

## TOPIC TWO: ART AS EVIDENCE

What is Record?

Historical Documentation

Characteristics of Art Movements

Art in India

Suppressed histories of Women  
Artists



Vinca Pottery, Southern Europe, 5000 BC

# Image as Record

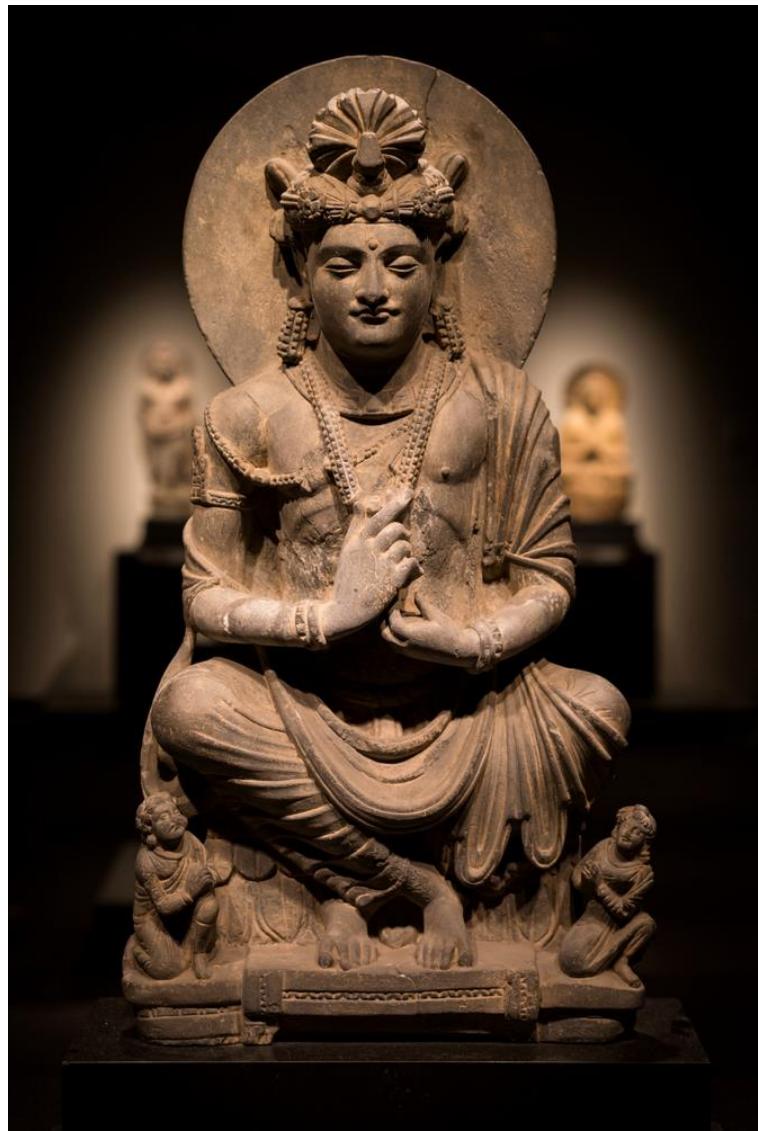
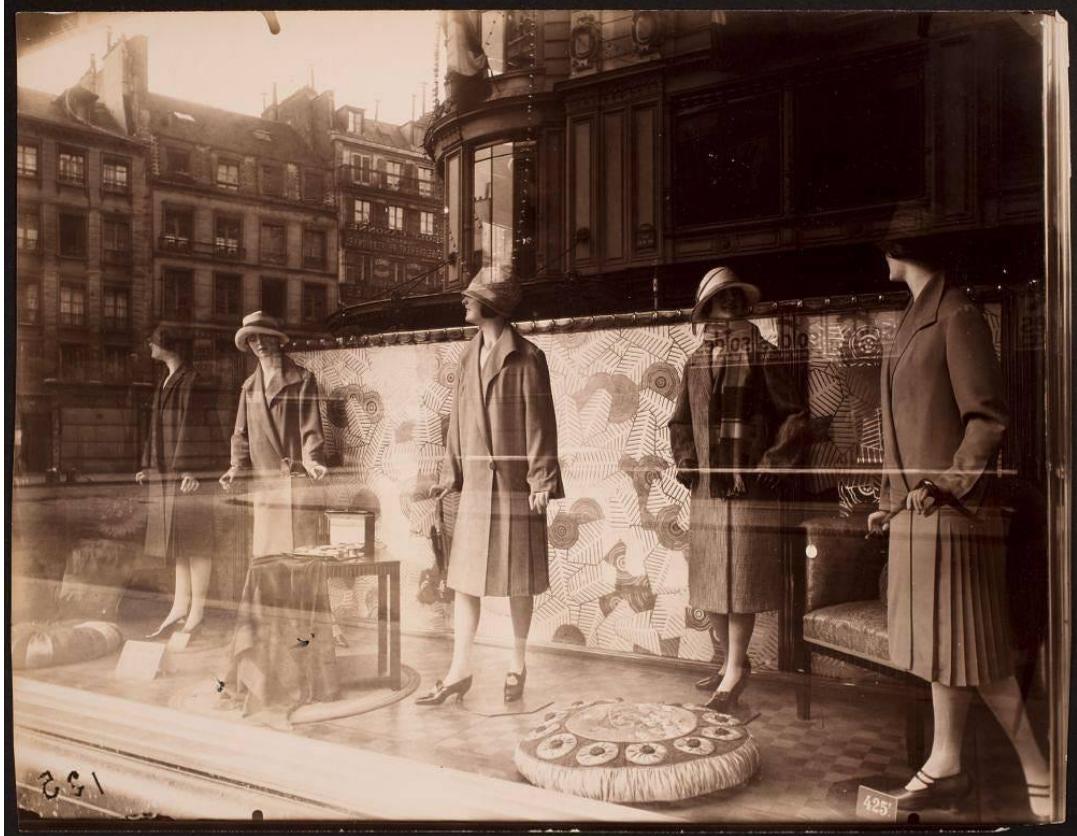
Record of What?

