CULTURE, SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND THE STATUS OF VISUAL ARTISTS IN CLASSICAL GREECE*

Recent contributions to the debate on the role, status and autonomy of the artist in classical Greece remain polarised in terms which have remained largely unchanged for more than a century. On one side, we find 'modernisers' who hold that the role of the artist, the function of art and the social structure of the Greek art world was more similar to the modern western art world than different.[1] On the other side are ranged the 'primitivists' who argue that modern conceptions of artistic autonomy and creativity are an anachronistic imposition on ancient Greek art, which was a largely anonymous craft, performing traditional functions and oriented to the reproduction of traditional artistic forms rather than the individualistic innovation held to be characteristic of western European art since the Renaissance.[2] The modernisers look back to Winckelmann's neo-classical view of the Greek artist as free and autonomous creator, whilst the primitivists ultimately draw their inspiration from Jacob Burckhardt's alternative account of the Greek artist as mechanical craftsman or *banausos*.[3] In this century, the primary point of reference for the debate has been Bernard Schweitzer's argument that whilst artists were held in low esteem during the classical period of Greek history, the fifth and fourth centuries, they came to be recognised as 'creative' in the Hellenistic period, the third to first centuries B.C.[4] More recent contributions have largely been concerned with adducing, or criticising, new evidence for one or other side of the debate, whilst retaining the assumptions within which the debate was set up in the nineteenth century.[5]

In this article, I seek to advance the debate about Greek artists' role and status by shifting its terms. The argument between primitivists and modernisers may be seen as a particular version of the broader discussion in sociological theory between 'voluntaristic' and 'deterministic' accounts of action, respectively emphasizing the autonomy of the individual actor or the constraints of social and cultural structures. Contemporary social theory has been

[1] Stewart (1979) 109–10, for example, argues that the Greeks affirmed 'the great artist's near god-like status as creator', manifested in the 'revolutionary aesthetic' and 'unrivalled creativity' of Lysippos 'the acme of autonomy in Greek sculpture'; cf. idem (1990) 69.

[2] Primitivists: Ridgeway (1997) 267 denies 'qualities of originality and aesthetic genius such as have been attributed by modern scholarship to the "big names"', preferring to think in terms of a 'high level of sculptural competence ... within the parameters of tradition and extended practice'.

[3] Himmelmann (1979) 127ff. on the origins of the contemporary debate. Coarelli (1980a) reprints Burckhardt's original essay (o.v. 1887) and the more important recent contributions.

[4] Schweitzer (1925), elaborated in idem (1932), esp. 7. Followed by Pollitt (1974) 52–5 with notes 35–41, and 101–2. Cf.Webster (1952), 8ff., esp. 21.

[5] Primitivists: Bianchi-Bandinelli (1957), Coarelli (1980b). Modernisers: Lauter (1974), Wesenberg (1985).

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concerned with transcending this dichotomy, by exploring the 'interplay between structure and agency over time'.[6] Neofunctionalist work has suggested that groups seeking to enhance their status and autonomy need to do considerably more than conceive for themselves a new social or cultural identity. The broader social acceptance or institutionalisation of such an identity is conditioned by a number of factors which may lie outside their immediate control: the interests of groups whose support they seek in redefining their role, 'the larger cultural patterns in terms of which they seek to legitimate their institutional quest … the surrounding social structure that conditions their activities, resources and sources of potential support, and the conflicting interests of their opponents'.[7] Drawing upon this sociological framework, my argument falls into two parts. In part 1, I examine the relationship between the artist and the *polis*. I analyse how structures of patronage in the *polis*, the religious culture of the *polis* and the moral–evaluative culture of the *polis* conditioned and framed the agency of artists in the classical city, and how artists drew upon and negotiated these structures in order make claims to status and construct a limited autonomy. In part 2, I explore the rationalisation of art which followed the Greek revolution and the development of naturalism. I argue that naturalism generated specifically artistic problems of design which were solved through the elaboration of art theory. This theory was constructed on the basis of the techniques of literacy and the intellectual models of other cultural specialists like sophists, philosophers and medical writers. These innovations intersected with changes in the patterns of patronage and the social structure of the Greek art world. Together they loosened the bonds of the *polis* over artists and encouraged attempts to reconstruct the role and public image of the artist in ways which would afford him greater prestige and enhanced autonomy (2.1). I then explore some of the factors that put a limit on this process of artistic rationalisation, preventing the kind of breakthrough towards the creation of an autonomous art world that occurred in the Italian Renaissance. I show how the rationalisation of artistic design was adjusted to and limited by the institutional settings and ideological functions of art in the *polis*, and how the social and cultural interests of other members of the cultural élite, like philosophers and orators, constrained the claims to prestige that artists sought to make on the basis of the theoretical and rational components of the discipline of artistic design (2.2).

1. The artist and the Polis

1.1 Greek artists and the primacy of the political

Some painters and sculptors were well-known figures in classical Greek cities, whether as the basis of comic-playwrights' jokes,[8] or as men who had become notoriously

[6] Archer (1995) 64.
[7] Colomy (1990) 478.
[8] Aristoph. *Ach.* 854–9 on Pauson, *Lys.* 678–9 Mikon, *Plout.* 382–5 Pamphilos.

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wealthy through their craft.[9] Fame and fortune, however, do not necessarily entail either positive social valuation or occupational autonomy. The classical Greek *polis* was a community of citizen–warriors, who provided their own arms. The economic basis of the community was self-sufficient, independent agrarian households. Social organisation was based on a pattern of egalitarian communalism and civic self-governance, with a system of solidarity resting upon ritual confraternity of the citizen body.[10] The 'paramount value pattern' in the classical Greek *polis* accorded primacy to the political sphere.[11] The ideal model was that of the soldier–citizen, the hoplite, ready to serve his city in the political deliberations of the citizen assembly or the political action of war. The primacy of political values in the classical *polis* left the visual artist ideologically and structurally marginal, whilst subject to the tight constraints of a predominately civic patronage system.

The primacy of political values shaped attitudes to sculptors and painters. The normative life-style was that of the peasant farmer, on whatever scale. This not only afforded sufficient leisure to serve the city in the periodic assemblies and the wars which regularly followed the summer harvest, but was also held to harden the body for warfare. Manual occupations, particularly bronze or marble sculpture and to a lesser degree painting, were considered to be not entirely suitable for citizens. Herodotus takes it for granted that all Greeks esteemed craftsmen very poorly in relation to warriors, the only question was how poorly.[12] For Xenophon, 'the banausic crafts spoil body and mind', especially those which 'compel the workers to sit indoors, and in some cases to spend the day by the fire'. Craftsmen are 'bad defenders of their country', with 'no time for attention to friends or city'.[13] It was held that craftsmen who worked for a living were not sufficiently leisured for full political participation. Painters and sculptors, moreover, had to be highly mobile to find patronage. For such highly specialised technicians as painters and sculptors there was very little chance of finding continuous employment in any single location, whether a city or a sanctuary.[14] Myron of Eleutherai, for example, worked in Athens, Olympia, Aegina, Samos, Ephesos, Orchomenos and Akragas on Sicily.[15] They could not be relied upon to be present to defend their city, nor were their life-interests so directly bound up with the fortune of their city – in particular the maintenance of its territorial integrity – as the interests of their fellow citizens.

In receiving wages craftsmen were held to be in a state of dependence on others, in

[9] Pl. *Men.* 91 Pheidias; cf. Stewart (1990) 71 on Iasos of Kollyte, one of the Erechtheion sculptors and sufficiently wealhty to fund as liturgist a Dionysiac Chorus in 387/6.

[10] Bryant (1996) 17ff.; 35ff. on civic confraternisation and cultic solidarity; 91ff. on the hoplite phalanx and the development of communalism.

[11] Finley (1985) 116f.; Bultmann (1956) 105–6. 'Paramount value pattern': Parsons (1953) esp. 398.

[12] Hdt. 2.166f.

[13] *Oik.* 4.2–3. Cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1337b8; Xen. *Mem.* 3.10 (Parrhasios the painter classified alongside Piston the armourer as pursuing a *techne* for business); Burford (1972) 238 n. 334 for further references.

[14] Burford-Cooper (1969) 9.

[15] Burford (1972) 66.

