

## THE “ART” OF POLITICS<sup>1</sup>

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**E**volutionary models of technical and stylistic development employed by Greek and Latin authors and their celebration of the accomplishments of individual artisans have greatly influenced modern histories of ancient art.<sup>2</sup> But ancient appreciation of “works of art” was also based on other factors, especially art’s function as a public form of expression that frequently served propagandistic purposes. In this paper, I examine a group of objects that offer an alternate lens through which we might interrogate the prevailing aesthetic frameworks of our art histories: artifacts removed from their original contexts and, for one reason or another, subsequently returned. Although multiple factors must have played roles in their movements, available evidence suggests that the ancients valued many, if not most of these objects for political, cultural, and/or religious reasons rather than technical, stylistic, or aesthetic ones.

Other papers in this collection address more directly than this one the similarities and differences between ancient and modern approaches to works of art. Examining restitution in antiquity carries some risk of over- or de-emphasizing parallels between ourselves and the ancients. Yet many of

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1 I am grateful to the editors for inviting me to participate in the 2009 colloquium in Philadelphia and for their perceptive comments on an earlier draft of this paper, which has also been improved by suggestions from the anonymous referee and, especially, the careful reading of Marina Belozerskaya. Some of the material herein was also presented to audiences in Malibu, Melbourne, Rome, and Pavia in 2007 and 2008, and the present paper has benefited from their comments. A short publication addressing the topic of ancient repatriation from a different perspective has appeared as Lapatin 2009. A longer version, treating all of the cases of the phenomenon known to me, is in preparation.

2 In addition to Tanner 2006, see, e.g., Donohue 1995, the papers collected in Donohue and Fullerton 2003, and Donohue 2005.

the issues attendant upon the movement of artifacts in antiquity are echoed in what we observe today. The return of ancient art has been much in the news recently: Athenian vases, Macedonian gold, south Italian silver, Anatolian jewelry, Greek and Roman marbles, frescoes, and other objects have been restituted to Greece, Italy, and Turkey by various American museums as well as by dealers and private collectors. Italy, for its part, has returned to Ethiopia the Axum obelisk and to Libya the Venus of Cyrene. Meanwhile, the University of Heidelberg has sent back to Athens a fragment of the Parthenon frieze, and Greece has returned a pair of marble statues to Albania. This early twenty-first-century spate of restitution has been much celebrated as a new chapter in the repatriation of cultural property—a kind of “sea change.”<sup>3</sup> But although the circumstances are rather different, the repatriation of works of art has a very long history going back to antiquity. (I am currently aware of more than fifty ancient examples.) And the underlying motivations—though today usually couched in ethical terms—are often comparable to those of today, for “art”—however we choose to define it—is a powerful and highly charged medium of communication that stirs up a variety of emotions, only some of which depend upon aesthetic admiration. It can evoke patriotism, social ideals, and historic associations; moreover, public art, in which category fall most of the objects to be treated below, is rarely neutral, for it is intended to make palpable concerns that are not primarily aesthetic but political, economic, religious, and the like.

Our knowledge of restitution in antiquity, like so much of what we know about the ancient world, is sporadic and partial, based on inscriptions and other preserved physical evidence, but also, for the most part, on literary sources that are usually concerned with something else. In every instance, there is much we do not know and much more that we would like to know. Nonetheless, these episodes, which concern some of the most famous ancient statues and other objects, have the potential not only to inform contemporary cultural property debates, but also—and more pertinent to the project of this volume—to suggest some of the ways the ancients applied other,

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3 Many items returned to Italy and Greece by American museums (including my present employer, the J. Paul Getty Museum) were exhibited in Rome and subsequently Athens: see Godart and De Caro 2007. These and other examples have been featured in the international press. For the application of the phrase “sea change,” see, for example: [http://www.artsjournal.com/culturegrill/2007/11/professorforaday\\_at\\_penn\\_cease.htm](http://www.artsjournal.com/culturegrill/2007/11/professorforaday_at_penn_cease.htm); <http://www.suzanmazur.com/?p=105>; [http://blogs.discovery.com/news\\_archaeorama/2007/12/index.html](http://blogs.discovery.com/news_archaeorama/2007/12/index.html)

non-aesthetic criteria when evaluating so-called works of art. For what made works famous in antiquity and provided their enduring histories was often the circumstances of their creation and the message(s) they were fashioned to communicate in particular circumstances, whether to a local audience or one further afield, through their materials, imagery, author (artist or patron), placement, or some other factor.

