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Greek Statues, Roman Cults and European Aristocracy: Examining the Progression of Ancient Sculpture Interpretation

Andrew Lusher¹

ABSTRACT

In 1747 Frederick II of Prussia acquired a rare and highly valuable statue from antiquity and gave it the description of Antinous (the ill-fated lover of the Roman Emperor Hadrian). Although the bronze statue had always been accepted as an original from ancient Greece, the statue eventually assumed the identity of the Roman Antinous. How could Frederick II, an accomplished collector, ignore the blatant style and chronological discrepancies to interpret a Greek statue as a later Roman deity? This article will use the portraiture of Antinous to facilitate an examination of the progression of classical art interpretation and diagnose the freedom between the art historian and the dilettante. It will expose the necessary partition between the obligations of the art historian to provide technical interpretations of a work within the purview of the discipline with that of the unique interpretation made by individual viewers. This article confirms that although Frederick II lived before the transformative scholarship of Winckelmann, the freedom of interpreting a work is an abiding and intrinsic right of every individual viewer.

Keywords: Antinous, Art History, Berlin, Frederick II, Sculpture, Winckelmann.

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1. Introduction

In the middle of Unter den Linden - the main thoroughfare of Berlin - stands a large bronze equestrian statue of Frederick II of Prussia looking east towards his *Forum Fridericianum*. The sides of this nearly fourteen meter tall bronze, designed by Christian Daniel Rauch in 1839, are fitted with reliefs depicting important scenes from the life of Frederick the Great. The top corner of the north side bears a scene very few people might understand, let alone notice. Frederick, with a great dane by his side, is being presented a small statue of a boy with its hands raised towards the heavens. The relief's background is the well-known exterior of his favorite palace, Sanssouci, and towards the very edge of the image stands a small bust of Homer - an homage to the king's respect and adulation for Greek philosophy. This relief embodies the most sacred and personal motifs of the enlightened monarch.

¹ Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler, Berlin, Germany.

If one were to continue down Unter den Linden to Museum Island, walk into the Altes Museum - the famous building designed by Karl F. Schinkel - and continue straight ahead they would come directly upon a small four-foot tall bronze statue with its arms stretched upward. Approaching the statue one reads the following description:

Bronze Statue of a Young Man
So-called Praying Boy
Rhodes (Greece), acquired in 1747
Bronze, around 300 BC

This statue was found already in the Renaissance and passed through many collections before it was acquired by Frederick II. Its missing arms are imaginatively amended and give the statue its name. As regards its style, it is attributed to the school of the sculptor Lysippos of Sikyon. Set up on this very site since 1830, it constitutes the signet of the Collection of Classical Antiquities.

The art history pioneer Johann Joachim Winckelmann felt that descriptions of statues ought to show the “cause of its beauty... and style” (Donohue, 2005). This current description does little justice for the short bronze boy and fails to convey to the average museum-goer of its illustrious and diverse history - which no doubt contributes to its beauty.

Matthias Oesterreichs, the eighteenth century director of the gallery at Sanssouci was in charge of compiling the official lists of the royal art collection and, with Frederick’s approval, published a description of the bronze statue as: “Antinous - in the position before falling in [the] Nile” (Oesterreichs, 1775).

This paper was inspired from a curiosity towards the museum’s minimal choice regarding the description of their self-proclaimed ‘signet of the Collection of Classical Antiquities’. Frederick’s description, although flawed, is certainly more personal and invites one to learn more about Greek statues, Roman deities, and the indulgences of European aristocracy. The museum’s current official description is factually correct but fails to captivate guests - many of whom walk past in search of pieces more familiar. As individual viewers, do we have an obligation to simply acquiesce to scientifically established interpretations or do we have the freedom to ignore the presented plaques and connect with works in ways more personal to us? Can we follow Frederick’s fanciful interpretation or must we only tolerate the scholarly informed interpretation?

This paper will aim to answer the following question: Is there freedom between the role of the art historian and that of the dilettante - between the way in which art historians examine the technical interpretation of a work within the purview of the discipline and with the personal interpretations of a statue made by individual viewers? In essence, why could one as enlightened as Frederick II disregard scholarship and misidentify one of the finest antique pieces in Europe?

Spanning nearly two millennia, primary and secondary sources in English, French, and German, with translations of Greek and Latin, were used to ground and connect biographical information of the key figures of Frederick, Antinous, and Hadrian, and to be secure in the innovative work of Winckelmann, Levezow, and Panofsky on the subject of interpretation. There were a number of important sources that served as pillars of the research. Firstly, Blanning’s *Frederick the Great, King of Prussia* was a main source for understanding the man of Frederick II. *Des Königs Knabe* by Fischbacher provided much of the exhaustive account for the whereabouts of the bronze statue from its discovery in the sixteenth century to its current location since the nineteenth century.

The article “Antinous, Archaeology and History” by Vout encourages a reexamination of judging portraiture ‘at large’ and exposes the problems in identifying Antinous images. Lastly, the original sources from Levezow and Oesterreichs were instrumental in understanding eighteenth and nineteenth century opinion.

The findings exists in two spheres. Scientifically, the problem of iconographical analysis between Hellenistic Antinous portraiture and Greek bronze work from 300 B.C is examined. Do all pretty boys from antiquity belong to the same group to be used interchangeably or are there certain qualities that distinguishes between one handsome youth and another? Antinous and the praying boy from Rhodes, although members of the larger group of handsome male youth, are too dissimilar to be iconographically synonymous.