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opposition to the self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*) of the peasant-farmer.[16] The disesteem in which such work was held can only have been strengthened by the major role played by slaves in all kinds of manufacture and craft production. Slaves worked alongside freemen, without apparent distinction, as skilled labourers on major artistic projects.[17] Indeed, the status fragmentation of sculptors and painters, as other craftsmen in the Greek city, the increasing mixing of slave and free, citizen and non-citizen, may in part explain why the developing role-specialisation of artists in the classical period, and the common work experiences and social interests to which such specialisation gave rise, did not provide sufficient basis for the formation of a professional group, in striking contrast to the Academy of Design which developed out of otherwise similar circumstances in the Renaissance.[18]

These are élite texts which stigmatise artists. There is no evidence, however, of a competing system of lower- or working-class values.[19] The same value-system is manifest in texts intended for popular consumption in the theatre and lawcourts. Aristophanes' ridicule of makers and sellers presumably got a laugh.[20] Demosthenes in a courtroom was able to draw on this ideology in order to prejudice a jury against the orator Aeschines' brother Philochares – once elected general and apparently a major wall- and panel-painter – by assimilating him to a painter of vases and alabaster boxes.[21] The sobriquets attached to upwardly mobile new-politicians in the fifth century – Kleon the tanner, Hyperbolos the lamp-maker (probably men whose income or fortune was derived from slave-staffed workshops rather than actually themselves craftsmen) – suggest that active practitioners of the crafts were not considered fit political leaders, and were thus ideologically disqualified from realising the society's highest values.[22] The nearest one gets to a contestation of these values is in the thought of the democratic theoretician Protagoras, as represented in Plato's dialogue of the same name, which goes so far as to include artisans amongst the citizens, rather than excluding them as Plato, and later Aristotle, advocated.[23] Even on vases which represent sculptors' workshops, the practioners of the craft may be visually designated as slavish by their reduced size (compared to the owners/patrons of the workshops also represented on some vases), their ugly unidealised physiognomies and often their position, squatting on the floor with legs apart, like satyrs.[24]

The primacy of the political also shaped the organisation of artistic production. The major artistic projects were civic: temple sculptures, cult-statues, myth–history

[16] Xen. *Mem.* 2.8.5.
[17] Randall (1953).
[18] Cf. Gernet and Boulanger (1932) 298 on slavery and the restricted development of occupational associations.
[19] Loraux (1986) 217; Austin and Vidal-Naquet (1977) 15; Dover (1974) 39–40; contra Philipp (1963) 99.
[20] Dover (1974) 34.
[21] Dem. *De fals. leg.* 19.237; SQ 1957–9.
[22] Burford (1972) 157.
[23] P. Vidal-Naquet ap. Frontisi-Ducroux (1975) 13.
[24] Himmelmann (1971) 35–8.

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paintings for public stoas. The monetary surplus which financed such projects was generally politically produced through windfall revenues, such as war booty,[25] with the consequence that art-production was in most cities rather spasmodic. The massive fifth-century programme of building and artistic production in Athens is an extreme example of the same principle, funded as it was from the revenues of the Athenian empire. The pattern of strict civic control over major building programmes and their associated artistic commissions is widely attested. The inscriptions from Epidauros document close state control over temple-building programmes in the sanctuary of Asklepios, with an elected building commission controlling all aspects of design and representing the community's interest in such projects.[26] Civic paintings, like honorific portraits, were commissioned through the state-assembly, where they were the subject of considerable debate to ensure that collective memory did not end up celebrating particular individuals at the expense of the community.[27] Both the religious and the civic-commemorative functions of art tied production to the temporal framework of civic festivals. Speed, as much as quality and cost, was of the essence. The artist's inspiration could not be waited upon. Contracts specified both dates for completion and penalties if such dates were not met.[28] Finally, once the work was completed, it was subject to civic scrutiny in the courts, where both financial and aesthetic–political proprieties were subject to assessment.[29] Mikon, for example, was fined 30 *mnas* for painting the Greeks smaller than the Persians in his painting of the Battle of Marathon in the Stoa Poikile in the Athenian *agora*.[30]

1.2 Representations of the artist in myth and ritual

Myth and ritual also played a central role in the representation of artists and their placement in the social community of the *polis*. A higher level of esteem for artists is sometimes held to be reflected in the artisans' cult of Athena and Hephaistos, deemed to put painters and sculptors on the same level – that of inspired creators – as the support of the Muses put poets.[31] On closer analysis, however, the set of religious and mythological representations and practices associated with Daidalos, Hephaistos and Athena – the divine and heroic patrons of craftsmen – whilst allocating a specific place to artists and craftsmen within the system of polytheism, at the same time articulate profound

[25] E.g. Paus. 9.4. More generally: Pritchett (1971) 53ff., 93ff.; (1991) 438ff.

[26] Burford-Cooper (1969) 14ff., 127ff.

[27] Plut. *Vit. Pel.* 25.2–7.

[28] Plut. *Mor.* 498; Pliny, *HN* 35.109; Lauter (1974); Burford-Cooper (1969) 97 on penalties for sloppy workmanship and delayed completion of contracts.

[29] On the courts as representing the assembled *demos* in its judicial capacity: MacDowell (1978) 33–40.

[30] Harpocration, s.v. *Mikon*; EAA, s.v. *Mikon*: a 'misunderstood' perspective effect: Greeks = Free, Persians/barbarians = natural slaves, therefore Persians must be smaller than Greeks (and cannot be shown in front of Greeks with the latter represented in perspectival recession): cf. Himmelmann (1971) 35ff.

[31] Carandini (1980) esp. 166–7; Philipp (1963) 64–5; idem (1990) esp. 83–4; Webster (1939) 174.

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cultural ambivalence about craftsmen. Although the centrality of these representations was gradually eroded – as the ideological terrain on which the argument about the nature and status of craftsmen was fought out shifted to the more abstract, generalised level of sophistic and philosophical thought, and the key criterion of rationality – they were still dominant in civic and popular thought of the fifth century (and still in the process of being reconstructed).[32] Craftsmen were amongst the primary adherents of the cult of Athena and Hephaistos located on the edge of Athenian *agora*, alongside the Kerameikos or potters' quarter. Fifth-century vase-paintings show Hephaistos and Athena present in vase-painters' and sculptors' workshops as patrons, protecting their clients from baneful influences and ensuring the successful outcome of their work.[33] A weaver of the archaic period might boast that 'queenly Pallas Athene had breathed ineffable charm (*charis*) on his hands', whilst a fifth-century sculptor, Arkesilas, claimed to be 'well-practised in the arts of Athena'.[34] But, whereas inspiration by the Muses gives poets access to the 'truth' (*alētheia*) and authorises their poetic voice,[35] the gifts of Athena and Hephaistos are not so much a matter of inspiration as of manual skill and practical intelligence, *mētis*.[36] Far from providing the cultural resources with which artists might have constructed a rationally systematised occupational identity – analogous to that of late-classical philosophers, Vasari's Academicians, or the modern artist's vocation as creator – the cult of Athena and Hephaistos bound craftsmen to the *ad hoc* instrumentalism of magic. As they fired their pots, potters prayed to Athena to 'spread her hand over the kiln' and prevent ill-disposed demons from damaging its contents. Representations of workshops on vases show Athena's owl sitting or hovering over the kiln, confronting a phallic dwarf, bearer of the evil-eye and a threat to the success of the craftsman's enterprise.[37] At best, the technical arts, the gift of Hephaistos and Athena, were of an altogether lower order than the civic arts, the gifts of Zeus.[38] At worst mythic representations of the figure of the artist articulate a profound ambivalence about the figure of the artist–craftsman. In a world where gods are characterised not least by extraordinary beauty and physical prowess, Hephaistos is lame and misshapen. A similar ambivalence runs through the myth of the Athenian culture-hero and artist Daidalos.[39] The man who brings all to light – representing the gods to men in statues, opening the eyes of statues – is also a deceitful hider of things (Pasiphae in the wooden cow, the Minotaur in the labyrinth); master of animation, the murderer of his own patron; brilliant imitator of nature, the contriver of the Minotaur, a monstrosity contrary to nature.

[32] Morris (1992) 215–56, 357–61.
[33] Philipp (1963) 64ff.
[34] Ath. 2.48b = SQ 385; D.L. 4.45. Cf. the dedication of a group of the Three Graces by the sculptor Bathykles, on the successful completion of a cult-statue of Apollo at Amyklai: Paus. 3.18.
[35] Detienne (1967).
[36] Detienne and Vernant (1978); Brisson and Frontisi-Ducroux (1992).
[37] Brisson and Frontisi-Ducroux (1992); although the phallic dwarf might equally be a form of protection against the evil-eye and kiln-smashing demons.
[38] Pl. *Prot.* 321–2.
[39] Frontisi-Ducroux (1975); Brisson and Frontisi-Ducroux (1992).

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1.3 Votives, signatures and the social structure of the art market

This framework of social organisation, moral culture, and religious representation did not wholly determine the status of artists in the Greek *polis*. Individual artists actively engaged these frameworks in order to make personal claims to a higher level of prestige as one exceptionally gifted craftsman amongst others, or as a citizen whose occupation should not disqualify him from respectable political status. Such negotiations of a broadly accepted framework, however, should not be confused with more radical attempts to try to redefine the role of the artist, and make claims to individual, specifically artistic autonomy, such as we encounter in the later classical period, or in the modern European tradition after the Renaissance. Far from seriously contesting established images and evaluations of artists, as some have suggested, such negotiations of the dominant frameworks as we find in the late archaic and early classical periods only served to reproduce them.