The earliest recorded examples of restitution known to me took place well over 2500 years ago when Assyrian kings refurbished, replaced, and returned statues of gods that they had captured from their neighbors. Limitations of space do not permit me to examine here the numerous examples recorded in cuneiform and Biblical sources. Suffice it to say that Sargon II, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, Cyrus the Great, and other rulers are reported to have returned captured images not out of altruism or any sense of ethics (the principal reasons put forth in contemporary debates), nor for aesthetic considerations, but rather as pawns in diplomatic negotiations or as part of planned, self-serving, empire-wide policies of religious toleration designed to bind together diverse peoples and simultaneously disguise the domination of subject cultures through the restoration of their native traditions.<sup>4</sup>

In the Greco-Roman world, too, the most prevalent type of restitution was a conqueror's return—for his own political advantage—of cultural property previously taken, from a third party, by someone he has conquered or even his own predecessor. Best known are the Athenian Tyrannicides, carried off by Xerxes I in 480 B.C. These were commemorative images of Harmodios and Aristogeiton, whom the Athenians honored as founders of their democracy (although Thucydides 6.54–59 insists that their unsuccessful assassination attempt was personal rather than political). The two bronzes by Antenor were the earliest known honorific portraits of mortals commissioned by the state. Their importance was evident in their prominent position in the agora, and their role in shaping Athenian self-identity was underlined by sacrifices offered by magistrates (see, for example, Aristotle *Athenaion Politeia* 5.8, Pollux 8.91), by epigrams inscribed on their base and recited in various contexts, and by replicas and representations in diverse media. Such rituals and performances served to transform space and produce a national *topos*. The Tyrannicides embodied several such

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4 Holloway 2002.278–88. See also Weizmann 2005.13–25 with Ezra 1:1–11, 5:13–15, and Jeremiah 28:2–3.

processes and thus were key symbolic resources for the nascent Athenian state—democracy embodied, as it were.<sup>5</sup>

Their significance evidently was known far beyond the borders of Athens, for while Xerxes' soldiers torched buildings and toppled statues as they sacked the city, they preserved these two figures and carried them off to distant Persia, deliberately targeting, it seems, these powerful Athenian symbols. Indeed, so great was the importance of the statues to the Athenians that, despite the destruction of their city, they commissioned replacement figures from Kritias and Nesiotes soon after the Greek victory. Today we cannot be certain how closely the substitutes followed the form of the originals, but they, too, were frequently reproduced (figure 15), indicating the continued potency of the images as political symbols. Then, more than one hundred fifty years later, when Alexander the Great conquered Persia, he sent not only shields to be hung on the architrave of the Parthenon, but also the original Tyrannicides back to Athens—and not on account of their aesthetic qualities. The historian Arrian twice mentions their return (*Anabasis* 3.16.7, 7.19.2), explaining it as part of Alexander's "gracious" reception of ambassadors from the cities of Greece, to whom he also returned "all the statues or images or votive offerings Xerxes removed from Greece."

Pliny the Elder (*Natural History* 34.70) also attributes the return of the Tyrannicides to Alexander,<sup>6</sup> but the Roman epitomist Valerius Maximus (2.10, ext. 1), credits Seleukos (probably Alexander's general Seleukos I) with sending the figures back to Athens, adding that while in transit, "the Rhodians invited them as public guests when they touched at their city and even put them on sacred couches. Theirs was the most blessed of memories, holding so much veneration in so small a quantity of metal" (trans. Shackelton Bailey). The Greek traveler Pausanias (1.8.5), meanwhile, attributes the return of the statues, which he calls "booty" (*laphyra*), to Antiochos, perhaps Seleukos I's son, Antiochos I (Soter), but perhaps a later dynast of the same name.