The other sphere questions if, regardless of scholarly interpretation, an experienced aristocratic collector in eighteenth century Europe could ignore scholarship and interchange the interpretation and identification of images based on personal attachments? The research points to an unequivocal 'yes' because a precedence to judge or classify a work based on style and method would not take root until the end of Frederick's lifetime. Frederick would have been perfectly able to publicly describe the statue as any individual from the larger category - that of handsome male youths. In fact, establishing Antinous as a false identity of the bronze was not a focus until the following century. Lastly, the final question, of where the opposing ends meet - scientific reason and emotional connection - for the twenty-first century art experience is left open-ended in the hopes of yielding important reflections and discussions on ways to present the public with a - dare we say - less scientific and more personal approach to the vast collections of antiquarian art.

The structure of this paper begins first with identifying Frederick and Antinous and why Frederick's acquisition of the statue was worthy of being memorialized in the middle of Unter den Linden. Then, the distinct characteristics of Antinous portraiture will be defined followed by a look at the unique style of the Greek bronze from Rhodes. The two will be briefly compared showing that the bronze could not be an image of Antinous and to further expose one of the earliest - and continuous - discussions of how to best approach the interpretation and categorization of ancient images. The last main section will look at the progression of art interpretation, with the work of Johann Joachim Winckelmann and Erwin Panofsky. Finally, the important points will be summarized in the conclusion.

2. Frederick II

Frederick II (1712 - 1786) ascended the throne as King of Prussia upon the death of his father, Frederick William I, in 1740. His youth was not a happy one. While crown prince Frederick was forced to live a secret life, having to borrow money from foreign courts to keep a library or pay for musicians in his Rheinsberg palace. The king progressed his crusade against his son's interest in French culture and vigorously stressed that the young crown prince would have to shift to activities more befitting a future German king - namely love for military and hunting (Blanning, 2015). Their relationship grew strained and Frederick William began to increase the emotional and physical abuse of his son - to a point that the King even remarked "If I were treated the way you are by my own father, I would have the decency to kill myself" (Koser, 2015).

At the age of eighteen the abuse came to a climax over the issue of marriage and Frederick sought to run away to England - where his uncle was monarch - and entrusted the help of his closest companion Lieutenant Hans Hermann von Katte. Their relationship remains controversial today but the two were considered lovers - even their contemporaries wrote of their relationship as "scandalous" and "unnatural" (Gaines, 2005). Regardless of the sexual nature between the two, it is accepted that they were emotionally devoted. Careless in their efforts, however, the King learned of the plan and Frederick was apprehended the moment he began to flee.

While imprisoned, Frederick's own father recommended execution for this treasonous scheme; Frederick's only saving grace was support from foreign courts who argued for the boy's life. In November 1730 the door to Frederick's cell was opened and in entered a contingent of guards instructed to hold Frederick's head against the iron bars of his window. In the courtyard just below his cell - a location specified by his father - the prince's lover was escorted into the prison courtyard. A popular anecdote of the event says that Frederick yelled out "Please forgive me, my dear Katte, in God's name, forgive me" to which Von Katte replied "There is nothing to forgive, I die for you with joy in my heart." As the sword was brought to Von Katte's head, Frederick fainted, wept for days, and feared that his own execution was imminent.

Frederick was eventually transitioned back into court life where he patiently awaited his father's death. Upon ascension to the throne in 1740 Frederick was endowed with a large inheritance and one of the best trained armies in Europe. His tumultuous childhood was about to transform into a shining reign, lasting longer than any Prussian monarch. In 1745 he constructed his pleasure palace, Sanssouci, in Potsdam and began amassing one of the most important collections of art in eighteenth century Europe. The crown jewel of his collection was a small bronze statue known as *Antinous*. For 5,000 thalers the statue of Antinous made its way from Vienna to its new home on the terrace of Sanssouci.

3. The statue

The first known record of the statue appears in a 1503 letter from a Venetian artist to his wealthy patron announcing the arrival of a “bronze boy from Rhodes” commenting “I never saw anything more beautiful” (Fischbacher, 2011). The statue had been found on the island of Rhodes in 1500, some 250 years before the pivotal excavations of Pompeii and Herculaneum, solidifying the rarity of such an item and thereby increasing its desirability among collectors. The statue, en route from Rhodes to Venice in 1503, was destined for the palace of Archbishop Andrea di Martini, where it remained in his collection until 1510.

One letter from 1549 is the first to reference the statue as Ganymede - with particular attention to the statue’s “well-formed gluteus” (Fischbacher, 2011). Ganymede was a mythological character from Greece who Homer describes as being the most beautiful mortal, “therefore, the gods caught him away to themselves, to be Zeus’ wine-pourer, for the sake of his beauty, so he might be among the immortals.” According to the myth, Ganymede became Zeus’ lover and that relationship was later used as a model for the acceptable Greek social custom of intimate relationships between adult and adolescent males. Thus, within half a century since its discovery, the bronze statue began to take on a specific iconological interpretation. Its association with Ganymede widened and the work became attributed - incorrectly - to Phidias, the most famous sculptor of antiquity - again only further increasing its value (Lehmann, 1997).