What does that say?



Left: Handprint from Chauvet-Pont d'Arc, 20,000 BC; Right: William Henry Fox Talbot, *Arrangement of Botanical Specimens*, 1838, Photogenic drawing negative

# What kind of Record is this?



Left: Eugene Atget, Photographs of Paris, early 20<sup>th</sup> century; Right: Bodhisattva, Gandhara, Northern Pakistan, Schist stone, 2<sup>nd</sup> century

# Fragmentary objects (pottery, textile, stone), evidence and historical documentation

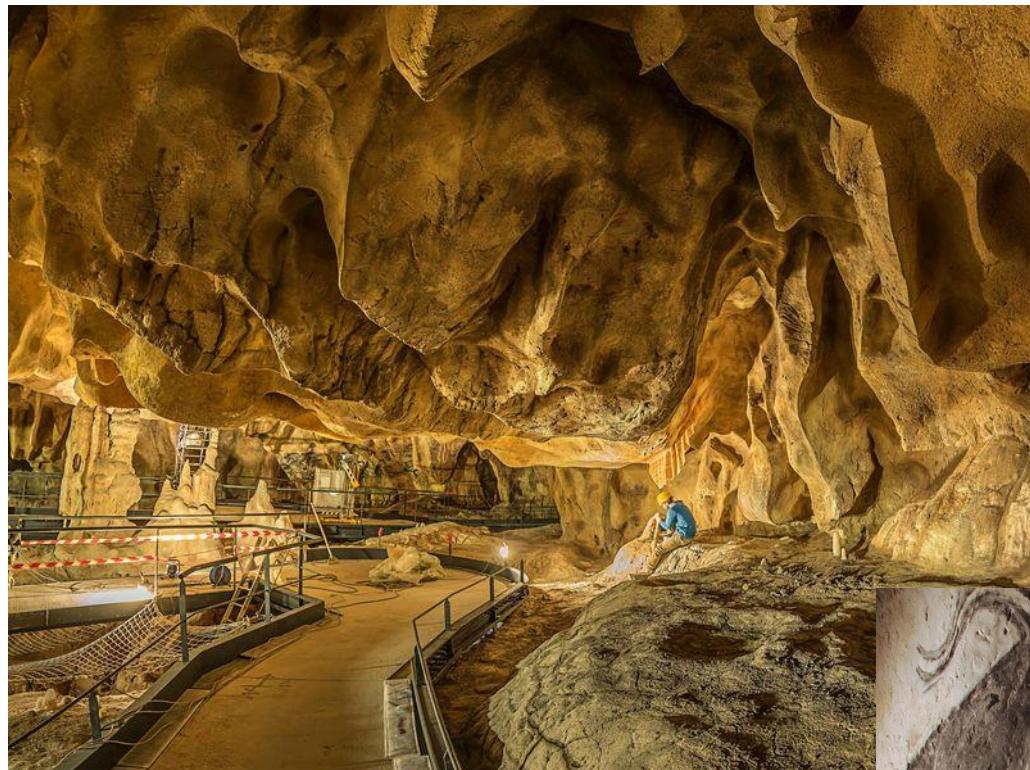
Durable and ephemeral



Left: Vinca Pottery, Southern Europe, 5000 BC; Right: Block printed textile, Gujarat, 13-14th centuries

# **Primitive Art:** Visuals and Objects as Evidence

Textual record?



Left: Replica of the Chauvet Cave, opened in 2015; Right: Bulls and horses, Chauvet-Pont d'Arc, 20,000 Bc,