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5 On the Tyrannicides, see Simonides frag. 76D; Thucydides 6.54–59, cf. 1.70; Pliny *Natural History* 34.17, 70; Arrian *Anabasis* 3.16.7, 7.19.2; Pausanias 1.8.5; Valerius Maximus 2.10, ext. 1; Lucian *Philopseudes* 18; with Overbeck 1868.443–47, 457–58. See also Frazer 1913.2.92–99 ad Paus. 1.8.5, Boardman 1985.24–25, Mattusch 1988.119–27 (with references to earlier literature), Mattusch 1996.58–62, Stewart 1990.249–52, Taylor 1991, Miles 2008.26, Ferrary 1988.582–87, and Muller-Dufeu 2002.541–48, 576–77.

6 Pliny, however, attributes the statues to Praxiteles, which most scholars take as an error of either the author or the textual tradition. Corso 2004–07.130–34 nonetheless suggests that the attribution to the fourth-century sculptor might be correct.

Seleukos I is also credited with returning to Ephesos the statue of Apollo Philesios that Xerxes had taken from the Milesians at nearby Bracchidae (Didyma) (Pausanias 1.16.3, 8.46.3; cf. 2.10.5, 9.10.2). Pliny (*Natural History* 34.75) describes the lost bronze original, fashioned by Kanachos, as holding in his right hand a stag that was cunningly produced in such a way that its hoofs moved and a cord could be passed underneath each of them.<sup>7</sup> This novelty may well have appealed to the Persians, but, more likely, they recognized the figure's cultural importance, for the statue was a source of local pride and identification: it was the principal image of the prophetic god at one of his most important shrines and, like the Tyrannicides, was subsequently frequently copied (figure 16). Thus it is tempting to see the return of the Tyrannicides to Athens (whether by Alexander, Seleukos, or Antiochos) and of the Apollo Philesios to the Greeks of Asia Minor by Seleukos as closely analogous actions, undertaken by new rulers eager to ingratiate themselves with "old" Greek states by acting as benefactors and preservers of their culture, employing the materialized authority of the distant past.<sup>8</sup> By the late fourth or early third century B.C., the statues in question might have been recognizably old on account of their style or condition, indicating their age and thus history, but there is no evidence that their technical and aesthetic qualities were of any great importance to the Macedonians who returned them to their venerable sites of origin. Rather, it seems the repatriation of such works helped bolster claims of a shared past and Hellenic identity important to these new rulers of Greece. That the *kouros*-like Apollo of Kanachos and the Tyrannicides play key roles for modern art historians in describing a "revolution" of style that is often optimistically linked to the political change that marks the shift from the archaic to the classical period may be of interest to us, but it is not mentioned by the ancient sources.<sup>9</sup>

More consequential, perhaps, was the return in 146 B.C. to the

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7 See Overbeck 1868.403–07, Frazer 1913.4.429–31 ad Paus. 8.46.3, Boardman 1978.89, 180, fig. 185, and Muller-Dufeu 2002.

8 For the "euergetism" of Hellenistic dynasts, see, e.g., Pollitt 1986, Gruen 2000, Barringer 2003.244, and Stewart 2004. Seleukos, of course, could also have been imitating Alexander.

9 To be sure, Lucian (*Rhet. Praec.* 9) employs as an analogy for obsolete models of speeches "the antiquated works of Hegias, Kritios, and Nesiotes, compact, sinewy, hard, and precisely divided into parts by lines," but he does not refer explicitly to the Tyrannicides. For social and political vs. art-historical interpretations of the Tyrannicides, see, e.g., Samons 2001.141 with n. 27, Ober 2003, and Lapatin 2007.129–30.

Greeks of Sicily and to the North African neighbors of Carthage of monuments that the Carthaginians had taken from them. This time the benefactor was the Roman conqueror Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus. It is supremely ironic, of course, that we know about Scipio's magnanimity not so much from fragmentary inscriptions but from the speeches of Cicero, who reports that many of these monuments were subsequently stolen again by the rapacious Roman governor of the island, Gaius Verres.<sup>10</sup> But what were Scipio's motives? Returning artifacts to Rome's allies, or at least to Carthage's enemies, was politically advantageous, and it has also been suggested that Scipio was not only emulating Alexander and presenting himself in contrast to Mummius, who had destroyed Corinth just months before, but was also recasting himself and the ancient Greek cities of Sicily in a new patron-client relationship.<sup>11</sup> Cicero reports that the statues' bases were reinscribed, thus transforming significant local monuments into the gifts of Scipio and of Rome.<sup>12</sup>

