

# Exploring Authenticity through Classical Art: Originals, Fakes and Copies

Elisa Bernard

## Abstract [heading]

Today, standing *in situ* or displayed in museums, are several classical and post-classical copies of works of art. In contrast, fakes are usually locked away in museum stores. This dichotomy sparks a reflection on the authenticity attached to fakes and to copies of classical artworks. Building upon Denis Dutton's work and drawing on a series of examples, this article contends that, although neither fakes nor copies are (the) original, copies are 'nominally authentic' regarding their authorship, origin, findspot, and/or provenance, whereas fakes are not. Also, copies are 'expressively authentic' in so far as they honestly fulfil the function for which they were created, are situated in the context of the original, or somehow speak of continuity with artistic and art historical traditions. On the contrary, once spotted, fakes lose their purpose and their intended audience, proving expressively inauthentic. Therefore, what fakes and copies have in common is their non-originality, explored here as both creativity and exemplarity or fecundity, that is, the capacity to originate an artistic or figurative tradition. The article concludes by asking what we are to do with fakes and contends that, as historical documents, they warrant exhibition since they can contribute to unlocking the multiple narratives surrounding originals.

**Keywords:** archaeology; aura; authenticity; classical art; copy; fake; museums; originality

## Introduction [heading]

*Un seul mépris pourtant serait déplorable, celui de la beauté. Or la tiare de Saitaphernès est une belle chose [...] [le travail] c'est beau comme l'antique [...] La tiare [...] n'est donc pas méprisable [...] une belle œuvre d'art, [c'est] digne d'être exposée dans un musée national.*

However, a single contempt would be deplorable, that of beauty. But the tiara of Saitaphernes is a beautiful thing [...] [the work] is as beautiful as the antique [...] Thus, the tiara [...] is not

contemptible [...] a beautiful work of art, [it is] worthy of being exhibited in a national museum.  
(Apollinaire 1903/1969: 553)

Acquired by the Musée du Louvre in 1896 as a Greek masterpiece (Metzger 2008), in 1903, the *Tiara of Saitaphernes* was proved to be a fake (Figure 1) and was removed from display immediately. Nonetheless, from the columns of *La Revue Blanche*, Guillaume Apollinaire (1903/1969) was claiming that, notwithstanding its misidentification, the *Tiara* was still the same beautiful thing – as beautiful as if it were actually ancient – and that it warranted display in a national museum. He suggested that the *Tiara* should be exhibited at the Musée du Luxembourg ‘avec cette explication qui aurait rendu à l’œuvre toute son authenticité: ‘maître Russe inconnu, fin du XIX<sup>ème</sup> siècle (with this explanation that would return to the work all its authenticity: ‘unknown Russian master, end of the 19th century)’, and allowing about ten years to pass before it should be redisplayed at the Louvre ‘comme un chef-d’œuvre de l’orfèvrerie du siècle passé (a masterpiece of the goldsmith’s art of the previous century)’. The *Tiara* is today still in storage the Louvre, however.

Museums display ancient and modern copies; also many copies of outdoor statues, such as that of *Marcus Aurelius* in Piazza del Campidoglio in Rome (Figure 2) are standing *in situ* today. A bronze equestrian statue dedicated to the eponymous emperor and dating to the last quarter of the second century CE, the original had been in the centre of Michelangelo’s *piazza* from the 1500s; at the end of the twentieth century, it was removed for preservation reasons, transferred to the Capitolini Museums, and it was eventually replaced in the *piazza* by a copy in the late 1990s.

Why does a copy like the *Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius* warrant exhibition in a public space, while the *Tiara of Saitaphernes* is still relegated to storage? Where does the difference between fakes and copies lie? Aren’t fakes worthy of any interest? And what are we to do, in practice, with fakes today? Analytic philosophers have debated the value of originals, perfect copies, and fakes in relation to modern art since the mid-1960s (Lessing 1965; Goodman 1968; Sagoff 1978, 2014; Danto 1981; Dutton 1983, 2003; Kulka 2005; D’Angelo 2006; Jaworski 2013). How fakes should be categorized in the field of culture and dealt with in practical terms is still contested too (Lenain 2021).

In this article, I use a series of examples relating to classical art to discuss the authenticity attached to fakes and to honest copies (henceforth only copies): namely, the *Victorious Youth* (an authentic archaeological relic), the *Tiara of Saitaphernes* (a fake), the *Farnese Hercules* (a Roman copy) and the *Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius* today in Piazza del Campidoglio (a contemporary copy).