## Object? Tool? Artwork? Evidence of What?

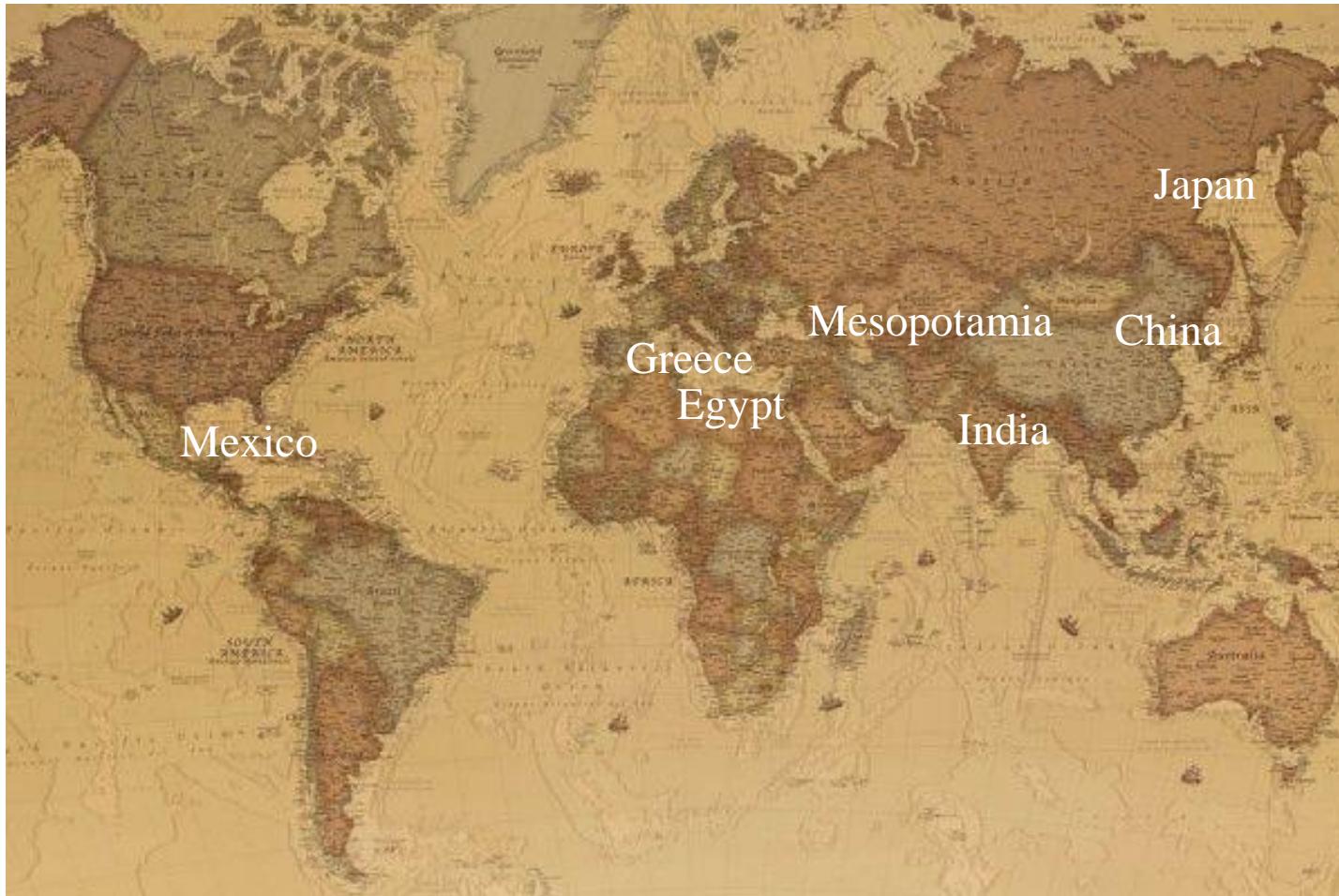


Left: Venus figurine dating to 28,000–25,000 BCE found in Willendorf, Austria; Right: Upper Paleolithic Stone Tools from France: gimlet (drill); blade; scraper; burin; scraper

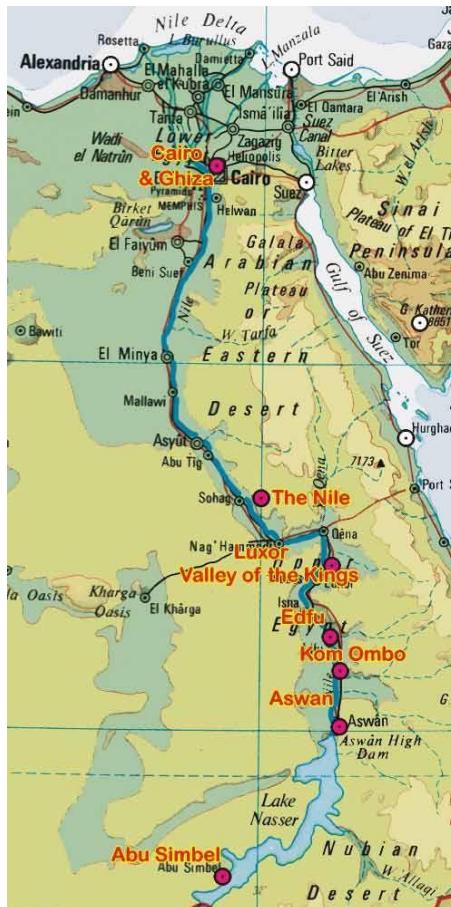
# Characteristics of Ancient Art: Features of Evidence