The practice of painters and sculptors in signing their work in archaic and classical Greece has often been linked to the supposed boundary formation of art as an autonomous province of meaning and system of cultural production legitimated in terms of the individual artist's creativity.[40] The practice of signing however, has no intrinsic meaning but must rather be embedded in a broader context of social relations, in which the signature is understood less 'for the signer himself, [than] for the group which attaches a certain importance to the signature'.[41] Signatures often represent only the workshop owned by the named artist, not necessarily the artist's hand,[42] a guarantee of quality like medieval signatures rather than an indication of individual creative pride.[43] Loewy's and Marcadé's invaluable collections of inscribed 'signatures' of classical sculptors are in this respect rather misleading.[44] They set artists apart from other classical craftsmen who were asserting comparable pride in their accomplishment through the same medium: the stonemason Parmenon, for instance, who signed one of the blocks of a nice piece of polygonal walling he had constructed.[45] Similarly the boastful epigrams of the painter Parrhasios, claiming primacy in his *techne* amongst the Greeks, can be paralleled by the Attic sepulchral epigram of Atotas the Paphlogonian miner, 'no one rivalled me in skill',[46] or the epitaph of the potter Bakchios, a producer of ordinary black-glazed ware, celebrating his victories in competitions organised by cities for commissioning pottery.[47] Symptomatically, on one of the few occasions when a sculptor gets the opportunity to tell us very much about himself

[40] Philipp (1963) 99; idem (1990) 100; Metzler (1971) 54; Lauter (1974) 8.
[41] Siebert (1978), quotation p. 112.
[42] Philipp (1990) 88–9.
[43] Coarelli (1980b) xxviii.
[44] Loewy (1895); Marcadé (1953–7).
[45] IG XII 8.390; Burford (1972) 215.
[46] IG II^2 10051; Burford (1972) 177.
[47] IG II^2 6320 (second half fourth century B.C.); *JDAI* 1920, 69–72; trans. Burford (1972) 178.

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on a statue base (rather than an epitaph), he lays claim to fame, not as a sculptor nor for any specifically 'artistic' competence, but for having been the inventor of a new kind of starting-gate for the chariot-racing at Olympia.[48]

Artists' and craftsmen's votives, whether small plaques with representations of their activities or more monumental thank-offerings for success in business, perhaps represent a more specific assertion of status and self-conscious identity. Particular attention has been drawn to a series of dedications on the Athenian akropolis made by potters in the late sixth and early fifth century, some of which take the form of *kouroi* or *korai* whilst others are reliefs representing the potter himself with his pots, perhaps giving one to the goddess Athena.[49] These certainly suggest a certain pride in the craft itself and in the worldly success achieved by the dedicant through his craft, and it is tempting to see such self-assertion as the beginnings of a more autonomous artistic identity,[50] anticipating the supposed artistic freedom of the Greek revolution.[51] Such votives, however, may owe more to traditional religious conceptions of craft, and their variable appropriation in the shifting circumstances of the production and marketing structures of the Greek art world, than to any epochal breakthrough in the role and status of artists. At one end of the spectrum are the little votives like the Pentaskouphia plaques: small clay tablets, painted with representations of craftsmen such as potters at their work, and placed in the oven in which the pots were fired, sometimes with an inscription invoking the protection of a deity like Herakles at this the most risky stage of the manufacturing process.[52] Similarly indebted to traditional religious understandings of the artist's role, and the importance of ritually mobilised divine favour in artistic accomplishment, are images of Nike dedicated by artists to celebrate victory in the competition for a particular commission and more generalised success. These range from a red-figure *hydria* representing Athena and Nike crowning two vase-painters in their workshop,[53] to the statue of Nike dedicated in the sanctuary of Apollo at Delos in the mid sixth century by the Chiot sculptors Mikkiades and Achermos.[54] Such representations serve not to break out of traditional understandings of the role of artists and the nature of artistry, but only to establish hierarchy amongst other sculptors and vase-painters within traditional representational frameworks by laying claim to particular divine favour.[55] They do not reorder the place of the visual artist within the larger classificatory system represented by Greek polytheism, nor do they form the basis of the

[48] Paus. 6.20.14 (Kleoitas, early fifth century).

[49] Guarducci (1958) 88; Carandini (1980)166–7; fullest account of this material: Scheibler (1979). Most recently see Gill (1991); Vickers and Gill (1994) 93–5.

[50] Guarducci (1958) 88; Carandini (1980) 166–7.

[51] Hölscher (1974) esp. 95–108; Metzler (1971) esp. 60–3.

[52] Scheibler (1979) 17; Mark (1995) 29.

[53] Himmelmann (1994) 12, fig. 6.

[54] Scheibler (1979) 20.

[55] As does Paionios' later epigrammatic appropriation of the Messenians' statue of Nike, in order to celebrate his own victory in a competition for the commission for *akroteria* for the temple of Zeus at Olympia; cf. Hölscher (1974).

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construction of specific professional identity grounded in an explicit theoretical rationale. The idiom remains a traditional religious one, shared with other craftsmen. On the Athenian akropolis in the late archaic period, alongside the well-known potters' votives, there stood comparable dedications by a washerwoman, a shipbuilder, a fuller and a tanner.[56]

1.4 Social change and artistic identity in late archaic and early classical Athens

Even if they do not as such overturn traditional images and conceptions of the role and status of craftsmen, such votives do attest first to shifts in market structure and opportunities which such changes afforded, and second to an increased concern with questions of social and cultural identity on the part of visual artists and other craftsmen, which in part arose from developments in the market.[57] Paradoxically, however, the enhanced political status of craftsmen as full citizens in post-Kleisthenic Athens may well have undermined the emergent class consciousness of craftsmen and artists as manifested in late archaic votive self-representations.

The increased affluence of at least the most successful of the growing population of craft producers in sixth-century Athens, amply attested by the akropolis votives, may have produced a sense of status discrepancy when such craftsmen compared themselves with members of the aristocratic élite. Whilst not contesting their traditional role representations, visual artists and craftsmen adopted two contrasting strategies in order to enhance their status within the framework of dominant aristocratic culture of *kalok'agathia*. On the one hand they could ape it. They might adopt aristocratic idioms for making claims to prestige, as Nearchos did in dedicating a *kore* on the Akropolis.[58] Further, they might fantasise participation in the social rituals of aristocratic life. A number of late archaic vases play with the idea of potters taking part in aristocratic symposia, or receiving the kind of literary and musical education which was the cultural monopoly of the élite.[59] On the other hand, excluded from real participation in the social networks and cultural contexts like the *symposion* and the gymnasia in which traditional aristocratic culture was transmitted, they could transvalue the negative or ambivalent representations of craft in dominantly aristocratic culture into a positive self-image. Even in contexts where the importance of the craftsman or artist is being celebrated, representations – for example images like that of Hephaistos on the Foundry-Painter's cup – do not disguise but clearly mark the crippled leg of the god. Similarly, a votive plaque showing the potter Lokris at his kiln represents him with crippled leg and foot, whether a realistic detail or an identification with the craft god Hephaistos, or both.[60]

[56] Scheibler (1979) 13; Raubitschek (1949) nos. 58, 196, 342, 376, 383; Williams (1995) 151.
[57] Williams (1995) 143ff.
[58] Richter (1968) no. 110.
[59] Mark (1995) 29–31; Frel (1983).
[60] Zimmer (1982) 31, fig. 14.

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We might therefore interpret the elements of realism in the representation of artisans – the bloated stomachs of the squatting sculptors on the exterior of the Foundry-Painter's cup, or the enlarged penises of the potters on the Pentaskouphia plaques[61] – as a self-conscious inversion of the normative athletic body of the elite, grounded in a different relationship to the body inculcated by the educational and life-experiences of disenfranchised artisans which differed markedly from those of a leisured and politically active aristocratic elite. The former received a practical education on the job in workshops, whilst the literary and athletic education of the aristocracy took place in the socially exclusive settings of the gymnasium and the *symposion*.

Neither strategy pursued by the artisans, however, offered an identity entirely free from contradiction. Identification with *kouroi* or *korai* presupposed both an ideology and a body-image radically distinct from that of craftsmen's practical experience, as well as participation in networks of social and cultural exchange – of women in marriage and religious capital in the form of priesthoods and other religious roles – from which they were excluded.[62] Our own difficulty in distinguishing between a self-assertive realism in representations of craftsmen in vase-paintings and votive plaques, and the internalisation of disparaging élite representations of craftsmen may represent the instability of the boundary between such evaluations in late archaic Athens, as much as any indequacy of the evidence available to us.[63] Artisans' realist self-representations were always framed within the dominant aristocratic ideologies of *kalok'agathia*, to which they were a reaction, and consequently it cannot have been easy to sustain the positive connotations of such realism.