I draw on Dutton (1993; 2003) to approach the notions of ‘nominal’ and ‘expressive authenticity’, where, I argue, two major differences between fakes and copies lie. What fakes and copies have in common, instead, is their non-originality. I explore originality as both creativity and fecundity, i.e., the capacity to originate an artistic or figurative tradition. In the fourth section, I maintain that, although inauthentic in the first place and usually non-fecund, by virtue of their ‘expressive authenticity’, fakes are valuable historical documents and might warrant exhibition. I conclude by addressing further questions concerning repatriation via copies, reconstructions and (de)restorations, and appropriations from classical art.

### Nominal authenticity

Dutton, citing John L. Austin (1911–1960), affirmed that authenticity is a ‘dimension word’, one whose meaning remains ambiguous ‘until we know what dimension of the referent is under consideration’ (Dutton 2003: 258). The *Tiara of Saitaphernes*, for instance, is not inauthentic in every dimension: a fake third-century BCE Greek relic, it is at one and the same time an authentic crafted piece of gold (Bouiller *et al.* 2018) and an authentic Rouchomovsky (Benjamin 1997).

Dutton identified both ‘nominal authenticity’ and ‘expressive authenticity’, the first as ‘the correct identification of the origins, authorship, or provenance of an object, ensuring, as the term implies, that an object of aesthetic experience is properly named’ (Dutton 2003: 259). The *Victorious Youth* (Figure 3), for instance, is an example of an authentic fourth-century BCE bronze statue. Likely a sanctuary *ex voto* for a victory in the Panhellenic Games, it is attributed to the Greek sculptor Lysippus – one of the voices in the chorus of Greek art (Mattusch 1997; Podany and Scott 2000; Moreno 2001; Daehner and Lapatin 2015; Scott 2017: 29, 31).

Instead, the *Tiara of Saitaphernes* is not the authentic work of a third-century BCE metalworker from the Black Sea coast that the Greek colony of Olbia gave as a gift to the eponymous Scythian King – as it was purported to be when it was sold to the Louvre in 1896. It was made to commission by the Russian goldsmith Israël Rouchomovsky (1860–1934) for the art dealer Hochman around 1894 (Pasquier 1994; Benjamin 1997; Douchêne 2005; Metzger 2008; Martinez 2011). Conversely, the *Farnese Hercules* of 216 BCE (Figure 4) is not an ‘authentic Lysippus’ – inspired by the *Weary Herakles* of the fourth century BCE, it is rather an ‘authentic Glykon’, the Athenian copyist who in a Baroque early third-century Rome sculpted the marble statue after (the same *schema* of) Lysippus’ bronze original (Vermeule 1975; Schneider 2005), and who signed his own work. Similarly, the copy of the *Equestrian*

*Statue of Marcus Aurelius* was not produced by a Roman second-century CE workshop, as was the original; in the 1990s, the Italian State Mint commissioned a copy to replace the original (Melucco Vaccaro and Mura Sommella 1989; Parisi Presicce and Mura Sommella 1990; Mura Sommella and Parisi Presicce 1997). None of the *Tiara*, the *Farnese Hercules*, nor the copy of *Marcus Aurelius* is (the) original; nonetheless, while the *Tiara*'s authorship and history of production were misrepresented in the first place, those of the *Farnese Hercules* and the copy of *Marcus Aurelius* have always been appropriately termed.

However, when it comes to archaeological objects, things get more complicated. Beyond authorship and history of production, in order to produce a fake, one needs to falsify the history of the object's excavation, and the history of ownership (provenance), or, more broadly its 'afterlife', defined as the events surrounding any archaeological objects after their discovery, including their reuse, collecting, restoration, exhibition, looting, and return. The *Victorious Youth* was retrieved in 1964 in the Adriatic Sea, where it may have been involved in a shipwreck on its way to Rome. After being illicitly introduced to and exported from the territory of Italy in 1971, it was eventually bought by the Getty Museum, where ownership is still contested (Lanciotti 2012; Li and Sargent 2016; Scovazzi 2019). The *Tiara of Saitaphernes* was not discovered in Crimea in the late 1800s. Acquired by the Louvre and proved to be a fake, the golden crown was removed from display at once.