Among the repatriated artworks listed by Cicero, the statue of Hermes returned to Tyndaris (*in Verrem* 2.4.84), where the god had an annual festival, has been recognized on coins, as have three statues Cicero mentions being returned to Himera (*in Verrem* 2.2.87): of the goddess of the Dawn ("Himera"), of the archaic poet Stesichoros, and of a goat. The goddess was particularly significant as the eponymous deity of the city, while Stesichoros was a famous resident.<sup>13</sup> Although I cannot, at present, say more about the statue of a goat that was also returned, it is clear that whatever their aesthetic qualities, these items were particularly important as the focus of cult, ritual performance, or the remembrance of historical accomplishment contributing to local identity, and that these properties made their return an emphatic gesture of restoring history, as well as rewriting it from an angle favorable to Rome.

Meanwhile, to the citizens of Akragas, in a seemingly bizarre case, Scipio returned the notorious bronze bull, fashioned by Perillos of Athens, in which the cruel tyrant Phalaris dispatched his enemies. This device, we are told, was fitted with a door and small sounding pipes in the animal's nos-

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10 Ferrary 1988.578–88, Miles 2002 and 2008.105–217.

11 Astin 1967.76–77 and Ferrary 1988.578–88.

12 On Scipio's inscriptions and their erasure by Verres, see Butler 2002.48–49; on erasure, re-inscription, and reuse in general, see Shear 2007 and Platt 2007.

13 For the coins, see Head 1911.190, 197; Calciati 1983.81, no. 13, 120–21, nos. 16, 18, 19, 20; and Miles 2008.180–81.

trils so that the screams of the tyrant's victims, roasted alive inside, would, through the ingenious acoustical mechanism, sound like the bellowing of the beast. Its inventor was its first victim. Just why the locals might desire the return of this instrument of torture is difficult to fathom. Whether or not it was judged a "work of art," the sculpture was a product of considerable *technê*, though hardly admired. In any case, according to Cicero (*in Verrem* 4.73), Scipio certainly had something else in mind, for he told the citizens of Akragas that he thought it reasonable for them to consider whether it was more advantageous to be subject to their own princes or to be under the dominion of the Roman people, when they had in one and the same object a monument to the cruelty of their domestic masters and the liberality of the Romans. (Of course, through its return, the bull also carried an implicit threat.) We cannot know whether Scipio actually made this remark, but it served Cicero's purpose to put into his mouth such words about the justness of Roman rule, a precedent violated by Verres.<sup>14</sup>

Among the other examples of conquerors returning for political advantage cultural property taken by their enemies, the emperor Augustus claimed in his *Res Gestae* (24) that he replaced in the temples of the cities of the province of Asia material that his adversary, Marc Antony, had taken into his private possession (Scheer 1995). This included a statue of Ajax that Augustus had found in Egypt, taken from the city of Rhoition in the Troad. This must have been a significant local monument, for according to Strabo (*Geographia* 13.1.30 [595]), the hero of the Trojan War, second only to Achilles among the Greeks, was buried and had a temple there. Recently, some scholars have linked this figure to the prototype of the famous Torso Belvedere (figure 17), a statue admired since its Renaissance rediscovery for rather different reasons (Wünsche 1998).

In any case, communal memories need places to gather and monuments to mark them. Civic topography requires landmarks. National myths and dreams need to be illustrated with sites, images, and artifacts.<sup>15</sup> Significant objects like the Ajax, whatever it actually looked like, had the ability to transform space, to provide a sense of commonality, and to furnish a lasting history. Removal of such a monument constituted an attack

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14 Perillos's bull was discussed by several authors before Cicero (e.g., Pindar *Pythian* 1.185, Callimachus *Aetia* frag. 46, Polybius 12.25) and others afterwards (e.g., Ovid, Valerius Maximus, Lucian, Pliny, Diodorus Siculus). The proverbial nature of the tale is discussed by Murray 1992 and Hinz 2001.19–126.