The statue changed hands to the brother of the Doge in Venice, then to Count Mario Bevilacqua in Verona and by 1604 was in the collection of Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua. The statue was sold from Mantua to the King of England, Charles I, where the bronze boy was not even given a name in the royal collection.

After Charles I the statue went to the new palace of Vaux-le-Vicomte, the precursor in grandeur to Versailles, built by Nicholas Fouquet, Minister of Finance to the French King Louis XIV. This palace surpassed all other residences in splendor and Fouquet began acquiring pieces to fill the estate, including the bronze, giving it its former name of Ganymede.

In 1717 the bronze was sold to Prince Eugene of Savoy for 18,000 Francs and moved to Vienna (Lehmann, 1997). Prince Eugene was one of the “better known sodomites in Europe” (Vogtherr, 2005), although he was considered by Napoleon as ‘one of the seven greatest commanders in history’ - a list which also included Frederick. Amassing substantial wealth, Eugene had a large collection of art and is probably most known for the construction of his baroque estate, the Belvedere Palace, in Vienna. During its tenure with Eugene the statue’s identity became known as Antinous, as so-named in a letter from the art dealer Algarotti (Fischbacher, 2011).

Upon Eugene’s death in 1736 the statue was sold to the Prince of Lichtenstein, who had a palace just across the city. In an interesting turn of events - and a great example of one of the consequences of war - Joseph Wenzel I, Prince of Lichtenstein, held lands in Silesia, an area that Frederick wasted little time in invading upon his ascension to the throne in 1740. Having won, the land and its economy became an addition to Prussia with Frederick II at the helm. After the second Silesian War Prussia continued to hold a substantial portion of the Lichtenstein land and drained Wenzel’s income, who now faced a financial dilemma. Faced with such duress Wenzel needed to downsize his estate and sought to sell pieces of his property and collections, including the statue of Antinous.

Originally, it is thought, that Wenzel offered Frederick the statue as a gift conditionally - if Frederick purchased the territories outright (Fischbacher, 2011). This offer, if it truly happened, was probably made in 1744 and obviously nothing came of it. Wenzel’s luck continued to sour when in 1745 he lost the title of Governor and control of the Lichtenstein property.

May 16, 1747, three years after the first offer, the sale of the statue (sans land) from Wenzel to Frederick was completed for 5000 thalers (a substantial sum). Interestingly, Frederick was the one to reinitiate the sale in a letter to his envoy in Vienna, asking them to inquire after the statue, its availability, quality, and price. After some back and forth on the price, Frederick agreed to the 5000 thalers, stating “it was expensive” but noting he would have paid any sum. To put the price into perspective, Wenzel could pay 1/5 of his debts solely from the selling of this bronze statue (Fischbacher, 2011).

At the time of its installation at Sanssouci it was the only original bronze from antiquity in all of Germany (Fischbacher, 2011). The chosen location of the bronze statue of Antinous was imbued with as much hidden meaning as the purchase of the statue itself. Set on the terrace of Sanssouci, it was placed on a pedestal in an elaborate trellis that resembled the temple from which it probably came. The statue

was only visible from the royal library - Frederick's favorite room - and is meters from the site of Frederick's planned tomb.

Frederick's purchase of the statue was, firstly, the common method of highlighting one's status among aristocratic circles. Matthias Oesterreichs, the inspector of the Royal Gallery at Sanssouci, wrote a description of the statue with the approval of Frederick that titled the piece as "Antinous - in the position before falling in [the] Nile." It continued: "this Kaiser made a number of monuments dedicated to the memory of Antinous and erected many statues" (Oesterreichs, 1775) and goes on to reference Eugene of Savoy as a previous owner. As this was approved by Frederick, historians have inferred an inherent intent that implied Savoy and Frederick shared several qualities, that as a successful general and art collector and perhaps even of their homosexuality, which - for both - had been an open secret. One historian takes it a step further, noting that with the bronze statue, "Frederick thus purchased an icon of pederastic, male desires in males, which had already long been defined as such" (Vogtherr, 2005).

Who was Antinous and why did Frederick pay such a huge sum from a Prussian enemy for a statue that was placed at the favorite palace and best visible from the most personal room of the monarch?

4. Antinous

Antinous of Bithynia lived in the second century Roman Empire, from 110-130 A.D. Antinous, a name thought to originate from a local founder of the province - though coincidentally also the name of the most beautiful suitor in Homer's *Odyssey* - met the Roman Emperor Hadrian during a royal visit throughout Asia Minor. He subsequently began accompanying Hadrian on his travels and eventually acquired the official role of Hadrian's lover. "Hadrian's personal life has been defined by his relationship with Antinous, and vice versa" (Fox, 2014). Hadrian became emperor in 117 A.D. and is widely considered one of the greatest rulers of Rome. He was highly educated, devoted to his troops, successful in uniting and consolidating the empire, reformed the Roman law, and undertook massive building projects (most famously the Pantheon). Like Frederick, Hadrian married for conventional matters, though the union did not interest him (Neill, 2011). It was a common understanding that Hadrian preferred the company of men which was not an altogether strange phenomena during this time. It was acceptable for men to have other male sexual partners - even male prostitutes were wealthy and a part of the upper class - opposite to their female counterparts (Neill, 2011). Regardless, the relationship between Antinous and Hadrian was acceptable by Roman custom and the particular roles of the two males were viewed through the classical Greek model, a pederastic relationship between an *erastes* (Hadrian) and *eromenos* (Antinous) (Waters, 2003).