The marble *Farnese Hercules* only copies Lysippus' lost bronze original, once on view in the *agora* of Sicyon, in Caracalla's Rome, where it became part of the decorative apparatus of the eponymous baths, from whose ruins it was reborn in the mid-sixteenth century. It entered cardinal Alessandro Farnese's collection; in 1787, Carlo of Bourbon took it to the Royal Museum of Capodimonte and later to the Royal Museum of Naples, where it has undergone several restorations.

One of the differences between fakes and copies seems then to lie in that while a fake was not nominally authentic in the first place, a copy (which still is not original) has always been appropriately identified. In other words, the director who purchased the *Tiara*, the curators who put it on view, and the visitors who saw it at the Louvre between 1896 and 1903 believed it to be an authentic archaeological relic. On the contrary, those who saw Glykon's *Weary Hercules* in the third-century CE baths of Caracalla and those who have seen the copy of *Marcus Aurelius* in Piazza del Campidoglio since 1997 should all have been well aware of not being in front of the original. (Interesting questions might arise concerning *how* an audience is to be made aware of being in front of a copy and whether or not the unaware audience might consider that work as nominally authentic. These questions go beyond the scope of this discussion, though.)

## Expressive authenticity

‘Expressive authenticity’ is defined by Dutton, with reference to indigenous art, as ‘the true expression of an individual’s or a society’s values and beliefs’ (Dutton 2003: 259). Here, I do not regard expressive authenticity as the original expression of an artistic personality working from individual inspiration, nor of a choral artistic production that mirrors the horizon and expectations of its own historical context (e.g., the Greek *polis*). Rather, I understand expressive authenticity as implying continuity of audience and living critical traditions, i.e., continuity of the social and cultural context in which the object came into being and of which it is the *expression*. It might entail conserving, exhibiting, and passing on evidence of the original, promoting access and education *via* its proxies, and/or assuring use and appreciation of the urban or architectural space.

Archaeology deals with audiences that are gone. Nonetheless, there is continuity (Settim 1994, 2015) across diverse audiences through the life and afterlife of the archaeological objects that have been handed down to us over the centuries. A figurative lineage links the Greek *polis* with the people who in Pergamon and later in Rome furthered the paradigmatic and serial nature of Greek *techne*, underscoring its simulation and copying. The same link also connects the collectors, artists, archaeologists, curators, who, starting from the Middle Ages, have reconstructed, exhibited, replicated classical artworks.

Both the *Victorious Youth* and the original *Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius* that are survivals of much lost ancient art are authentic in this respect. So are the mosaics and frescos inspired by the grand Greek paintings that invaded the floors and walls of the Roman *domus* and their villas, and the crowd of statues – including Glykon’s *Weary Hercules* – that multiplied in baths, gymnasias, fora, and theatres; they reflected, heightened and propagated, like many shards of a broken mirror, the originals they replicated and the image of both Rome and conquered Greece. Not only do they reflect the reception of Greek art in the Roman world but they also contain something of the spirit (or aura) of their ancestors, and over the centuries have been (and are still) inviting us to search for those originals. From the ruins of the Roman empire where these copies have been rediscovered, to the antiquity collections which were gathered from those ruins and inspired the eyes of new copyists and artists, and today’s museums that are born in their turn from those collections, a narrative is sparked. Such a narrative, structured like concentric circles, makes clear the continuity of both audiences, and artistic and critical traditions.

Those museums showcase both classical and post-classical copies, which indeed are instances of the same continuity, especially when the creation process has involved using the same ancient material and

technique. Since the rise of post-imperial museums, copies in European and American museums and universities have been meant to foster educational and artistic training, to promote access to artworks, and to enhance museum narratives (Conestabile 1874: 366–369; De Ruggiero 1874; Salinas 1874; de Zerbi 1885). They were also used to gather the *disiecta membra*, foster repatriations *ante litteram*, and reconstruct lost originals (Salinas 1874; Hartswick 1983). Even today, museum copies replace originals whose survival *in situ* is in jeopardy, such as the Lascaux Caves in France;<sup>1</sup> or which have faced destruction, such as the collection in Mosul Museum, Iraq (Curry 2019); or have been displaced, for example the *Persephone Gaia* of Taranto (Rutigliano 2016); or which are difficult to access. Even museums of reproductions, for instance the Otsūka Museum of Art, Tokushima, Japan, (Puppi 1999, 2003) or touring exhibitions of replicas such as *Tutankhamun: His Tomb and His Treasures*<sup>2</sup> are thought to meet such needs. However, one might wonder whether or not there is continuity of audience and function, i.e., expressive authenticity, in these cases.