With the elaboration of the institutions and ideology of democracy at Athens during the course of the first half of the fifth century, the sharpness of status differences between élite and *demos* was eroded. Full participatory rights of citizenship were extended to groups, like craftsmen, who would not have enjoyed it before, and the aristocratic ideal of *kalok'agathia* was, to some degee, democratised.[64] The development of public contexts of performance in tragic and comic drama and the elaboration of political institutions – such as the *boulē*, the assembly, lawcourts and local deme institutions – greatly extended the degree of cultural experience shared by the old aristocratic élite and craftsmen amongst other members of the *demos*. Craftsmen – who in the late archaic period had been faced with the choice of either aping their betters, or recognising their practical exclusion from such élite society and reacting by developing inversions of aristocratic norms as an alternative group ideology – were now faced with a different situation. The primacy of political values and the model of the citizen-hoplite still precluded a high level of esteem for craft *per se*, but the broader social extension of significant political roles offered craftsmen a source of self-esteem, with some real practical basis, which was a positive alternative to the earlier oppositional or imitative

[61] On the Pentaskouphia plaques, Himmelmann (1994) 9–11, fig. 5; Zimmer (1982) 26–32.

[62] Karusos (1961); Osborne (1994a).

[63] Compare Himmelmann (1971) (realism as élite hostility) with Himmelmann (1994) 6ff. (realism as artistic self-assertion).

[64] Loraux (1986). Cf. Ps-Xen 2.10 on the creation of public gymnasia.

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strategies. The increased participation of slaves and foreigners in craft production may have reduced the attraction of further elaborating an identity rooted in class or labour.[65] Slaves also provided the leisure which allowed craftsmen the opportunity to participate in the kinds of cultural practices – political debate, exercise in the *gymnasion* – which gave a more realistic substance to their self-representation as ideal citizens than their identification with the aristocratic image in the late archaic period.

During the course of the fifth century representations of banausic activities – whether craftsmen or shepherds and fishermen – disappear from Attic vase-painting.[66] One of the last is highly suggestive of the shifting basis of status identity during this period. A red-figure cup from Boston, dated *c.*480 B.C., shows a seated vase-painter, painting a *kylix*. Leaning against his stool is a stick, whilst on the wall hang the athlete's strigil, oil-flask and sponge – the attributes of the free citizen, who enjoys the leisure for political debate in the *agora* and for shaping his body in conformity with civic ideals through regular athletic exercise in the *palaistra*.[67] Significantly, when the monumental funerary and votive reliefs reappear at Athens in the later fifth century, and throughout the series which continues in the fourth century, representations of craftsmen or other *banausoi* occur extremely seldom, and even those few eschew the realistic details which in the archaic period might distinguish the body-image of craftsmen from the dominant ideal of the *kaloik'agathoi*.[68] A more generalised civic image, of a mature, adult bearded man, draped in a cloak and supported on a stick – in other words dressed appropriately for participation in leisured political activity in the *agora*, like the tribal heroes represented on the Parthenon frieze – is preferred.[69] The ideal image of citizen, promulgated in such classic documents as Thucydides' Funeral Speech or on the Parthenon frieze, seems entirely to have swamped class identity, at least in the sphere of public self-representation.[70]

The expansion of civic euergetism in democratic Athens, replacing the personal patronage characteristic of the archaic period, afforded further opportunities for visual artists to develop prestigious civic personae. When the early fifth-century painter Polygnotos painted the Sack of Troy in the Stoa Poikile in the Athenian *agora*, he refused payment and thereby evaded the status reduction associated with wage dependency. He was celebrated for this action, however, not as a painter or for the high quality of his paintings, but, in accordance with a more general civic ideology, as one who had benefited the city by expending his resources on its behalf. Similarly, when he was awarded hospitality – presumably board and lodging – at public expense by the Amphiktyones whilst working in the sanctuary at Delphi, he was not being honoured as an artist as such, but as a public benefactor.[71] This does not in itself indicate the high

[65] Himmelmann (1979) 128.
[66] Himmelmann (1994) 17.
[67] Himmelmann (1994) 13, fig. 7; 28ff.; Mark (1995) 31ff.
[68] Himmelmann (1994) 18 and 28–33.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Contrast Roman craftsmen and freedmen, like Eurysaces the baker; cf. Kampen (1981).
[71] Plut. *Kim.* 4.5–6; Pliny, *HN* 35.59.

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occupational status of artists: in some cities even foreign potters might be awarded civic privileges extending as far as citizenship in return for completing public commissions on behalf of the state.[72] It simply demonstrates the extent to which a political value-system came to dominate all considerations of social status. Within this political value-system, it was extraordinarily difficult to place a positive value on manual work, whether artistic or otherwise. The best that could be said of such work was that it was not a disgrace to work if one had to, and that such regrettable necessities should not count against one's political achievements.[73] Symptomatically, when, in a court-setting, Demosthenes slanders Aeschines' brother, the well-known painter Philochares, suggesting that here was nothing more than a painter of funerary *lekythoi* and tympana, Aeschines does not reply by asserting Philochares' relatively high professional ranking as a painter, but by celebrating his high social status, as 'a frequenter of the gymnasia', and his political achievments, 'a one-time comrade of Iphikrates in the field, and a general now for the past three years'.[74]

2. Art and rationalisation in classical Greece

In this section , I shift the primary focus of my analysis away from the broader social structure of the Greek *polis* which shaped both frameworks of patronage and the moral and religious culture within which craft-occupations were classified and evaluated. I turn instead to more technical questions of artistic design as the 'material substance' out of which a new structure of artistic agency was constructed during the later fifth and fourth centuries.[75] My argument starts from the familiar observation that the transformation in the languages of Greek art represented by the Greek revolution necessarily also transformed artistic practice. Traditionally, the Greek revolution has been seen as marking not only a transformation in the languages of art, and their technical foundations, but also in the role of the artist more broadly, and indeed in the whole function of art: according to some it entailed the emergence of the first autonomous or free art world, comparable with the art worlds of the modern West.[76] Art becomes disembedded from its social and religious functions, the modern idea of the artist as free and

[72] Burford (1972) 34 (the Ephesians grant citizenship to two Athenian potters, fourth century B.C.).

[73] Thuc. 2.40.

[74] Aeschines, *On the embassy* 149; cf. Demosthenes, *De falsa leg.* 237.

[75] Cf. Brain (1989) 40.

[76] Hölscher (1974) gives the most sophisticated reprise of a theme which goes back to Winckelmann, esp. 95–108: 'and because the artist could now decide relatively freely as regards the complete construction of every statue, a fundamentally new significance must have been attributed to him as the form-giving subject'(98). Cf. Metzler (1971) esp. 60–3: 'Free from every tutelage of religion or the state', the production of art in classical Athens was autonomous, regulated in terms of specifically aesthetic values. 'Because of the individuality of the artists, as of their patrons, the development of art in free Greek society naturally led not to the traditionalistic academicism of the monolithic cultures of the ancient orient, but instead to an individualistic concern with the solution of self-set problems.' Gombrich (1959) presents perhaps the best-known version of the argument that the Greek revolution can only be explained by 'a change in the whole function of art' (quotation: 108).

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autonomous creator is born, and art becomes the vehicle of artists' personal expressions of aesthetic philosophy, to be interpreted as such.[77]

In practice, such analyses assume a series of homologies between different levels of social and cultural structures and practices: social and political organisation, organisation of artistic production, languages of art, role of the artist, functions of art and organisation of reception of art – all characterised by freedom and structural autonomy. I want to start from an alternative assumption, namely that societies consist in 'differentiated ensembles of organised practices', in which changes in one set of practices may or may not ramify into and transform other social domains.[78] The creation of homologies – the extension of a higher level of autonomy within the languages of art, first to a higher level of autonomy in the social organisation of art, and then further to a transformation in the social functions of art from a politically embeddded to an autonomous art – is not an automatic process. On the contrary, it depends on the interests of actors, in our cases artists, in reorganising social and cultural structures and practices on these various levels, and upon their capacity to do so.[79] Their capacity to do so depends on a number of factors. First, they must develop material and cultural resources that permit the reorganisation of these levels of social and cultural practice. Second, they must find some way of overcoming the countervailing interests and efforts of other groups who are committed to already existing arrangments, whether ways of organising artistic production, using and evaluating art, or of classifying and esteeming artists.[80] My argument will involve several interrelated steps. The development of naturalism created demands and opportunities for artists to transform practices of artistic design in such a way as to enhance their importance in determining the particular visual form of a statue or painting (2.1). Artists drew upon contemporary scientific and philosophical thought both to reconstruct their design practices, and to realign artistic design with the broader culture and society in which it was embedded, seeking in particular to enhance the status and autonomy of artists. This process, already under way in the fifth century, was accelerated in the fourth century by favourable changes in patterns of patronage and the structure of the art market. This gave rise to strong claims for prestige and autonomy on the part of some leading artists, and even the creation of a small group of works of art which have a self-reflexive character, designed to be read in purely artistic terms as expressions of the specifically aesthetic projects of their producers. In the following section (2.2), I shall argue that this process of artistic rationalisation was in fact a good deal more limited than scholars have traditionally allowed.