## Formation of Language: Visual and Textual

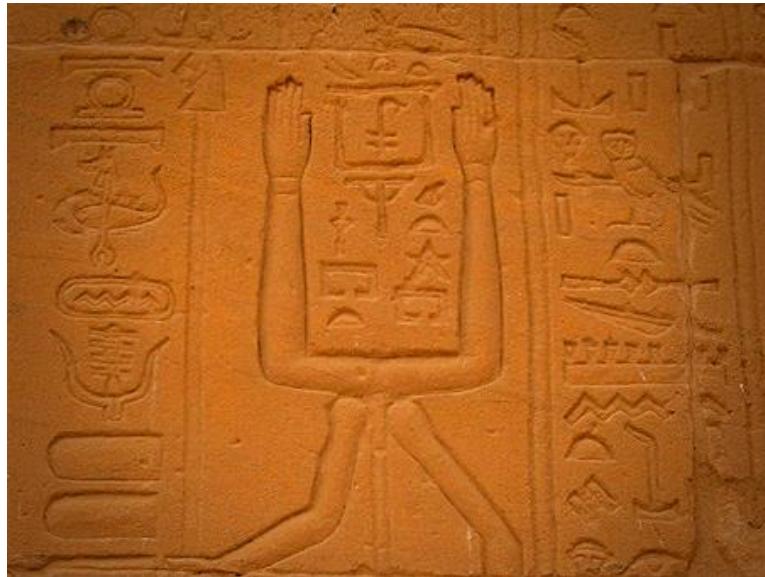
### Narrative



# Evidence of Language? : Image and Text in Egypt

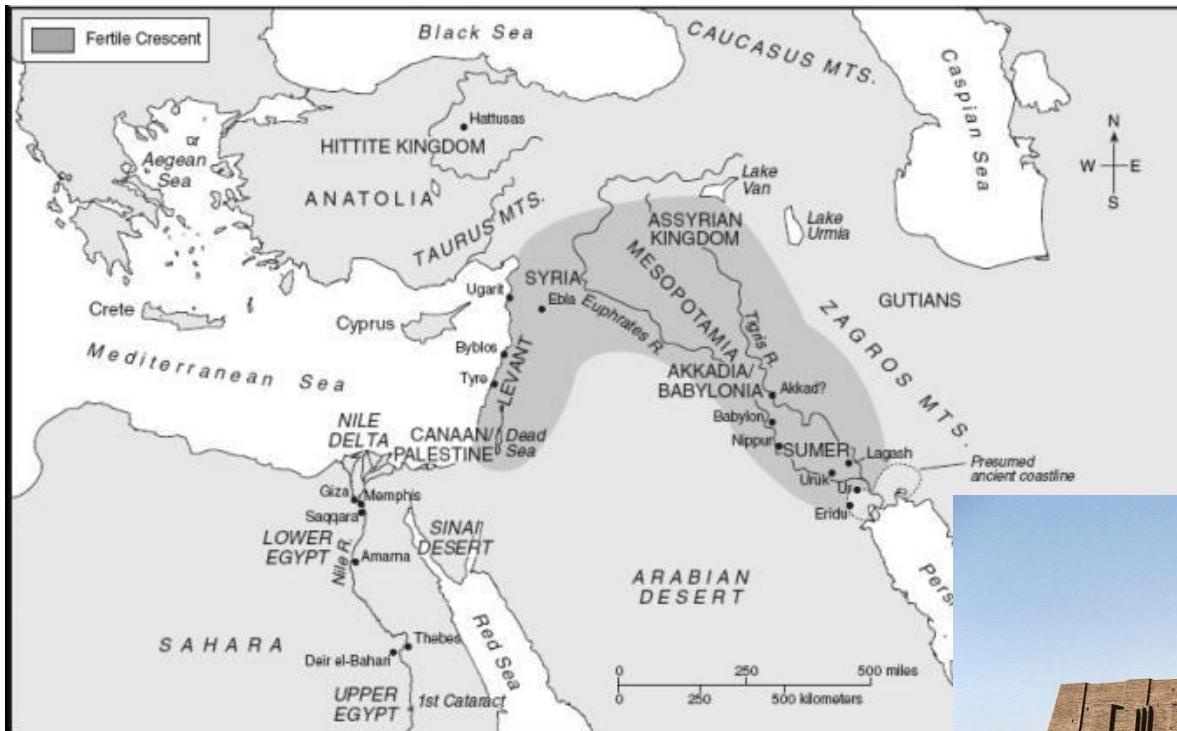


Left: Nile River basin; Right: Stepped Pyramid at Saqqarah, 3<sup>rd</sup> Millenium BC, Egypt



Left: Representation of *Khu*, Right (upper): *Ba*, , Right: A wooden coffin, 1400 BCe,

# Civilisation(s) of Mesopotamia



Left: "The Ancient Middle East, 4000-1000 B.C.E." Right: Ziggurat of Ur, baked brick structure, 2100 BC.