15 Hamilakis 2007; cf. Nelson and Olin 2003.

on such communal memories, while its return could help restore those memories along with the sense of identity—to the credit of the benefactor. If the modern identification of the Ajax with the Torso Belvedere type is correct, the statue might have had considerable aesthetic appeal, but style, too, could play into national myth and local identity inasmuch as such an over-muscled figure would certainly be meaningful for those who admired the great Homeric hero.<sup>16</sup>

Strabo (*Geographia* 14.1.14 [637]) also reports that Augustus repatriated other statues Antony had taken “to gratify the Egyptian woman” (Cleopatra), including three by Myron removed from the Heraion at Samos, where their base has been identified along the Sacred Way.<sup>17</sup> Two of these, an Athena and a Herakles, Augustus returned, but the third, a Zeus, he dedicated on the Capitol at Rome, erecting a small temple to house it. No justification is offered for Augustus’s splitting of Myron’s group, which must have originally depicted the introduction of Herakles into Olympus. The emperor cannot have been motivated by appreciation of the original iconographic concept. Perhaps given the frequent identification of Antony as a “new” Herakles (as well as a “new” Dionysos), Augustus sought to destroy the connections within the original group and thus to undermine Antony’s claim to heroic status.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, one wonders whether after Antony’s suicide and the repatriation of the Rhoition Ajax, some Roman wit might have quipped that Antony was now a “new Ajax.”

Many of the items mentioned above had religious import, but it is difficult to believe that piety is what principally spurred men like Cyrus the Great, Alexander, Seleukos I, or Augustus—or Claudius and Vespasian, who repatriated objects taken by Caligula and Nero, respectively<sup>19</sup>—however much they might have wanted to appear to respect the gods. For religious scruples often had clear political advantages. For example, according to Cicero (*in Verrem* 2.4.103), an admiral serving the Numidian king Massinissa presented that ruler with a magnificent pair of elephant tusks, of astonishing size, that pleased the monarch greatly. But when the king

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16 Technical, aesthetic, and stylistic concerns were never fully divorced from political, religious, or economic ones. For style as bearer of content, see, e.g., Fullerton 1990; for financial issues, see Lapatin 2001.

17 Kyrieleis 1981.129–30, no. 33; see also Scheer 1995.

18 I am grateful to the anonymous reader for this suggestion. See, e.g., Plutarch *Antony* 4 with Zanker 1988.45–46.

19 E.g., Dio Cassius 60.6.8 and Pliny *Natural History* 34.84, with Miles 2008.255.



learned that they had been plundered from the Temple of Juno at Melita, he sent the tusks back having inscribed them with an explanation as to how he had received them unwittingly and, on learning the truth, had returned them. Thus rectification of the sacrilege, like so much religious behavior in the ancient world, was exploited as an opportunity for self-aggrandizement (see, e.g., Rouse 1902).

A less successful case of repatriation to a looted sanctuary is reported by Livy (42.3.3–11) and Valerius Maximus (1.1.20). In 173 B.C., the Roman Censor Quintus Fulvius Flaccus removed from the Temple of Hera Lakinia in Southern Italy its imported white marble roof tiles in order to embellish a new temple he had vowed to Fortuna Equestra in Rome. He attempted to keep the origin of the tiles secret, but could not, and was eventually called before the senate where he was severely taken to task for despoiling a sacred building that had escaped the depredations of Pyrrhos and Hannibal. The senate voted to return the tiles and to offer atoning sacrifices to the goddess. Alas, in the end, the tiles were just dumped near the temple, supposedly because no craftsman could figure out how to put them back in place.<sup>20</sup>

A generation later, in about 24 B.C., a desired restitution failed when rebellious Kushite tribesmen invaded Upper Egypt, attacked Elephantine, Philae, and Syene, "enslaved the inhabitants, and pulled down statues of the emperor" (Strabo *Geographia* 17.54 [C820]). The Roman general C. Petronius sent ambassadors demanding the return of what had been taken, but the rebels refused to restitute an extremely high quality, over life-size bronze statue of Augustus. Rather, they decapitated it and buried its head under the steps of a local temple to Victory. There it could be trodden upon symbolically in perpetuity, or at least until it was found by British excavators in 1910. Although the bronze now in London (figure 18) is one of the best preserved images of the emperor known today, retaining its inlaid eyes, there is no doubt that its artistic quality was not the reason it was sought by the Romans or retained—in its damaged state—by the Kushites.<sup>21</sup> Here again politics, rather than aesthetics, provide the context for understanding the ancient significance of this fine object.

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20 La Rocca 1996, Jaeger 2006.404–08, and Miles 2008.77–79.