Here a difference must be expressed between copies *in situ* and other types of autonomous, context-independent objects. Not only does an *in situ* copy, like that of *Marcus Aurelius*, grant virtual continuity to an audience with the original; it also assures continuity of urban use for the public space of Piazza del Campidoglio and, to some extent, aesthetic, emotional, and cognitive experience and appreciation of it.

As distinct from museum copies – whether Roman or post-classical – *in situ* copies might raise further questions regarding their context's expressive authenticity as well. Latour and Lowe (2008), dealing with the facsimile of Veronese's *Wedding at Cana* in the refectory of St George monastery in Venice, have argued that bringing the new version to the original location can give the copy 'a certain originality'. Piazza del Campidoglio is not the context for which the statue of *Marcus Aurelius* was created, nor its *raison d'être*; it is only its latest location. On the other hand, Michelangelo created this square especially for showcasing the statue, while the copy of *Marcus Aurelius*, in turn, was created especially for that location. Therefore, one may ask where originality and expressive authenticity actually lie.

And what about the *Tiara of Saitaphernes*? Whereas nominal authenticity can be forged – if one can fake the style of an author, use the original material and technique, and counterfeit the documents relating to the discovery, collection, acquisition, restoration, exhibition, etc. of an object, expressive authenticity cannot. The *Tiara* cannot be studied or evaluated as an archaeological relic – even if it was passed off as the authentic expression of a past civilization. It should rather be understood within the history of collecting and curatorship, the history of the archaeological discipline, and the history of taste. It was

aimed at appealing to its own contemporary audience, whose attitude towards and knowledge about the past it therefore mirrors.

In other words, while the copy fulfils the function it has been created for, or however grants some continuity with the original (just as the *Farnese Hercules* exhibits evidence of its model, waiting for later generations to ‘rediscover’ them both, and the copy of *Marcus Aurelius* grants continuity of audience and use to the context of Piazza del Campidoglio), the fake, once unveiled, loses its function (the *Tiara* does not deceive any more), continuity of use (it is removed from display), and appeal to its own audience (the museum that acquired it and its public, who cannot see it any more – and when it can, the host institution is honest about the artwork’s nominal authenticity).

Not only is the nominal authenticity of copies properly represented while that of fakes is not, but while the expressive authenticity of copies grants continuity (to an audience, critical tradition, context, and/or function or use) with the original they replicate, fakes encounter a hiatus.

What fakes and forgeries have in common, instead, is that none are *the* original.

## Originality

Originality has two major meanings. Firstly, creativity or novelty (Lessing 1965; Meyer 1983; Ràdnoti 2006), which is actually a bridge between originality and authenticity (Hoaglund 1976), and secondly, the capacity to originate an artistic or figurative tradition, which I shall call fecundity.

As far as originality and creativity are concerned, one might argue that both fakes and copies imitate or copy models that, either uniquely or serially, instantiate the original answer to one artistic question or aim, which is no longer original (Sagoff 1983; Ràdnoti 2006). Nonetheless, it might be more useful to differentiate between inventive and referential copies/fakes (Levinson 1990: 103). While copies are referential by definition, i.e., they reproduce the original with fidelity or however with minor non-essential variations, most fakes are inventive; they are created *e nihilo* by imitating the style and technique of one or more originals. In this sense, fakes might be said to be original, i.e., creative and novel, and to some degree, copies have less originality.

Within the context of Greek art, which encouraged stylistic invention and iconographic variation but with reference to a conventional repertoire, Lysippus was considered an original artist because he introduced a new canon of the human body’s proportions and dynamicity; he was also the first sculptor

to portray people as they appear rather than as they are. Whether the *Victorious Youth* is to be attributed to Lysippus or one of his acolytes or *epigones*, it is still novel.

In contrast, the *Tiara of Saitaphernes* is an inventive fake that mingles styles and iconographies inspired by various originals. Nor can the *Marcus Aurelius* copy be regarded as the innovative product of second century CE Roman bronze-casting technology and imperial propaganda, but rather its latest legacy.