# Art in Sumer

## Script, Semitic languages

## Epic of Gilgamesh



Left: Sumerian “wedge shaped” script, cuneiform tablet, 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC; The Standard of Ur of a royal tomb, 2600 BC, possible theme: war and peace(?), Now in the British Museum

## Assyria and war narratives



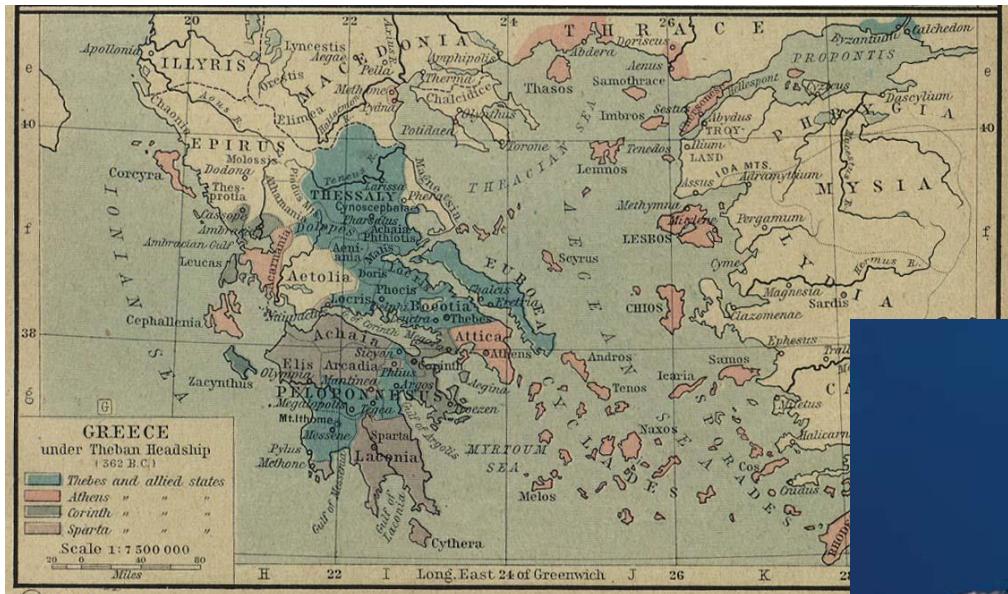
Left: Ashurbanipal taming a lion, 7<sup>th</sup> century BC; Right: Lamassu of Nimrud, 9<sup>th</sup> century BC,



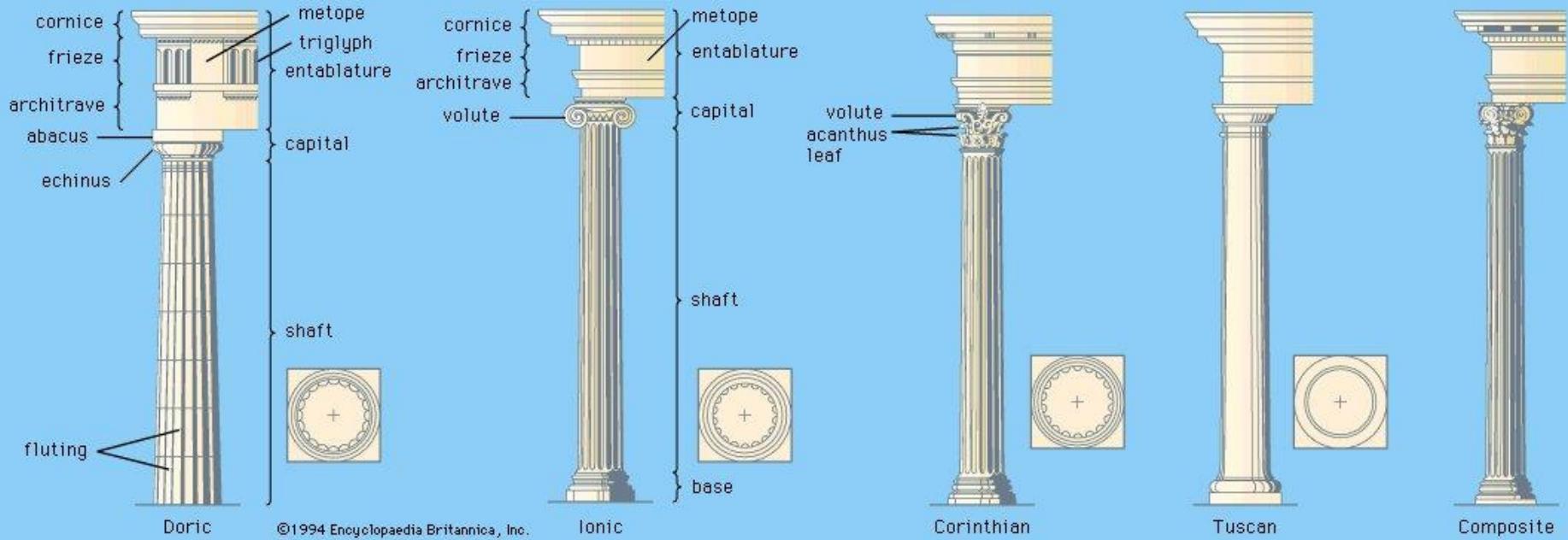
Left: Assyrian siege of an Elamite fort, 7<sup>th</sup> century BC,