[77] Most recently in a collection of papers on Polykleitos' Doryphoros, Moon (1995). For example H. Meyer (87): 'It would seem that the untenable equilibrium of the Doryphoros makes visible the cosmic harmony in which the human being (in Herakleitos' thinking the *oppositum coincidens* of the gods) partakes.' Or J.J. Pollitt (ibid. 22): 'Works like the Doryphoros were vehicles through which one could contemplate, like a Pythagorean philosopher, the perfect number, *to eu* of man.'

[78] Bryant (1996) 400.

[79] Cf. Archer (1988) 7–21 on the very high levels of social and cultural integration of traditional societies as historical products, rather than an essential characteristic of traditional societies.

[80] For this neofunctionalist formulation of the conditions of structural differentiation, Colomy (1990).

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2.1 Naturalism and rationalisation by design

The traditional association of the Greek revolution and the development of naturalism with democracy and even artistic freedom is not entirely misleading. In archaic *kouroi* and *korai*, the basic structure of the statue was codified within the genre, and the individual contribution of artists limited to variations in the elaboration of ornament or the fineness of the finish within a fundamentally fixed overall design. The development of naturalism – the representation of weight-bearing and free legs and arms, and the ramifications of the muscular tensions generated by these throughout the human body – afforded artists representational problems in which they had to make choices which could fundamentally shape the overall appearance of a statue in a way which was not true of their archaic predecessors. Theoretical reflection and writing, drawing upon the model of contemporary philosophical and scientific throught, was one way in which artists sought to address and think through these new representational problems, and to codify and communicate to each other their solutions.

The precise nature of the relationship between art-theoretical thought and philosophy more generally in fifth-century Greece is a matter of some controversy. The philosopher Demokritos of Abdera is known to have written works 'On painting' (*peri zōgraphias*), 'On colours' (*peri chrōōn*), and on linear perspective (*aktinographiē*), in part under the influence of scene-paintings and a commentary on them by the painter Agatharchos.[81] Some have wanted to see in this the mutual influence of art and philosophy, and giving rise to both the history and the philosophy of 'fine art'.[82] A closer look at the ancient classification of Demokritos' writings, however, suggests that his work on painting, colours and linear perspective were discrete treatises rather than elements of a general theory of fine art. The *aktinographiē* is listed as a mathematical work, 'On painting' as a work on *technai* (alongside a treatise on fighting in armour and another on land measurement), 'On colours' as a work of physics – alongside 'On flavours'.[83] Perspective construction in fifth-century painting was of an empirical *ad hoc* nature, not systematic or mathematically calculable.[84] It seems probable that Demokritos' *aktinographiē*, whilst prompted by Agatharchos' paintings, was a subsequent rationalisation of the problems of perspective implicit in them, rather than that Agatharchos' own painting was philosophically informed.

Polykleitos in the mid-fifth century created a statue, the *Doryphoros* or 'Spear-bearer', preserved today in Roman copies, as a 'canon' or model for sculpture with an accompanying treatise also entitled the 'Canon', of which fragments survive in later writers.[85] Some argue that this was a sophisticated work of theoretical aesthetics, deeply

[81] D.L. 9.48; Vitr. 7.praef.10.
[82] Keuls (1978) 48ff., 66, 130ff.; Philipp (1963) 48–61.
[83] D.L. 9.46–9.
[84] Rouveret (1989) 95.
[85] The relevant fragments are collected in FVS no 40, pp. 391–3. See also Galen, ed. Kuhn, I. 566–7; IV. 351–3; 606; Galen, *de plac. Hipp.*, ed. Müeller, pp. 425–6; Plut. *Mor.* 85–6; 636. Cf. Urlichs (1887) 5ff.

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informed by Pythagorean philosophy and concerned with purely formal questions of proportion and symmetry, rather than a technical or practical work concerned with the kind of workshop procedures for mapping out the basic proportions and form of a statue such as we know to have been used even in the archaic period.[86] Polykleitos was certainly concerned with the aesthetic problems of the relationship of the parts of the body in a statue to each other,[87] a problem much more difficult of solution in naturalistic statues – characterised by variety of pose, dispositions of the parts of the body and muscular tensions – than in archaic *kouroi*. Other fragments – τὸ γὰρ εὖ παρὰ μικρὸν διὰ πολλῶν ἀριθμῶν γίγνεσθαι – can be taken to suggest Pythagorean number mysticism.[88] The context in which this fragment is repeated, however, is a discussion by Philo Mechanicus of the difficulty of producing operative catapults of varying size and throwing capacity on the basis of a single model. Because the relations of the parts of the catapult to one another change with changes in scale, simply doubling the size of each part will not work. On the contrary, many measurements are required and gradual adjustment of the parts to each other, until the machine works. Neither metaphysical nor specifically aesthetic preoccupations are immediately apparent. In other fragments also, Polykleitos' concern appears to be primarily practical.[89] Stewart consequently inferred that Pythagoras and Polykleitos may have shared only an interest in the same arithmetical progression, used by Pythagoras to determine the principles of the universe and by Polykleitos as a practical aid to design.[90]

Even if the philosophical pretensions of Polykleitos' *Canon* were quite limited, the treatise represented a marked step forward in the rationalisation of the cognitive/intellectual basis of Greek art. First, the objectification of workshop procedures in writing made them an object of sustainable reflection and further development on the model of other *technai* – like medicine, music, architecture and city-planning – which were the subject of theoretical writing in the middle of the fifth century,[91] even if there is little evidence to suggest that this potential was realised to any significant degree until the fourth century. Second, formulating the problem of design as something which could be approached and solved in exact mathematical terms was at least implicity – perhaps explicity if we had the full text – claiming a scientific status for art.[92] Precision – *akribeia* – was a central criterion according to which scientific *technai* based in real knowledge (*epistēmē*) might be distinguished from 'things without reason' – *alogon pragmata* – domains like medicine or rhetoric, held by some to be founded on nothing more substantial than opinion (*doxa*) and guesswork.[93] Alongside syllogistic argument,

[86] Robertson (1975) 328–9; Pollitt (1964); (1974) 14ff.; Lauter (1974) 9.
[87] *De plac. Hipp.*, ed Mueller, p. 426; transl. Pollitt (1974) 14–15.
[88] Philo Mech. 4.1, p. 49,.20; FVS 40.b.2; Pollitt (1974) 15–21, transl. p.15.
[89] Plut. *Mor.* 636C.
[90] Stewart (1978a) 130.
[91] Metzler (1971) 68.
[92] Schneider (1989) 270ff. on the importance of defining problems in terms which permitted exact and mathematic solution in the Greek technical literature.
[93] On the use of the term *akribeia* and its Latin counterpart *diligentia* in art critical contexts, Pollitt (1974) 117–32 in the student edition. In Plato's *Philebus technai* are ranked according to their level of *akribeia*.

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mathematical operations were particularly favoured as indicators of technical rationality, in particular in so far as they relied purely on intellect rather than being contaminated by possibly misleading sensory experience. Sokrates' suggestion that rhetoric was not a *technē*, because like cooking it relied purely on experience, and completely ignored the intellectual precison afforded by mathematics and number (*ouden diarithmēsamenē*) could hardly be applied to Polykleitan sculptural design, reliant as it was on *polloi arithmoi*.[94]

Only at the very end of the fifth century and in the fourth century, did the opportunities for a radical reorganisation of the relationship between visual art, élite intellectual culture and society – which had been opened up by Polykleitos on the limited level of design – begin to be exploited. Changes in patterns of patronage and the structure of the art market encouraged and enabled artists to extend the rationalisation of art from design practices to broader domains, impinging on the definition of the role of the artist, artists' status and conceptions of the function of art – its place as a particular cultural form within the broader social structure.

In the fifth century, Athens, uniquely amongst *poleis*, had been able to sustain more or less continuously a series of major artistic projects by virtue of the revenues derived from the Athenian empire. In the fourth century, when she had lost her empire and public finances were a perennial problem, no single patron dominated the art-market. Whilst there were occasional major civic projects sponsored by Greek *poleis* – the temple of Athena Alea at Tegea for example – civic art tended to be on a smaller scale, honorific portraits and smaller cult-statues like Kephisodotos' Ploutos and Eirene, rather than the chryselephantine colossoi of the fifth century.[95] The most important large-scale projects were increasingly sponsored by monarchs on the margins of civic life.[96] In addition, private patronage gained a new importance. Restrictions on funerary expenditure seem to have been relaxed, and fourth-century Athens has bequeathed a marvellous series of sculpted grave monuments. New kinds of collectivity, like the philosophical schools, generated further commissions, often, although not exclusively, portraits of their leaders.[97] A wider range of patrons competing for their services enhanced artists' freedom of action in relation to their

[94] On rhetoric as οὐδὲν διαριθμησαμένη, see Pl. *Gorg.* 501a, 463b with Schneider (1989) 157. The concern with intellectual demonstrability and the mathematisation of the world was, of course, by no means an innovation of Plato. In Aristophanes' *Clouds* (200ff.), the Phrontisterion is decorated with images of geometry. Pythagorean philosophers like Philolaos in the middle of the fifth century and Archytas in the early fourth had sought even to organise social action according to mathematical principles: Pl. *Gorg.* 568a; cf. Eur. *Phoenissae* 528ff., with Schneider (1989) 173ff. For Archytas' mathematisation of mechanics, D.L. 8.83.

