no need to do all the reading (Hegel, Summers, Loewy, Rowland, and Panofsky will give the main drift), please do read the texts in the order cited.

### Discussion Issue

Since the Renaissance, “the antique” (the culture of “the ancients”) has been a way of seeing or form of consciousness—an approach to nature and human understanding—identified with Classical thought and supposedly incarnated in specifically Classical art and architecture. I say “supposedly” because visual evidence (pictorial, artifactual, spatial-architectonic, etc.), though important in some contexts, did not play the dominant role in constituting modern ideas of the antique and its persistence; the primary evidence, of course, was textual and literary—largely dramatic, poetic, and philosophical. One might say (for argument’s sake) that ancient visual evidence really signified historically only when it could be aligned with the textual evidence of Classical thought—Laocoon’s sculpted body with Homer’s narrative of the destruction of the priest and his sons; Polygnotus’ putative monumental wall paintings with the virtualizations imagined in poetic ekphrasis of the “shield of Achilles”; the design principles deployed by Phidias and Iktinos at the Periclean Parthenon with the geometries and aphorisms of Protagoras and Pythagoras; etc. At the same time, the material infrastructures and objects of the ancient world—increasingly well known to prehistory, classical archaeology, etc., by the second part of the twentieth century—provide evidence for modes of visualizing and virtualizing—in pictorial, architectonic, and other contexts—that might well lack any

kind of textual expression or representation. Of course, the survival of Greek and Latin—i.e., the readability of the texts in modern times, regardless of the continuous material persistence of particular tokens of the texts—is a crucial, even the defining, aspect of the persistence of antiquity. But how has (or maybe *has*) the historical persistence of material infrastructures and objects changed, even contradicted and overturned, textually derived interpretations of the essential configuration of Classical thought, of “antiquity”?