Even though sexuality was much more fluid and accepted throughout society, Hadrian "showered such affection (on Antinous) that it was cause for wonder for Romans of that period" (Neill, 2011). In 130 A.D. while on a trip through Egypt the entourage was sailing down the Nile to celebrate the Festival of the Nile and the Feast of Osiris (an Egyptian god believed to have died and risen again). The only concrete event from this day was that Antinous drowned in the river. There are various theories about how - some stipulate it was murder, perhaps from another jealous lover of Hadrian's or from someone who felt that Antinous either wielded too much power or that his presence was ruining the image of the emperor. There is much evidence, however, refuting those theories. What is commonly accepted is that Antinous threw himself in the river as a sacrifice to save Hadrian.

It was a common belief in Egypt at this time (especially during the feast of Osiris) that suicide in the Nile allowed you to give your strength to a loved one. There were rumors that Hadrian was ill and attempted to keep it a secret to conceal any weakness from his enemies. It was also thought that the extent of their relationship, clearly beyond sexual and more of a loving, emotional connection, was beginning to upset larger portions of the aristocracy. Sex was acceptable but emotionally loving another male was a different matter. As the number of families with wealth was rising (from the formation of the empire over the republic), the older established families - usually connected with the former Roman senate - considered such displays of pleasure as vulgar excess and blamed their loss of prestige on the decline of moral standards in the empire (Neill, 2011). Thus, ridding Hadrian of himself was a way to preserve the power of the emperor and the support from the established aristocracy. Regardless of reason - for health or image - it was accepted that Antinous' death came from a willingness on his own accord (Aurelius, Sextus & Bird, 1994).

When Antinous drowned, according to contemporary legend, Hadrian “wept like a woman” (Benario, 1980). To commemorate their love and to “preserve the image of his (Antinous’) outstanding beauty” Hadrian formed a cult to worship the boy, with a festival held every year and an athletic competition every five. In addition to the cult Hadrian formed a city at the spot on the Nile where Antinous gave his life, naming it Antinoopolis, a metropolis that remained a cultural center for centuries (Bell, 1940). Hadrian had Antinous deified and ordered thousands of statues erected in his image. These statues were “so beautiful” that for centuries they were regarded as the standard for representations of male beauty (Neill, 2011) and the number of surviving statues are third only to those of Hadrian and Augustus (Vout, 2005).

So little is known about the fine details of the life and death of Antinous, the only concrete fact being that he died from drowning in the Nile. We know so little in the twenty-first century, so how much did Frederick in 1747 know?

5. Frederick II and Antinous

Frederick’s complete library existed at least five times in each of his major palaces (Röhm & Scheidler, 2009). When purchasing books five copies were ordered so that wherever he went he could continue at the same point. In his library Frederick owned a volume of *Roman History* by Cassius Dio who wrote in Greece during the second century A.D. Dio recorded the relationship between Hadrian and Antinous and supports the sacrificing theory. In a volume owned by Frederick there were small notes written in the margins, proving Frederick’s familiarity with the story (Fischbacher, 2011).

It is only speculative, but it is believed that Frederick purchased the ‘Antinous’ bronze statue as a symbol of his younger friend, and probable lover, Von Katte, who sacrificed his life so that Frederick could live his. There is no speculation needed that Frederick considered himself akin to Hadrian - both were highly educated, devoted to their troops, united and expanded their kingdoms, reformed the civil service, and undertook massive building projects. Frederick even built a quasi-replica of Hadrian’s pantheon in Berlin with the construction of the St. Hedwigs Catholic Church. For a king who connected with an emperor on matters of state, when their personal lives endure such similar and painful loss, why wouldn’t Frederick feel a similar connection? Why couldn’t Frederick honor his devoted lover with a statue of Hadrian’s?

But, the problem is, the bronze statue was from Ancient Greece and Antinous lived *Anno Domini*, some 400 years later. While in Italy in the sixteenth century the statue had already been attributed to the ancient Greeks, so surely Frederick would have known that the identity as Antinous was chronologically inaccurate. How did the portraiture of Antinous compare to that of the bronze statue and could the two be synonymous images? If we did not know the dating of the bronze, based solely on the features, could the bronze be accepted as an image of Antinous?

6. Antinous portraiture

An art professor from Oxford famously quipped “There really [is] no such thing as Roman art” (Stewart, 2010) alluding to the fact that most features of Roman art came from Greece. However, regarding Antinous, “Roman art attained its highest achievements in the portrayal of this youth” (Henderson, 1923). After the death Hadrian deified the boy and his images became used in forms of worship. Archeologists have found his images in sculpture, busts, reliefs, and on coins. More images have been identified as Antinous than any other figure from classical antiquity - with the exception of Augustus and Hadrian - and statues have been found throughout Egypt, Asia-Minor, Greece, and Italy (Vout, 2005). This is substantial considering that Christians sought to destroy all images of Antinous, whom they regarded as the ultimate symbol of pagan idolatry as well as a competitor of their savior Jesus - who was also believed to have sacrificed himself so that others may live. Because of the passion manifested through the founding of a city and the deification of the youth both regular citizens and the wealthy elite would use images of Antinous in public and private spheres as a way to gain favor with the emperor; this is a reason there was such a large number of images (Fox, 2014). Whether they faithfully worshiped the boy or not was insignificant, there were political advantages to having his image in your temple or home.