[95] Burford-Cooper (1969) 82 points out that the costs of the buildings even of quite major 4th-century programmes like that at Epidauros are very modest compared with the programmes of the fifth century.

[96] Archelaos of Macedon paid Zeuxis 400 *mnas* for painting his palace (Ael. *VH* 14.17); Bryaxis, Leochares, Timotheos, Scopas, Praxiteles all employed on Mausolus of Caria's tomb; Hellenistic kings – Pollitt (1986) 19–46.

[97] D.L. 3.25; Frischer (1982).

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patrons: the late classical and early Hellenistic period sees a series of anecdotes in which the autonomy of artists in setting their own criteria of performance is asserted against or recognised by kings.[98]

The smaller scale of even civic commissions seems to have promoted the commodification of art, which came to be made speculatively and sold to purchasers as well as commissioned.[99] Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Knidos was one of a pair of Aphrodites made by Praxiteles. The people of Kos, shocked by the nudity of the one, were unwilling to buy it and chose instead the draped Aphrodite which Praxiteles also had to hand, whilst the naked Aphrodite was bought by the Knidians.[100] A similar picture is presupposed by the stories of Zeuxis giving away his paintings, and the anecdote which tells how Praxiteles' mistress Phryne discovered which of his works he considered to be the most beautiful.[101] This shift in the pattern of the organisation of production enhanced artists' autonomy in several respects. First, it distanced patrons from artists, undermining the closer control they had enjoyed when works were directly commissioned. Second, making art and selling it on a speculative basis both presupposed considerable monetary wealth and augmented it through higher profits.[102] Kephisodotos the younger, the son of Praxiteles and himself a sculptor, undertook the trierarchic liturgy – equipping an Athenian war galley, for which only the three hundred most wealthy families in Athens were liable – an extraordinary three times in ten years, placing him amongst the handful of most wealthy men we know from classical Athens.[103]

The enhanced affluence of some artists enabled them further to rationalise their art and secure both greater occupational autonomy and higher social esteem. Many painters and sculptors are known to have written on their arts in the fourth century: Melanthios 'On painting' (*peri graphikēs*), Euphranor on symmetry and colours, Apelles, the sculptor Silanion, Leonidas – a pupil of Euphranor, Pollis – a bronze statuary, Demophilos, Pamphilos of Sicyon, Protogenes – *peri graphikēs kai schematōn*.[104] Whilst none of these treatises survive, we do have some knowledge of their contents through the art-historical writings of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, which drew on these artists' treatises as sources.[105] In writing treatises and developing

[98] Ael. *VH* 2.3 Apelles and Alexander; 2.2 Zeuxis and Megabyzos; Pliny, *HN* 35.85–6 Apelles and Alexander; Plut. *Mor.* 472 Apelles and Megabyzos; *HN* 35.104–5, cf. Gell. 15.31 Demetrios and Protogenes.

[99] Lauter (1980) esp. 529–30.

[100] Pliny, *HN* 36.20.

[101] *HN.* 35.62; Paus. 1.20; Ath. 13.591.

[102] Burford-Cooper (1969) 111 discusses the replacement of the system whereby craftsmen were hired by the state on an individual and daily basis, for example in the akropolis projects at Athens in the fifth century, by a contracting-out system, whereby the contractor was only paid on completion of the work, which of course presupposes a certain amount of capital.

[103] Davies (1971) no. 8334.

[104] Urlichs (1887) 14ff.; Vitr. 7.praef.14: Melanthios – D.L. 4.18; Euphranor – Pliny, *HN* 35.129; Apelles – ibid. 79; the sculptor Silanion; Leonidas; Pollis (cf. ibid. 34.91); Demophilos (late fifth century, cf. *HN* 35.61); Pamphilos of Sicyon (Suda s.v. = SQ 1747); Protogenes – Suda s.v.

[105] Pollitt (1974) is the standard study, but sociologically naïve and ahistorical in his treatment of the terminology as a symptom of 'the Greek mind'.

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a critical terminology, artists were actively engaged on a project which involved culturally transformative work on an inherited repertoire of cultural patterns and practices, oriented to changing the classical Greek art world on a number of levels – the relation of artists to their work, the communicative functions of art and concomitantly the relation of the art world to the broader society. It seems likely that the writing of classical Greek artists – using old words in new contexts and new ways until they acquired specifically aesthetic meanings – led to a process of conceptual development and abstraction similar to that which Havelock has traced for concepts of wisdom and self in the case of Plato and Greek philosophy. There are certainly traces of such a development, despite the fragmentary evidence. In archaic Greece, religious and aesthetic meaning are undifferentiated in the concept Χάρις (*charis*), a kind of divine power and charisma. Charis is the wife of Hephaistos. It is at the same time the capacity to produce beautiful objects, bestowed on craftsmen by Hephaistos and Athena, and the sign of that divine power manifested both in works of art and in people, generally heroes, upon whom gods confer a kind of temporary exaltation or charisma.[106] By the Hellenistic period, it can be used as a secular concept referring to the pictorial charm achieved through mastery of line and simplicity of colour, to which Apelles apparently laid particular claim in his volumes about painting.[107] Similarly, in the archaic period, ῥυθμός refers concretely to a mode of personal formation or disposition and character as revealed in patterns of movement or bodily conduct. By the end of the fifth century and in the work of Plato it is used in a slightly more abstract way to refer to any regularly recurring pattern of movement, for example in dance. Finally, in writing on the visual arts – certainly by the Hellenistic period and possibly in earlier sources from which Hellenistic art-history writing was derived – it comes to refer to particular forms or shapes of parts of the body in sculpture or architectural elements.[108]

Rather than simply emanating from aesthetic experience, the construction of a critical vocabulary changed artists' relationship to their work. The need to master more complex representational problems generated by the Greek revolution was part of the point of developing these new intellectual tools. This is reflected in a shift in patterns of artistic pedagogy. The dominant model of artistic training in the archaic and early classical periods was based in families. Father transmitted practical knowledge to his son trained in the family workshop, and the son's credentials were represented by his patronymic, widely used in signatures of the period.[109] Whilst most sculptors and painters seem to have been the sons of artists and were probably trained initially by their fathers, this traditional mode of training was supplemented in the fourth century by a rationalised and commodified artistic pedagogy, in which

[106] See e.g. Hom. *Od.*6.234 for the χαρίεντα ἔργα of Hephaistos and Athena; Ath. 2.47; Frontisi-Ducroux (1975) 72.
[107] Dion. Hal. *Isaeus* 4; Pliny, *HN* 35.79.
[108] Pollitt (1974) 218–28.
[109] Burford (1972) 84ff.

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mathematics played a central role. This is associated above all with Pamphilos of Sikyon, who, according to Pliny,

> was the first painter highly educated in all branches of learning, especially arithmetic and geometry, without the aid of which, he maintained, art could not be perfected. He took no pupils at a lower fee than a talent, at the rate of 500 *drachmae* per annum, and this was paid to him by both Apelles and Melanthios.[110]

Pheidias and Polykleitos may have taught for money as early as the fifth century.[111] Zeuxis almost certainly did.[112] Teaching for money in itself was a practice associated with the new learning of the sophists.[113] It seems reasonable to suppose that much of the critical writing on art attested for the fourth century was written for pedagogic purposes, as is explicitly stated to have been the case for Apelles' writings.[114]

Leading artists moved in the same social circles as sophists and philosophers,[115] and some copied them in their public presentation of self. The sophists Hippias and Gorgias took to wearing the purple robes associated with rhapsodes as part of their claim to usurp the traditional pedagogy based on Homeric poetry transmitted by the rhapsodes.[116] Empedokles the philosopher not only had his work performed at Olympia by a rhapsode, but also 'liked to walk about with a graceful expression, wearing a purple robe with a golden girdle, a Delphic wreath, shoes of bronze, and a luxuriant growth of hair, and attended by a train of boys'.[117] Similarly, the painter Parrhasios

> wore a purple cloak and had a white band [or sometimes a golden crown – Ath. 543c] on his head; he also supported himself with a staff embossed with golden spirals, and kept tight the straps of his sandals by means of gold latchets. (Ath. 543f)

Zeuxis

> acquired such great wealth that he advertised it at Olympia by displaying his own name embroidered in gold lettering on the checked pattern of his robes. (Pliny, *HN* 35.62)

110 *HN* 35.76.
111 Pl. *Prt.* 311c–d.
112 Ibid. 318c–d.
113 de Romilly (1992) 34.
114 Pliny, *HN* 35.111.
115 Xen. *Symp.* 4.63.
116 Ael. *VH* 12.32; Marrou (1956) 50.
117 D.L. 8.63; Guthrie (1965) 132; cf. Lloyd (1987) 101; cf. Arist. *Pol.* 1267b21–8 on Hippodamos of Miletos dressing for distinction.