21 British Museum GR 1911.9-1.1; see Burn 1991.182, fig. 152; Jameson 1968, esp. 74, 83; and Shinnie and Bradley 1981. This provides, perhaps, a coincidental argument for retention as a means of preservation.

The Roman people themselves fared better when the Emperor Tiberius was compelled by popular demand to return the Apoxyomenos of Lysippos (figure 19). According to Pliny (*Natural History* 34.62), the statue had been erected by Marcus Agrippa in front of his Baths (its original location is unknown). Tiberius, we are told, had developed a “wonderful passion” for the figure and, unable to restrain his desire, removed it from public view, transferring it into his private bedchamber and installing a copy in its place. But the people of Rome rose up and made such a clamor in the theater that the emperor was forced to return it. Nothing more is known about this episode. Tiberius seems to have been moved by aesthetic—though not necessarily stylistic—concerns, but the passion of the crowd for this statue is less clear. It has been suggested that the protests demonstrate “that even the Roman populace at large may have had some notion of artworks as public property,”<sup>22</sup> and the piquant Plinian anecdote is frequently rehearsed in modern art-historical accounts of the statue. Yet it has not been subject to detailed literary or historical analysis. Art historians customarily discuss the Apoxyomenos in light of its adaptation of Polykleitan proportions, *contrapposto*, and movement—elements not, apparently, of great interest either to Tiberius or the Roman people.<sup>23</sup> I would tentatively propose that what the Roman citizenry desired was a form of justice. The statue was public property: it had been taken from Greece and placed by Agrippa in front of his Baths for the public’s benefit. Tiberius had removed it for his private pleasure, robbing them of their cultural patrimony. This case is made more interesting by the fact that although the statue did not originate in Rome but had been taken previously from Greece or Asia Minor, the Roman populace nonetheless had assimilated the figure into their own history.<sup>24</sup>

In this and many of the other cases discussed above, the ancient authors who are our principal sources of knowledge have an axe to grind against tyrannical abductors of objects or for their magnanimous restorers, so conclusions must be speculative. Still, some patterns emerge. Usually objects seem to have been restituted by someone other than he who took

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22 Stewart 2003.142; see also Boschung 1989.

23 Stewart 1978.169–71, 1990.187, fig. 554, and Moreno 1995.196–207, 321–25.

24 For Pliny’s moralizing, especially regarding the transfer of public goods to private hands, see, e.g., Isager 1991. For a modern parallel in which the citizens of a small town in Columbia have come to identify with hippopotami only recently imported into their region, see the *LA Times* of 20 December 2006: <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-hippos20dec20,0,4603981,full.story> (last accessed, October 2009).

them, usually a greater authority, often after the passing of several years. It also seems that in most cases, the authority sent the material back not for ethical reasons, nor on account of aesthetic admiration of the object, but rather as part of a calculated strategy to gain political advantage.

I conclude with what is a particularly telling case: the Eros of Thespiiai in central Greece. This statue by the renowned fourth-century B.C. sculptor Praxiteles was reputedly one of his favorite works.<sup>25</sup> Pliny (*Natural History* 26.22) recounts that the artist had agreed to give his lover Phryne the most beautiful of his statues, but refused to tell her which it was, so she had a slave burst into the room declaring (falsely) that his studio was on fire. The sculptor exclaimed that if the Eros was lost, all his labor was wasted. Thus Phryne chose that statue and dedicated it to the god, or his mother Aphrodite, in her home town. Centuries later, Cicero (*in Verrem* 4.2.4, 4.60.135) remarked that people traveled to Thespiiai just to see the Eros, there being no other reason to go there. The statue was also the subject of numerous epigrams preserved in the Greek Anthology (6.260, 12.56–57, 16.167, 203–06), and copies of it were distributed as far as Sicily—Verres stole one. Praxiteles' statue was later removed from Greece by Caligula, who brought it to Rome, leaving a copy in its place. The statue was returned to the Thespians by Claudius and taken again by Nero to be installed in the Portico of Octavia, where it was destroyed by fire in A.D. 80 (Pliny *Natural History* 36.22, Pausanias 1.20.1–2, 9.27.3–5). Back in Thespiiai, in the second century A.D., Pausanias saw a copy made by a certain Menodoros of Athens. If we are to accept the statements of Cicero and Strabo (*Geographia* 9.2.25 [410]), who also said that "in earlier times travelers would go up to Thespiiai, a city otherwise not worth seeing, to see the Eros," it would appear that in addition to piety—the statue seems to have been the focus of a local festival, the Erotidaea<sup>26</sup>—tourism, that most modern of concerns, was one of the reasons for the statue's restitution.<sup>27</sup>