# Greece and Classicism

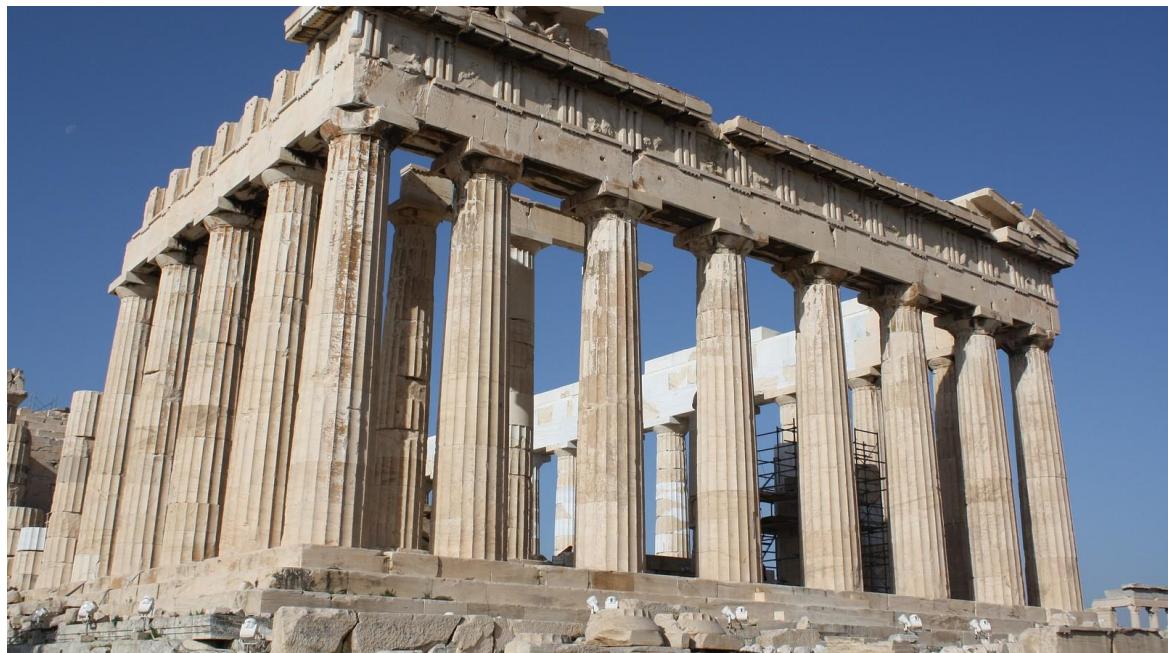
## Aesthetics, philosophy and Arts



Left: Map of Greece in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.; Right: Parthenon Temple, Athens, 5<sup>th</sup> century BC,