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In behaving in this way, painters like Zeuxis and Parrhasios were not simply imitating sophists and rhapsodes. They were seeking to redefine the role of visual artist by personifying it in a fundamentally new way.[118]

The self-assertion of artists and the rationalisation of art as a province of meaning reached its acme in a series of fourth-century works of art which were self-referential and demanded a formalistic reading in terms of the artist's technical skill, rather than pointing towards an extra-artistic order of meaning. Praxiteles framed his statue of Eros, dedicated by his mistress Phryne at Thespiai (the site of a major cult of Eros), with the following inscription on its base: 'Taking his own heart for the pattern, Praxiteles portrayed the love he felt, and gave me to Phryne as the price of myself; and so I no longer cast love philtres with my bow, but by being gazed upon.'[119] The type (*archetupon*) for the image is, Praxiteles claims, generated by the artist himself (1–2). It is an allegory, giving evidence less of the god's power than of the artist's technical mastery (*diekribōsen* – worked with consummate *akribeia*). The autonomous power of the work of art to move a viewer merely by being gazed upon is compared both verbally in the poem and visually in the image to the unseen power of Eros' arrows.

Zeuxis displayed in Athens a painting representing a family of hippocentaurs, mother, father and two babies being breast-fed. Centaurs were conventionally represented in the context of mythological narratives, usually violent, articulating Greek conceptions of moral boundaries and the consequences of their transgression.[120] This radically innovative presentation – with no narrative content pointing viewers to a meaning beyond the painting itself – was designed to maximise attention to the formal properties of the painting and Zeuxis' technical skill, as evoked by the second-century A.D. sophist Lucian in a description of the painting:

> The other qualities, not completely describable by the eye of an amateur like myself, nevertheless display the whole power of his *technē* – such things as precison of line (τὸ ἀποτεῖναι τὰς γραμμὰς ἐς τὸ εὐθύτατον), accuracy in the blending of colours (τῶν χρωμάτων ἀκριβῆ τὴν κρᾶσιν), taste in the application of paint (εὔκαιρον τὴν ἐπιβολὴν ποιήσασθαι), correct use of shadow (σκίασαι ἐς δέον), good perspective, proportion and symmetry (τοῦ μεγέθους τὸν λόγον καὶ τὴν τῶν μερῶν πρὸς τὸ ὅλον ἰσότητα καὶ ἁρμονίαν). The sons of artists appreciate these points, for whom it is their business to know them.

[118] Cf. Archer (1995) 191: 'social selves are reconstituted as actors personify roles in particular ways to further their self-defined ends.' For the broader social and cultural context of this process see Lloyd (1991), esp. on the development of intellectual roles in the fifth century (philosophers, sophists, practitioners writing technical treatises), and the crystallisation of the relatively fluid situation of the fifth century into a more stable institutional form with the formation of the rhetorical and philosophical schools during the fourth century. Xen. *Mem.* 1.4.3–4 on *sophia* as an attribute of poets and artists.

[119] Ath. 591.

[120] Osborne (1994b).

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The painting itself is as much a description of artistic skill as a representation of centaurs:

> The union (μίξις) and junction (ἁρμογή) of bodies whereby the horse part is fused with the woman part and joined to it is effected by a gradual change with no abrupt transition; the eye, as it moves gradually from one to the other, is quite deceived by the subtle change.[121]

Both *harmogē* and *mixis*, ostensibly used here to describe the anatomy of the hippocentaur, are drawn from the technical terminology of painters.[122] The hippocentaur's body is not just a vehicle of but a metaphor for artistic virtuosity.[123]

The sculptor Lysippos set up outside his workshop a bronze statue of Kairos or 'Opportunity'.[124] It showed Kairos as a winged youth, with hair falling down the front of his face but bald behind, signifying that opportunity once missed cannot be caught again. He balances on tip-toe on a sphere whilst equilibrating a scale on a razor's edge.[125] Conceivably, Lysippos' Kairos could be read as a relatively straightforward cult-personification, like Kephisodotos' Eirene and Ploutos (Peace and Wealth). However, both the virtuosity of the statue, a masterpiece of complex casting and delicate balance now sadly preserved only in relief copies (figure 1), and its secular location, set up as an education or object-lesson (*didaskalian*) in the entrance way to Lysippos' workshop in Sikyon, suggest an alternative reading. It represented Lysippos' claim to have mastered Kairos and thus to have leapt from the ranks of the craftsmen to that of the intelligentsia. As such it was both an assertion of autonomy – art about art – and an intervention in the contemporary debate about the rationality of art. In philosophical thought it was sometimes argued that the craftsmen was a slave to Kairos, the point in time where human technical action 'meets a natural process developing according to its own rhythm', in contrast to philosophers who could self-sufficiently dominate time by grasping it through purely intellectual operations of the mind.[126] Lysippos polemically presents himself like a sophist as the master of Kairos. Come to his workshop and artistic success is guaranteed not through chance, the judicious distribution of phallic dolls, or the imprecation of the magical powers of Hephaistos and Athena, but through a rational artistic education.[127]

[121] Lucian, *Zeuxis* 5–6.
[122] Pollitt (1974) 150–1.
[123] Rouveret (1989) 157–9.
[124] Poseidippos, *Anth. Pal.* 16.275; HE Poseidippos xix.
[125] Kallistratos, *Eikones* 6.
[126] Vernant (1983c) esp. 291–2, citing Pl. *Rep.*2.370b, 374c.
[127] Cf. Lloyd (1987) 28 on the Hippokratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease* (18), where the writer argues that the true doctor, endowed with *epistēmē* – scientific understanding – 'could distinguish the right moment (*kairos*) for the application of the remedies. He would not need to resort to purifications and magic and all that kind of charlatanry (*banausiē*).' Cf. Stewart (1978b). The broader message of the Kairos, and perhaps of Lysippos' writings on art were they preserved, may be compared with the treatise *On the art*

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Fig. 1: Roman marble relief (ht. 60 cm.) after a bronze statue of *Kairos* by Lysippos. Date of the original, second half 4th century B.C. Torino Museum. (negative no. 30.236)

Although the evidence is lacunose and fragmentary, there can be little doubt what is going on here. The formalisation of knowledge, setting it apart from everyday knowledge, and the attribution of importance to the special nature of the abstract knowledge involved in certain kinds of work are common means by which occupational groups seek to enhance their status and increase their level of autonomy.[128] Despite some practical continuities and structural constraints given by the place of art as a functionally differentiated strand of cultural tradition within the human action system, for Lysippos, like Zeuxis and Parrhasios as painters, the very sense of what it was to be a sculptor was in important respects quite different from that of archaic sculptors like

(of medicine) in the Hippokratic corpus, which is centrally concerned with justifying the status of medicine as a true, that is to say 'rational' *technē* against its detractors. Like Lysippos, the author is centrally concerned with the question of whether his *technē* realises its goals by chance, in which case it is not a true *technē*, or through reason. Cf. Xen. *Mem.* 3.10 – Sokrates' defence of artistic *technē*.

[128] Friedson (1986); Zolberg (1990) 41.

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Mikkiades and Achermos when they dedicated their Nike, or indeed the painter Polygnotos playing the role of civic benefactor.

2.2 Culture, social structure and the limits of artistic rationalisation

Although the level of artistic rationalisation in the Greek art world – manifested by the claims and practices of individual artists like Lysippos – is real and significant, it was considerably more limited than has normally been allowed. Paradoxically, the same set of cultural resources – writing and the new rationalism – which artists appropriated to rationalise their own practices and make claims to higher status in terms of a value-system less restricting than the political values of the classical city, also represented a serious constraint. First, the practice of writing, used in different ways and in different contexts from those of the new intellectuals, could be used to fix, reinforce and stabilise the traditional culture of the *polis* and traditional civic functions of art. Second, the cultural content of the new culture – attributing charisma to reason – set rather severe limits on the degree to which intrinsically sensuous practices such as painting and sculpture might be perceived to participate in values held to be sacred.

2.2.1 Epigraphic rhetoric and the artist's voice

Writing was not a unitary phenomenon in classical Greece. Recent work has drawn attention to the very different attitudes in Athenian democratic ideology to two different types of writing.[129] Theoretical writing was a tool for reflection. It was associated above all with sophists and philosophers, social marginals who did not participate fully in the life of the city, and were therefore distrusted. Instrumental writing served to fix the spoken word – decrees and enactments of the assembly. It was essential to the functioning of the democracy in so far as it made the law publicly available, gave permanent expression to the decisions of the *demos* and facilitated democratic control of politicians and magistrates.