Concerning the second meaning of originality, a paradox emerges; originality also means fortune or exemplarity, that is, being at the origin of an artistic or figurative tradition. Copies (from the Latin *copia*) reflect, influence, and further what we might call the fecundity of their originals. The fecundity of the Greek originals also emanates from Greek (Jacquemin and Laroche 2001; Rebaudo 2016; Settis 2015: 60) and Roman copies although they also bear the imprint of their latest craftsman and target audience; they might even be regarded as multiple instantiations of the same *schemata* (Goodman 1968; Meager 1959; Wollheim 1968; Ralls 1972; Margolis 1983; Currie 1989; Prieto 1991; Genette 1994).

From the sixteenth century onwards, both originals and copies have become models for further copies, as happened for instance with the bronze statuettes of Marcus Aurelius, created among others by Pietro Bonacolsi (known as ‘L’Antico’) (Settis and Anguissola 2015: 244), or small-scale and larger-than-life copies in various materials of the *Farnese Hercules* (Gasparri 2015; Settis and Anguissola 2015: 232–234). Even today, this image is appropriated by contemporary artists like Léo Caillard, who for his *Farnese Hipster* 2016 (Figure 5), recast in bronze the bust of the hero with added hipster glasses, headphones, and cap. See also Jeff Koon’s *Gazing Ball (Farnese Hercules)* 2013,<sup>3</sup> Matthew Darbyshire’s *An Exhibition for Modern Living* 2010 (Judah 2015), and, most recently, *Punto di Fuga* by JR (Rome, Farnese Palace) 2021 (Pisa 2021). This fecundity, or continuity of artistic tradition, might even be regarded as another instance of expressive authenticity.

When dealing with fakes, things get more complex: prior to being detected, fakes behave like originals or honest copies and might originate or influence an artistic tradition. On the contrary, once proved to be ‘hybrids’ bred from different original ‘species’, fakes usually become infertile (although copies of fakes also exist). Therefore, questions might arise about what we are to do with them.

## **What are we to do with fakes today?**

Expressive authenticity seems to be the primary reason why we have always accepted copies of classical art but still do not accept fakes. Suddenly coming ‘out of nowhere’ and apparently functionless and sterile, once unveiled they are regarded above all as criminal in intent – which is why, when they are private property, seized artworks judged to be counterfeits might even be legally destroyed (Tanni 2018), or defaced or marked as such.

Nonetheless, expressive authenticity also suggests that fakes, as the expression of the cultural, social, and historical *milieu* in which they came to be, mirror that *milieu* and its reception of, knowledge about, and interest towards, the work, the material, or the style they were alleged to embody.

While copies have always been on display, since the late 1800s when art forgery became more widespread,,museums forced to confront doubts concerning authenticity have usually withdrawn contentious objects from display, or even deaccessioned them. When it was proved to be a fake, the *Tiara of Saitaphernes* was relegated to storage.

Nonetheless, from the second decade of the twentieth century, a series of temporary exhibitions on art and archaeological fakes and reproductions held in Europe and the United States have changed this. They have aimed at warning collectors and the public against fraud, and educating them about it, by illustrating indicators of deceit. Other exhibitions have been organized by police units dedicated to fighting forgers, to expose a threat to the integrity of the art world, and to highlight the economic and social costs of crimes. Furthermore, from the 1980s onwards, a series of exhibitions has started to re-evaluate the significance of art forgery for the history of culture and art criticism, acting as a litmus test for contemporary collecting and curatorial policies, and art market trends (Bernard 2020).

Interestingly, the *Tiara of Saitaphernes* has been included in many exhibitions (van Datzing 1952, van Datzing 1954; Anon. 1955; Anon. 1973; Jones *et al.* 1990; Kaeser 2011; Anon. 2018). Most notably, in 1997, it was the centrepiece of *The Secret of the Tiara: The Work of the Goldsmith Israël Rouchomovsky* at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem (Benjamin 1997). This was one of many solo exhibitions meant to reevaluate the character of ‘the forger’ and the originality and authenticity of the forger’s *oeuvre* within a contemporary context (Bernard 2020: 283–284, 292–293). A few years before, the *Tiara* had also been on display at *La Jeunesse des musées: Les musées de France au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* at the Musée d’Orsay in Paris in 1994 (Georgel 1994), an exhibition presenting the history of museum collecting and curatorship in France. More recently, it was on view at *Louvre Atlanta: The Louvre and the Masterpiece* at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta in 2008–2009 (Lemaistre and Brenneman 2008), where it was used to historicize the notion of ‘masterpiece’, which, again, is tied up with the history of

knowledge and the history of collecting. It is also worth saying that, while the ‘authentic *Tiara*’ is not currently on permanent view, the British Museum holds a copy of it made by Rouchomovsky in Paris c.1903–1909. Bequeathed by the British collector Oscar Charles Raphael (1874–1941) in 1947, the copy is currently on display.<sup>4</sup>

