

Art, Architecture & Art History
Greek Sculpture and the Four Elements

University of Massachusetts Amherst

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Preface

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PREFACE

My aim has not been to create yet another survey of Greek sculpture—there are enough excellent specimens of that already available—or indeed to be confined by the strictures of a survey at all. For this reason the criterion for the selection of works to be discussed could not be to illustrate regional schools or the careers of individual sculptors or the range of motifs in use. Rather my criterion was to show fundamental aspects of Four Elements thinking found to be incorporated in the ever-changing renderings of human form executed by a long-lasting race of gifted sculptors. My ultimate goal is to add another dimension to the style historical analysis generally practiced nowadays by art historians or, more specifically, by critics of Greek art. That analysis generally proceeds on an empirical basis and I saw the possibility of underpinning this with some factors arising out of a study of Greek philosophy. This in itself is no startling innovation, given the contemporary trend to multi-disciplinary studies in various fields.

However, in this particular case there might be very limited value in simply lining up in parallel columns the stock materials of two experts. I felt that the inherent dynamic quality of Greek achievement would have to be appreciated and commingled in one mind applying itself to more than one narrow subdiscipline of Classical studies. The vital clue arose in the realization—not itself original, of course, but experienced vividly—that early Greek philosophy is *de facto* Greek science also (and the beginning of science as we know it) and that Late Classical philosophy is also Greek psychology in so far as it can be said to have existed. This situation gave me the two poles which are discussed in the Introduction (Four Elements philosophy and faculty psychology); the resulting necessity to relate these poles to the artistic tradition led me to results that constantly confirmed my intuitions.

A preface is normally the place to express gratitude to specific people and institutions for support and assistance in carrying out the project being presented. This has already been done in the preface to *Greek Color Theory and the Four Elements*, the companion volume of this study, and I refer the reader to that and also to the credits in the present volume.