Gods in Color

A History of Research and Scholarship on the Polychromy of Ancient Sculpture

- Color was extreamly important, and a lack of color only indicated that a sculpture was not finished, or under funded.
- The pygments used were very sensitive to light, and would faid quickly, unless taken undergound.
- The first view we had of the coloring was from sculptures that were buried or covered in ash.
- First attempts at recreation were primarily hypothetical, but factored in some observations.
- Some research has shown that everything on sculptues were painted, even whites were painted with white pigments, however it seems that geometric patterns in architecture was left unpainted.
- Optimization of ultraviolet photography to capture traces of polychromy in 1960s.
- Some methods used
  - UV fluorescens
  - UV reflactography
  - Raking light
  - Photography on orthochromatic film
  - Microscopy
  - Samples
- X-ray fluorecense analysis, measures chemical elements.
- Ultraviolet-visible absorption specturm analysis.
- The different methods are bettern at finding traces of different pygments, some do better with organic orthers with inorganic, some spot blues some spot reds.
- Bronze polychromy was done through combining alloys and metals, and the use of arificial patina by the use of asphalt lacqure and chemical reactions.

Web

https://www.cnn.com/style/article/gods-in-color-ancient-world-polychromy/index.html

- The paint would have protected the underlying marble. Because of this the parts of marble that remain are raised. This can help deduce what pygments, because some would have been more resistant and thus would leave more material, or a larger bump than the weaker pygments would leave.
- Some pygments absorbe light and reemit it at a different wavelength. Using UV-Vis it is posible to determin the absorbsion/emmision spectrum of

the pygments and thus reference that to a data base inorder to make an assumption as to what that pygment is.