Because they are not authentic archaeological objects (Lenain 2011, 2021), fakes are seldom displayed in permanent museum galleries along with authentic ones. The reasoning behind this echoes the temporary exhibitions *La Jeunesse des musées* and *The Louvre and the Masterpiece*, which used them instead as documents for the history of collecting and the history of knowledge and taste.

The Entella documents at the Regional Archaeological Museum ‘Antonino Salinas’ in Palermo, Sicily, illustrate this paradigm. Dating from the third century BCE, these are Greek inscriptions on bronze tablets containing decrees by the Entella *helia* (assembly) and *boule* (council) granting *isopoliteia* (citizenship) to other cities and communities in Sicily. They were publicly posted in the sanctuary of Hestia and the *bouleuterion* (senate house). Excavated by illegal diggers and offered for sale abroad, three genuine pieces, plus one fake, have been repatriated to Palermo. They are all on view at the museum. Displaying the fake Entella document among the original ones enables articulation of the plurality of narratives surrounding the archaeological artifacts: not only does the museum tell the story of the Greek originals in the ancient world, but it also tells the story of their illicit excavation and trade, their presence in collections in the last quarter of the twentieth century, and their incomplete repatriation.

Indeed, like copies, fakes are part of the history of culture, the history of aesthetics, and the history of art criticism; and thus might warrant exhibition.

### **Conclusions and remaining questions**

There are two significant differences between classical art fakes and copies. The first relates to nominal authenticity; whereas the authorship, origin, site of excavation and/or provenance are appropriately named for copies, it is not so for fakes. Secondly, whereas the perceived authenticity of fakes relies in the will and capability of deceiving their own audience, once one becomes aware of their true identity, they lose that audience (and the audience usually loses them), while copies still fulfil their function, occupy a clear position in the context of the original, or speak to its audience, in continuity with artistic, art historical, and critical traditions.

These, I argue, are reasons why, even if none of them are the original, we usually accept copies but do not tolerate fakes, which are hidden in storage and only seldom brought out.

To conclude, I would like to address some open questions relating to expressive authenticity that might guide further discussion on the subject. Firstly, at a time of increasing campaigns for the repatriation of looted and stolen objects, when copies have to take the place of the originals repatriated to the source nation/community (Hollinger *et al.* 2013) or are even ‘returned’ in substitution for the lost originals (Rutigliano 2016), how do the expressive authenticity and the aesthetic and cognitive experience of these copies change, depending on their context? The copies of the Elgin marbles in Bernard Tschumi’s new Acropolis Museum in Athens is a case in point. Their installation looks like an iconic exposition of the missing context: plaster casts and empty spaces in the topo-mimetic display exhibit a physical absence and stage a claim against the British Museum (Lending 2009).

The second question is, how should reconstructions and (de)restorations be handled in a way that relates to their authenticity? In 2015–2016, the German archaeologists Vinzenz and Ulrike Brinkmann added to copies of the *Riace Bronzes* (Figure 6), along with anatomical details and more brightly coloured skin, essential narrative features such as the Corinthian helmet, Greek shield, and spear of *Riace A*, and the fox cap, *pelta*, and axe of *Riace B*. These additions suggested the possible identification of *Riace B* as Eumolpos, the Thracian hero and son of Poseidon, and the other with Erechtheus, the Athenian hero and son of the goddess Athena. They also led to the deduction that the statues were originally erected on the acropolis in Athens, and the attribution of *Riace A* to Myron (Brinkmann 2015; Brinkmann *et al.* 2015; Brinkmann 2016).<sup>5</sup> Not only did this reconstruction provide a glimpse of the original (i.e., primigenial) aesthetic-emotional appearance of the statues, but it also affected the interpretative narrative as relating to both their nominal and expressive authenticity. Nonetheless, one may argue that they are copies and that asserting the original identity of any works is a contentious matter and hypothetical only (Dutton 2003).