In order to best understand the style of Antinous portraits one must follow the progression of ‘Roman’ portraiture to the time of Hadrian. The idea that portraits were intended to realistically depict

their subjects was a Hellenistic quality begun with Alexander the Great and still accepted in the early Republic of Rome. The portraits being produced - in the Republican style - show stern, old, wise leaders as they really were with foreheads of wrinkles and hallowed, tired eyes. With Augustus, the first Emperor of Rome, a dramatic transformation in portrait style occurred and remained prominent to the very fall of the empire.

Augustus was only nineteen years of age when he became emperor, so the production of the old 'Republican' style of portraits was impossible - how do you show a wise, old, experienced leader when he was anything but? The solution was to make virtuous the attributes of youth and youthful beauty (Stewart, 2010). For this the Romans looked to the late Greeks, between the 3rd and 1st centuries B.C, to replicate the forms used to represent young men.

Bodies of statues were ambiguous and individual heads were often slotted into stock marble bodies. Although the details of the body were indifferent, the presentation of the outfit made an important statement about the subject: emperors were shown in costumes; athletes, heroes, and gods were naked; and important citizens wore togas. As evident with Augustus and Hadrian, the portraits served an ideological role in addition to being objects of veneration. They were adored, presented garlands and offerings, received prayers, and even paraded throughout villages. These portraits were not just commissioned by the government or in public places, many homes had small sculptures in the same way that many Christian homes today have small statues of saints.

The only surviving Antinous bust with the original inscription is used to compare other statues according to the following qualities: straight, strigilated eyebrows; rounded chin; firm lips; downturned head; and most importantly, the hairstyle, with two noteworthy qualities - luscious curls that form a "mop" on his head and locks on each side that curve towards the temples. According to current scholarship, any ancient sculpture which boasts these key locks on the temples and forehead - and with longer hair at the back - qualifies to be classified as Antinous (Vout, 2005). There are many pieces that have subsequently been ruled out as a result of this scholarship. In effect, the images must share the distinctive features of a broad swelling chest, head of tousled curls, and downcast melancholic gaze (Waters, 1995) and fall into three categories:

1. Antinous in character as the Greek youth (mostly on coin images)
2. Antinous appearing as a deity or hero, characterized by the extension of one finger or the wearing of a garland
3. Antinous idealized as a particular deity, usually as Bacchus with a wreath in his hair, but also as Apollo, Osiris, Ganymede, Hermes, and Narcissus.

7. The bronze boy

As stated earlier, when the bronze statue was in Italian collections it began to be attributed - falsely - to the studio of Phidias, whose statue of Zeus at Olympia was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. However, he was working some 150 years before this bronze was cast.

Since the nineteenth century the Praying Boy has been attributed to the work of Lysippos (370-300 B.C). It's recognized as the work of Lysippos, aside from recent scientific dating and geographical placing of the materials, because of the style he began to develop. He cast slender bodies and small heads, which gave the illusion of being taller, and often with limbs extended away from the body. Lysippos paid great attention to the hair. His methods sought to impart a sense of motion through a shift in weight and arms that change direction (Grossman, 2003). His workshop was also responsible for streamlining production to meet the growing demand for bronze statues because by the fifth century B.C. bronze was the most popular medium for freestanding public sculpture. The process of production allowed the creation of figures in almost any gesture or pose, opening up endless possibilities in the portrayal of individuals (Palagia, 2005).

This bronze had its arms replaced in the seventeenth century and archeologists have rendered what the original would have looked like, concluding that this statue was most probably an athlete showing gratitude for a victory (Lehmann, 1997).

Although the bronze boy statue continued to be described as Antinous in official publications until 1823 (Fischbacher, 2011) in 1803 Konrad Levezow, Professor of Antiquities and Mythology in Berlin, was the first to say, regarding the bronze, "at first he was thought of as Antinous, but it is doubtful. The head and the face have no resemblance to the ever-recurring forms of the face and characteristics of this

youth.” He goes on further to say “it is quite unmistakable that the youthful, delicate, and voluptuous, beautifully formed body, with special attention to the head, can belong to no other than... Ganymede.” Thus, even though it was already known that this work could not have been Antinous due to chronological discrepancies, there was still a desire by artistic circles to properly describe the bronze statue using new, modern methods of interpreting ancient works based on style and typology of the individual.

In the early nineteenth century Levezow began a campaign for the royal collection of art in Berlin to be placed in a museum so that it could be studied and appreciated by all. Levezow completed a full survey and subsequent publication of the available images of Antinous using modern evaluation techniques of classical archeology. This was the first attempt at an iconographical grouping of Hadrian’s favorite lover, stating that some of the works have been “counted among the highest and most advanced” pieces from antiquity (Levezow, 1808). In this monumental publication on Antinous portraiture Levezow fails to even mention the bronze statue.