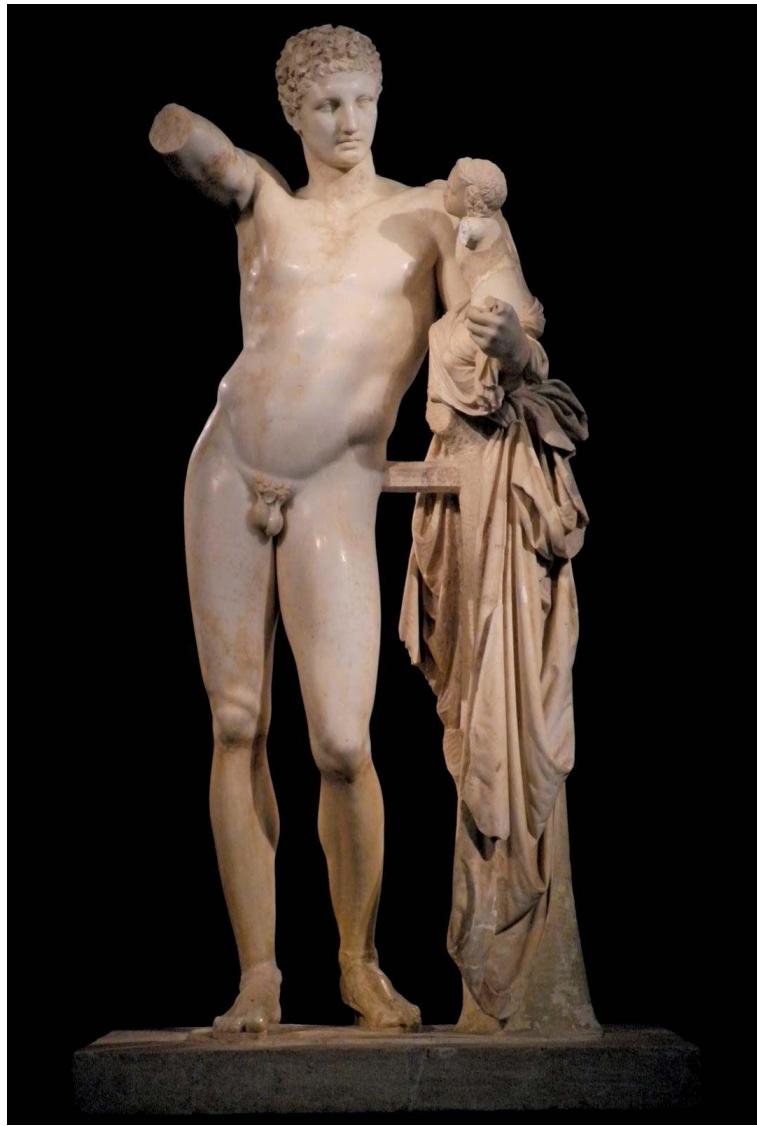


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Up: Types of Pillars; Down: Parthenon Temple, Athens

## Rationality, Human body, Anatomy: Their Interconnections



Left: Praxiteles: Hermes Carrying the Infant Dionysus, 4<sup>th</sup> century BC; Right: Praxiteles, Aphrodite of Knidos, 4<sup>th</sup> century BC

## Roman Art: Identified Portraits, Greek copies and Classicism



Left: Marble portrait of the emperor Caracalla, marble, h. 362 mm, Roman, c. 212–217 AD; Right: Three Graces, 2<sup>nd</sup> cen. Roman copy of a Greek work of the 2nd century B.C. showing Aglaia (Beauty), Euphrosyne (Mirth), and Thalia (Abundance)

# “Dark” or Medieval Era: Why “Dark?”

## Monastic institutions, manuscripts, scholarship



Left: A dragon; Right: Slaying a dragon, Early Manuscripts of Europe, 10-13<sup>th</sup> century AD

# Gothic Architecture: Is it really “Dark”?

## Evidence of Ad-hoc style

## Relationship to Classicism

architecture was indeed the greatest and most characteristic expression of medieval thought and technique. It was, however, a purely technical rather than a scientific achievement. The marvellous construction of vault and buttress, far more daring than anything the Romans or the Greeks attempted, was the result of a series of ad hoc solutions to practical difficulties. Theory did not enter into them at all, nor could it, for the theory of the arch, apart from working knowledge of it, was only discovered in our time. For the same reason medieval architecture contributed little, directly or indirectly, to the advance of science.

J. D. Bernal

Flying Buttresses from a Gothic Cathedral, 10-11<sup>th</sup> century AD