Conversely, one may ask whether or not the restoration that changed an original *Kore* into the *Abbondanza Grimani* (Figure 7) compromised its originality and identity (Traversari 1973: 60–65). In the sixteenth century, due to a misinterpretation of the subject, a cornucopia with flowers and fruits was added to the armless Greek Goddess (late fifth – early fourth century BCE) that turned it into the Roman personification of Abundance. The forearms were eventually removed in 1926, when Carlo Anti renovated the Archaeological Museum in Venice ‘mostra[ndo] le sculture nella loro schiettezza, così come le ha restituite il suolo, senza aggiunte o pasticcio’ (showing the sculptures in their frankness,

so as the soil has given them back, with no additions nor *pasticcio*)' (Anti 1927: 599; de Paoli 2019: 34.) Would the removal of deceptive historical additions make an artwork look more original? Would not this rather compromise its authenticity (Brandi *et al.* 1958/1987; Brandi 1963; Muñoz-Viñas 2004; Scott 2016; Scott 2017)? Thinking of the small-scale copies used in the past to test the reconstructions of missing arms or legs on fragmentary statues – of the *Laocoön* or the *Belvedere Torso*, for instance, further questions might also arise concerning what opportunities and challenges digital facsimiles, virtual reality, and augmented reality are offering for the ways that the changing appearance and meaning of museum objects is studied, delivered, and accessed.

The third and last question, if the multiplication of an original though copies across time and space – which Latour called the ‘trajectory’ or ‘career’ of a work of art (Latour and Lowe 2011) accounts for the aura and vitality of that original, how should appropriations from classical art be regarded today? In an era of the global proliferation of visual media, classical artworks and iconographies are appropriated not only by contemporary artists but also by fashion houses, for example the Dolce and Gabbana *Alta Moda* fall/winter collection (Madsen 2019) and for advertising purposes (Casadei 2011) – in ways that someone might consider irreverent. Is this a dangerous game, one that compromises the expressive authenticity and *dignitas* of the originals and their illustrious copies, or, rather, are confiscations from classical art paradoxical antidotes to the mortality of the work of art and its loss of the aura?

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## Notes

1. <https://www.lascaux.fr/en> Lascaux Centre International de l'Arte Parietal. <<https://www.lascaux.fr/en>> [Accessed 26 July 2018].
2. ]. *Tutankhamun – His Tomb and His Treasures* <<http://www.tut-ausstellung.com/en/>> [Accessed 18 July 2021]
3. <http://www.jeffkoons.com/artwork/gazing-ball-sculptures/gazing-ball-farnese-hercules> [Accessed 18 July 2021]
4. British Museum 1986, 1021.1, see [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H\\_1986-1021-1](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1986-1021-1) [Accessed 18 July 2021].

5. See Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung Frankfurt am Main, *Digital Gods in Color. Polychromy in Antiquity*. <<http://buntegoetter.liebieghaus.de/en>> [Accessed 18 July 2021].

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## Figures



Figure 1 Israël Rouchomowsky (1860-1934), *Tiara of Saitaphernes*, c.1894, gold. Paris, Musée du Louvre. Image courtesy of the Musée du Louvre.



Figure 2 Left: Imperial Roman workshop, *Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius* 170–176 CE, bronze. Rome, Capitolini Museums. Right: Italian State Mint, copy of *Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius* 1997, bronze. Rome, Piazza del Campidoglio. Images: Elisa Bernard. © Roma, Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali.