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25 Eros at Thespiiai: Cicero *in Verrem* 4.2.4, 4.60.135; Strabo 9.2.25 [410]; Pliny *Natural History* 36.22; Pausanias 1.20.1–2, 9.27.3; Athenaeus 12.591A; Callistratus *Imagines* 3; Lucian *Amores* 11, 17; *Anthologia Graeca* 6.260, 12.56–57, 16.167, 203–06. See Muller-Dufeu 2002.1451–68, Gutzwiller 2004b, Corso 2004–07.1.257–81, and Pasquier and Martinez 2007.36–38, 348–59.

26 Knöpfler 1997, Pasquier and Martinez 2007.37, and Georgiadou 2008. Knöpfler suggests that the statue had been removed by Mummius after 146 B.C. and that its return by Sulla was celebrated by the foundation of the Erotidaea.

27 Of course, in antiquity as today, piety, pilgrimage, and tourism went hand in hand; see, e.g., Rutherford 2001. On the whole issue of religion and art, see Platt, this volume.

There are many other cases of objects repatriated in antiquity, and many other ways to structure an interpretation. More work remains to be done. Legendary episodes might be explored for their archetypal significance: for example, according to a variant of the Palladion myth (e.g., Silius Italicus *Punica* 13.51–81), Diomedes was compelled by an oracle to return to Aeneas the sacred statue of Athena stolen from Troy, which was subsequently housed in the Temple of Vesta at Rome.<sup>28</sup> Chronological or geographical investigations might also be revealing, though I sense that a statistical approach would ultimately be misleading on account of the sporadic nature of our sources. Still, it is important to remember how the transfer of objects across great distances could serve as a very real manifestation of the physical reach of one's power.

If we look more closely at specifically what was repatriated, we find mostly statues, because public statuary in the ancient world was a powerful tool for propaganda of various kinds, but also gold and silver vessels, coins, religious paraphernalia, elephant tusks, and even roof tiles of precious imported Greek marble. These items all had material as well as cultural value reflecting the wealth of their dedicators, their piety, ambitions, et cetera. Among the statues, we find not just images of gods, heroes, mortals, and animals, but also many creations of several famous artists: the sources explicitly name Antenor, Kanachos, Myron, Lysippos, Praxiteles, and others. These were admired—by some—for their technical, stylistic, and aesthetic features. Indeed, what made these works notable was their ability to make manifest to viewers the absent beings they represented.

In this context, it is particularly interesting to note that several of these statues, before they were restituted, had been replaced with copies that must have been intended to mitigate their loss. But such substitutions evidently did not succeed, perhaps because ersatz works by other craftsmen were less accomplished. On the other hand, it may well be that, as today, when “original” works are vested with a particular “aura,” the substitutes were deemed inauthentic. Certainly, replicas of Lysippos's Apoxyomenos and Praxiteles' Eros seem to have been unacceptable,<sup>29</sup> but at Athens, the two sets of Tyrannicides were eventually displayed alongside each other.

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28 See, e.g., Austin 1980.83–85 and Ando 2008.

29 Julian (*Orationes* 3(2).4.68 H.54b) reports that the wings of the ersatz Eros were eventually gilded, but the implication is that this attempt to enhance the statue only ruined its grace. See Corso 2004–07.1.278.

Whether the wide proliferation of copies of ancient masterpieces—as substitutes for the originals or as reproductions in other contexts and/or media—actually enhanced the value of those originals, remains an open question, and scholars continue to grapple with the status of copies in the ancient world.<sup>30</sup> Still, the desire of those who lost significant objects for their return and the willingness of those in power to return them, when advantageous, suggest that for the ancients, as for us today, there was something ineffable about *original* works of art.

*The J. Paul Getty Museum*

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30 See, most recently, Perry 2004, Gaifman 2006, Marvin 2008, and Junker and Stähli 2008.