8. Potential for synonymous interpretation

While the statue could not have been intended as specifically portraying the likeness of Antinous and does not meet the crucial requirement of the curls of hair, there is the possibility of its inclusion to the larger shared group, that of beautiful male youths. This particular group became significant in the art of ancient Greece where festivals and competitions celebrated the human body and considered beautiful bodies as the highest attainment of humanity (Sorabella, 2017). The Greek male nude in particular represented triumph, glory, and moral excellence. The nakedness, while having sex appeal, was not sexual, but rather celebrated the human ideal.

It is also important to recognize that in Ancient Greece the function of statues was not to portray individuals for how they truly appeared but rather for the ideal imagery of the human body. For Greek artists the way to convey expression was through movements of the body, therefore any expression in the face was avoided. Statues weren’t created as a way to recognize individuals - that is a later, Hellenistic, trait - in the same way that Antinous statues were supposed to be created in his likeness. During the time of the bronze boy the goal was to portray the ideal traits of the intended figure - be it athlete, statesmen, or divinity - and the attachment of your name to those exalted qualities was the greatest honor. It is only with the later years of Lysippos’ work that Hellenism and its progressing qualities is being heralded in. This is clear in Alexander the Great’s request for Lysippos to change the way portraiture was done; Alexander requested a ‘real’ portrait in his likeness and this is when the Hellenistic quality of portraying the true likeness of an individual is born. By the time of Antinous there was an established mixing of Hellenistic techniques with the Egyptian belief that the likeness of an individual created in stone effectively preserved their soul. That is the best way to examine the power of Antinous’ portraiture - it was Hadrian’s attempt at preserving the soul of his beloved.

“The ancient understanding of what kind of deity Antinous was depended to a large extent on his images’ membership of a larger visual category, that of divine, beautiful, young males. His distinction as Antinous is, in effect, only a subset. Without the visual borrowing from other youthful deities such as Dionysus, Apollo, Ganymede, and Narcissus, Antinous is arguably unremarkable: an imperial pretty boy just like any other” (Vout, 2005). Identified and associated as a homoerotic icon, Antinous and his portraiture have often been misidentified throughout history because of this association with the larger visual category of beautiful young males (Waters, 1995). It is only in this larger grouping that the bronze boy and Antinous can belong together.

Looking at the scope of beautiful male youths from Greco-Roman antiquity, the problem of interpreting antique imagery is exposed. “The realization, that if we were to not look at just the hair, but the overall portraiture, puts the issue of iconographic difference under the spotlight. Not all images of Antinous were necessarily based on centrally disseminated models or their replicas. Therefore, failure to fit a set of iconographic criteria does not by itself deny a portrait a particular identity” (Vout, 2005). This is the largest consequence of modern scholarly interpretation of antique works; our limited knowledge of the intended portrayal does not necessarily disqualify one likeness over another. While we have the consciousness and ability to quantify an artist’s style, in ancient times this notion was non-existent. Lysippos didn’t consciously decide to create his own style - it was simply a result of attempting to execute the best version of his work. We are, in essence, viewing ancient art through a modern lens.

However, according to modern scholarship, while the two boys could certainly belong to a larger grouping because of their youthfulness, attractiveness, and political or religious uses, they do not match stylistically. Both images have roots in the same Greek ideals of beautiful and well-proportioned bodies for viewers to idolize, but beyond that their styles are too different. The traits of the work of Lyssippos, as previously mentioned, focused on an unattainable likeness for the intended individual which was based on his role in society. Whereas by the time of Antinous there was a greater attention to the details of the face in an attempt towards conveying a more accurate likeness. Even though both belong to the larger grouping of beautiful young males, according to the established criteria set down by Winckelmann, expounded upon by Levezow, and now the focus of modern scholarship today, the two are forbidden to be accepted as the portrayal of the same individual.

How did we get here? Were the Duke Eugene of Savoy and Frederick II - living in the ages of reason and enlightenment - ignorant and arrogant collectors ignoring key visual clues or were they ordinary aesthetes who disregarded specific details in order to satisfy a personal attachment of such a priceless work? What can be said today for modern viewers admiring classical works adorning the galleries of museums the world over?

9. Art interpretation

The appropriate departure for the interpretation of art - specifically sculpture - is with Johann Joachim Winckelmann, a figure whom many consider the 'father of art history' (Robinson, 1995). He was a contemporary of Frederick II - in the Enlightenment - and helped to facilitate the purchase of the art collection of Baron von Stosch for Frederick, forming the initial antiquities collection which gave birth to the state museums of Berlin.

Winckelmann, from Protestant Brandenburg, became well educated in his youth and converted to Catholicism for the sole purpose of having access to the papal library. Upon his arrival in the 'Eternal City' he was placed in the service of various influential cardinals and his first undertaking was to interpret a series of beautiful nude males - at the time known as Antinous - which he claimed "represented the utmost perfection of ancient sculpture" (Winckelmann & Potts, 2006).

His most famous written work is considered 'The Art of Antiquity' in which he lays the foundation for the interpretation of ancient art by providing a chronological account of the art of the ancient world. He openly discredited contemporary figures who wrote about art descriptions based solely on seeing lithographs of the works, an advantage over which he had for having seen many works in person and even personally observing the excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum.