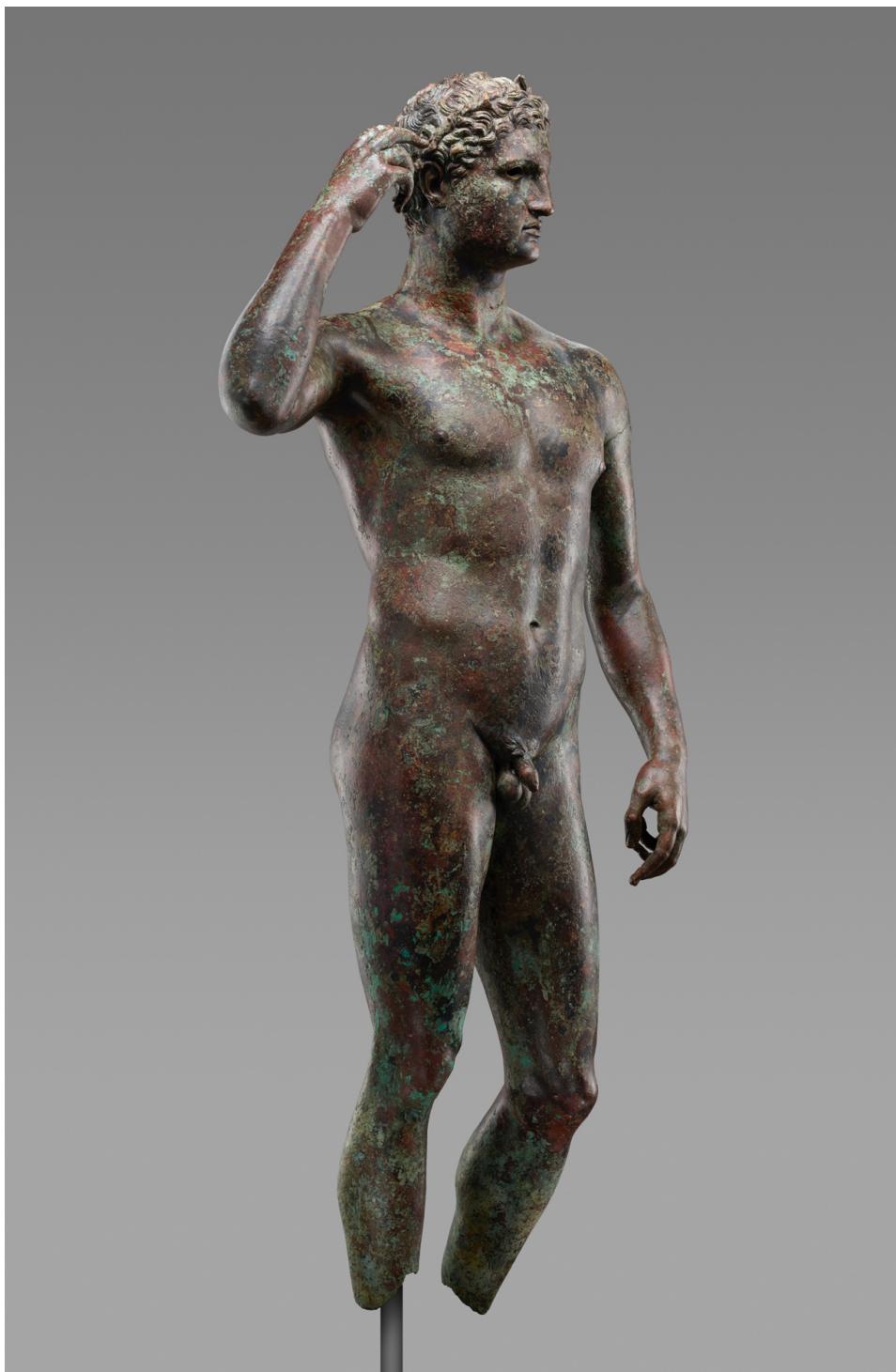


Figure 3 Attributed to Lysippus, *Victorious Youth ('Getty Bronze')* c.320–310 BCE. J. Paul Getty Museum. Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.



Figure 4 Glykon, *Weary Hercules* ('Farnese Hercules') 216 BCE. Roman copy in marble after bronze original c.350 BCE by Lysippus. Naples, National Archaeological Museum. Image: Elisa Bernard. Courtesy of the Ministero della Cultura – Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli.



Figure 5 Léo Caillard, *Farnese Hipster* 2016, bronze on marble base. Image courtesy of the artist.



Figure 6 Experimental colour reconstructions of the bronze warriors *Riace A* and *Riace B*, 2015 and 2016 respectively, in cast bronze, copper, coloured stones, silver, asphalt. Heights 282 cm and 208 cm. Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Frankfurt am Main (on permanent loan from the National Archaeological Museum, Reggio Calabria). Image courtesy of the Liebieghaus Skulpturensammlung, Frankfurt am Main.



Figure 7 *Kore*, Ionic, *Abbondanza Grimani*, late fifth to early fourth century BCE, marble, Venice, National Archaeological Museum. On the left, with sixteenth-century restoration. Image pre-1926: Pellegrini 1914, pl. V.9, reproduced with permission. On the right, the work de-restored. Image taken after 1926, supplied by Wikipedia Commons.