

# Aarhus Seminars in Classical Antiquity

KLASSISKE STUDIERS SEMINARRÆKKE E2022

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## On the Genesis of Hellenistic Grotto Art: Vari, Lindos, Praeneste - and what Plato has to do with it



The paper seeks to shed light on the mimetic tactics of Hellenistic art closely related to the context of sacred caves. Through the study of examples from Attica, Rhodes, and Praeneste, it emerges that the artificial grottos of Hellenistic and Roman periods still clearly bear witness to these roots.

Already in some sanctuaries of Pan and the Nymphs existed certain installations which related images and context – i.e. the cave – in a highly conceptual way. These rural sanctuaries emerge as starting points of a long and vivid tradition. The specific iconography of the cave, which probably originated in Attica during the fourth century BCE, is only one piece of this complex puzzle. At the heart of the art of the grotto lie different mimetic practices which were already being applied in the

Hellenistic age in a systematic and often combined manner. The question then arises whether through the self-referentiality – established by these divergent mimetic practices – a meditation on the very nature of the image should be provoked.

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**Antikmuseet**

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