His historical framework for interpreting Greek sculpture was based on the way objects looked. Put simply, this sparked the analyzation of style, on which Shapiro says "Style is an essential object of investigation. The style is above all a system of forms with a quality and meaningful expression through which the personality of the artists and broad outlook of a group are visible" (Donohue, 2005). It is with Winckelmann in the later part of the eighteenth century that historians and collectors begin to systematically interpret ancient works. Evidence of this was with Winckelmann's first assignment upon arriving in Rome in 1755 - to describe and analyze those nude male figures of the Belvedere Palace at the Vatican.

This immediately answers the question of Frederick's ability not only to correctly interpret the statue, but also whether there would be a precedence to seek a correct interpretation. As acquisition of the statue in 1747 predates the significant work of Winckelmann, most notably the publication of the 'Art of Antiquity' in 1764, this is a crucial moment - one not to be underestimated. Until the time of Winckelmann, the leading art critic/historian was Roger de Piles, a seventeenth century Frenchman who led a fairly diverse career between artist, critic, and diplomat. His work was more with aesthetic theory and principles of painting, which focused on analyzing the composition, drawing, color, and expression of a work.

Until the middle of the eighteenth century one could interpret a work based on a larger grouping, in our case that of nude young males. The statues of Ganymede, Apollo, or Antinous would have belonged to the same group and, as we have seen with the bronze boy, their identities interchangeable. It is with Winckelmann that the development of observation towards style begins and important characteristics - like the curls of hair towards the temple - would finally begin to specify an identity or specific interpretation, as well as artists' individual practices. Thus, Frederick II, the Duke of Savoy,

Fouquet, even Charles I of England would have been perfectly able to name the statue as Antinous, Apollo, or Ganymede because to contemporary thinking they all belonged to the same group and there was no need - nor precedence - to say with certainty that it was one individual over another. Therefore, to Frederick, acquiring a statue of a beautiful boy entitled him with the freedom to describe the likeness as he saw fit within the larger grouping. In his case, the attachment to Antinous - who was still a standard of male beauty from Greco-Roman antiquity - fostered the purchase, location, and personal appreciation of the rare bronze statue.

The next major innovator of interpretation came with Erwin Panofsky, a German-Jew who fled to the United States to escape persecution under the Nazi regime. Panofsky was the leading voice of iconology, the study of visual imagery and symbolism. He is most regarded for his interpretation of symbolism in Netherlandish painting, but his structure for iconographic analysis remains popular today - though widely criticized. Panofsky developed three steps towards the analysis of an image (Panofsky, 1939):

1. Iconographical Description - describing the picture
2. Iconographical Analysis - using cultural contexts to analyze
3. Iconological Interpretation - putting the picture into historical context

With the first level, formal judgements only are made and no interpretations. It's all about what is seen - form, composition, color, etc. The second level is to deduce the story from known stories or allegories. The third level requires additional knowledge to deduce the symbolic values and therefore the intrinsic meaning. One of the biggest complaints of his method, although it is an efficient system, is that it treats an object as though there is only one iconographical meaning, which limits the iconological interpretation for individual artists or viewers.

Had this systematic method been established during the reign of Frederick II he would have described the statue as a young boy made of bronze with his arms outstretched. Then at the second level he may have used the allegory of Antinous falling in the Nile. But somewhere between levels two and three he would have asked himself, how can this be? This statue is from Ancient Greece and Antinous lived in second century Rome. Thus, Panofsky's method may have curbed the sale of the statue and Frederick's attachment to it.

Information and interpretation - diagnosis and analysis - are firmly connected (Donohue, 2005). The question for modern scholars today is best put by H.G. Kippenberg: "Where lies the border between an arbitrary play of association and a more objective perception?" (1986).

With all art, the historical analysis begins with what can be seen in the object. The "phenomenon of taste as a source for individual interpretation is the silent discourse between an image and the beholder, which has its inception in early sensory experiences" (Kippenberg, 1986). With sculpture, over other mediums like painting, the matter gets more complicated. Statues started their life as objects with purpose, usually for divine worship, and over time have morphed into an object to be valued for its aesthetic qualities. Sculptures have a third dimension, thus there is no one right angle from which to view the work. Classical sculptures, and the late Greek works completed in-the-round, could be viewed from any angle. Therefore, with ancient sculpture, analyzing subject matter is a challenge because there is little-to-no 'drama' helping to imply an intended portrayal. Are they a deity, athlete, warrior, or statesman? The viewer - and historian - is left to utilize smaller qualities to analyze a given individual.

The characterization of the individual - based on the outfit and the smaller details on the face - were crucial to knowing the appropriate description. With regard to the aesthetic experience of the viewer, the pre-Winckelmann period allowed a greater possibility and freedom for the viewer to interpret the work to their private tastes based on its membership in a larger category. However, with modern scholarship and its desire to methodically catalogue and classify works we have become hostage to the marriage of the subject and style of a work which imply one - and often only one - acceptable interpretation. The main difference from us today and to the people in Frederick's time is that those living in the eighteenth century had the luxury of valuing a statue not only with the eyes and ones natural aesthetic response, but also by having the opportunity to assign its description based on an image or likeness that was personal to the collector. Today we are told, either by professionals in the field or through our own knowledge of particular styles and traits, which identities are to be associated with which characteristics and works. There is almost a blessing in the pre-Winckelmann ignorance of the eighteenth century; the modern approach to the interpretation of classical sculpture may be efficient in

classifying and categorizing works but it deprives modern viewers of the powerful privilege of creating a personal opinion based on a larger spectrum of possibility.

Is there freedom between the role of the art historian and that of the dilettante - between the way in which art historians examine the technical interpretation of a work within the purview of the discipline and the personal interpretations of a statue made by individual viewers? The answer must be yes. The individual is not bound by any conventional or standard technicalities when it comes to forming their opinion and appreciation for a work. That is the prestige of art itself - encompassing an inherent function of empowerment and attachment that serves a specific and individualized role for each viewer. For the art historian their role is slightly different, as their field - a science in its own right - requires methods and classifications rooted in principles of the Enlightenment. Without these parameters archeologists and art historians would be no different than the average dilettante. Perhaps the field itself is a double-edged sword; in order for museums and institutions to function and prosper in the preservation and education of their collections there must be a standard set of conditions. This collective regulation, which consequently may limit interpretation and description, is what ultimately allows individuals from all walks of life to benefit from exposure to important and priceless pieces of bygone eras. Conclusively, there comes a juncture - in all facets of life - where the Enlightenment ideas of method and reason (in which both Frederick and Winckelmann believed) must end and the immortal influence of an individual's passion will triumph and flourish.

10. The future of the praying boy

Upon Frederick's death in 1786 his successor, nephew Frederick William II, moved the statue to the Berlin city palace into the royal apartment. Previously, in art of the Renaissance, Ganymede had been the "ruling symbol" of homosexuality - particularly in respect to the Greek manner between men and boys. This changed by the 18th century with a shift from Ganymede to Antinous as the dominant "ruling symbol" in homosexual literature (Waters, 1995). Oscar Wilde references Antinous in multiple stories; in his *The Young King* his character actually kisses a statue of "the Bithynian slave of Hadrian" and in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* the character's beauty is described as "the face of Antinous."

During the middle-to-late nineteenth century European collectors increasingly sought items with the boy's image. Ironically, when Frederick William II moved the statue to his apartment in the city palace, it was for reasons furthest from his uncle. The statue, for him, had no homosexual connotation or power as a result of its portrayal of male beauty; Frederick William II entertained many mistresses, even fathering a handful of children from them. The statue for the new king was still known as Antinous but was a representation of Antinous' devotion to Hadrian, whose love and sacrifice made possible Hadrian's success. Unfortunately this inspiration did little for the Prussian king as Napoleon swiftly entered Berlin.

In 1806 the statue, along with 123 paintings and 28 statues, was taken to Paris by Napoleon and placed in the Musée Napoleon. The bronze statue was placed at the center of the hall, given the special place as one of the most prominent pieces. After returning to Berlin it was finally moved to the center of the 'new' museum in 1830, now called the Altes Museum. The architect - Karl Friedrich Schinkel - took the bronze boy into account when designing the building, purposefully placing him as visitors' first view when entering the modern temple to classical art. It remains in that very spot today.

In August 2017 the Humboldt Forum, the main body overseeing use of the new Berliner Schloss, announced that a copy of an Antinous statue from the original palace will be added on the building's exterior upon completion in 2019. The article states that in 1699 Andreas Schlüter - the sculptor of the Antinous statue for the original city palace - used a Greek statue of Hermes as the basis of his statue of Antinous. This is only the most recent example highlighting the many problems with the interpretation of Antinous portraiture and antique works at large.

The revelation by the Humboldt Forum has made clear that even in the deepest desires to be methodical and scholarly there are limitations and exceptions with interpretation. If a statue of Antinous made in 1699 was based on a previous sculpture of Hermes, then who is to say with scholarly certainty that the bronze boy was not used as a prototype for images of Antinous?

Frederick II was neither ignorant nor trailblazing in his assignment of the Greek statue as a Roman deity. According to contemporary thinking this was perfectly acceptable and most probably a sign of being the highest caliber of collector, when one could use knowledge of philosophy and history to individually interpret a work.

The 'Praying Boy' bronze is a special piece - weaving over 2000 years of questions, impressions, interpretations, and aristocratic collections. When Frederick acquired the statue in 1747 he could not have known that only a few decades later the world of art history would never again be the same. With Frederick - and those collectors before him - freedom of interpretation rested largely on a larger grouping of similar works. With the scholarship of Winckelmann the way pieces are categorized, described, and interpreted would be forever changed.

Yet, there is no definite guarantee with scholarship. Nor is there preservation with only personal interpretations. Museums today provide the middle ground between the two spheres of professional scholars and the visiting public. Museums and art institutions worldwide, which present and preserve these priceless works, should foster more engaging ways to educate the public and provide opportunities for individuals to form personal opinions and to view works as more than just classified inanimate objects on a shelf but as real objects once used in daily life. The ancient people commissioning and creating these works carried no desire for scientific analysis or dreams of filling the halls of large museums; these works were intended to tell a story, to record an event, or to inspire human ideals.

If one chooses to enter the Altes Museum today, walk in, view the small bronze statue, and think of Antinous sacrificing himself - or perhaps even of Hans Hermann Von Katte - it would be their right and pleasure so to do. In 1991, 205 years after his death, Frederick II was finally laid to rest where he requested - in a crypt between the remains of his favorite dogs and an iron trellis where a copy of his beloved statue of Antinous stands in homage to his lost love.

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