The inscriptions placed on statue-bases and paintings were instrumental writing, fixing what the person or group setting up the image was doing in setting it up. Like other captions, they are intended as much for the viewer as for the writer. They shape the relationship constructed between the viewer and the work of art. In the classical Greek world, control of the inscription as a framing device was in the hands of the person who commissioned the work of art. In a predominantly oral culture, people were deeply sensitive to the questions of voice in the few permanently inscribed words, since these could profoundly shape the way artistic monuments entered into collective memory and transmitted tradition to posterity. Such inscribing in civic art was closely controlled by the state. Pausanias of Sparta was punished and the inscription recut when

[129] Loraux (1986)178ff.; Thomas (1992).

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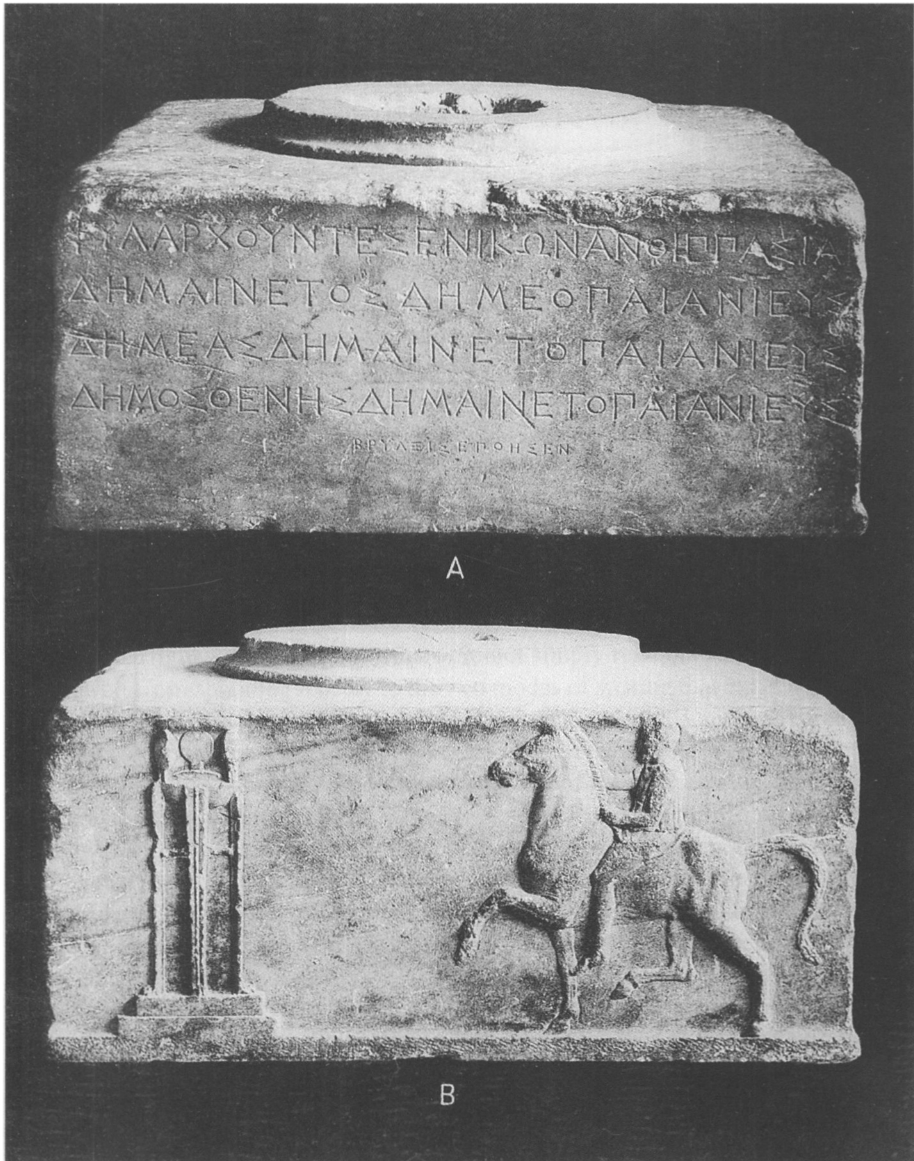

Fig. 2: Base signed by Bryaxis, *c.*350 BC – after *Ephemeris Archaiologikē* (1893) pl. 6

The following, as Phylarchs, were victors at the Anthippasia
Demainetos the son of Demeas of the deme Paiania
Demeas the son of Demainetos of the deme Paiania
Demosthenes the son of Demainetos of the deme Paiania
Bryaxis made it

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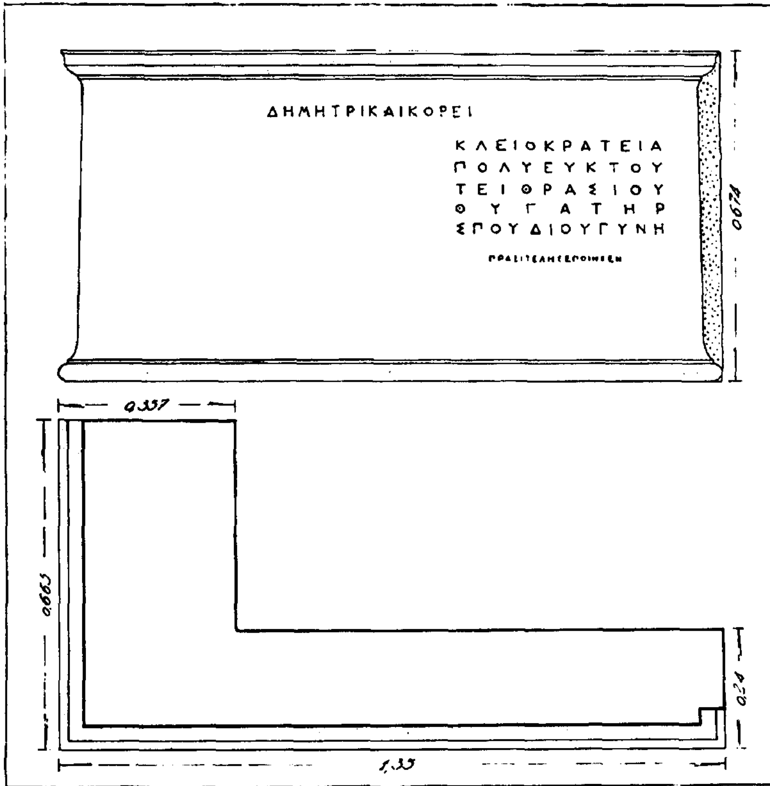

Fig. 3: Statue-base signed by Praxiteles, *c.*350 B.C. After Hesperia (1937) 341, fig. 6.

To Demeter and Kore
Kleoikrateia
the daughter of Polyeuktos
of the deme Teithras
the wife of Spoudias

Praxiteles made it

he tried to usurp the collective honour of the Greek states who had defeated the Persians, memorialised in the serpent column at Delphi.[130] The inscriptions to be placed on civic history-paintings were the subject of fierce debate in popular assemblies and in the lawcourts.[131] When the tragedian Astydamas was awarded an honorific portrait-statue to stand in the theatre of Dionysos, he wrote his own epigram for it, only to have it disallowed as too pretentious.[132]

[130] Thuc. 1.132.
[131] Plutarch, *Pel.* 35; Suda s.v. Ποικίλη; Aeschin. *In Ctes.* 178–86.
[132] D.L. 2.43; Suda s.v Σαυτὴν ἐπαινεῖς.

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The rhetorical format of these inscriptions rendered artists marginal in the classical city, just as modern art-world labels make them central. The relatively small importance attributed to the artist in the communicative process accomplished in setting up a work of art, and rehearsed in its viewing, is nicely indicated by the vanishingly small size of the maker's mark of Bryaxis (figure 2)[133] and Praxiteles (figure 3)[134] when compared with the inscriptions of the dedicants – victors in an Athenian cavalry review in the case of the Bryaxis base, and Kleiokrateia, the daughter of Polyeuktos, offering a portrait of herself to Demeter and Kore in the case of Praxiteles. The positioning of the inscription could also marginalise the artist. In *Inschriften von Olympia* 162–3 (figure 4: late fifth century B.C.), the name of the athlete portrayed, the dedicant of the statue, dominates the front of the base and frames the beholder's gaze at the statue from the privileged viewing position, whilst Polykleitos' maker's mark is tucked away on the top surface of the base, at the back on the left-hand side. (The inscriptions on the right are Roman renewals.)

Verse inscriptions on bronze plates, celebrating the person represented in a portrait-statue and its dedicant, might also be set in the front face of a statue-base. Set off against the stone of the base, such an inscription would, by virtue of its material, be visually integrated with the bronze of the statue. More importantly the use of verse epigrams, whether on bronze plates or directly inscribed in the stone base, helped to integrate the viewing experience with the memory techniques of oral *paideia*. Two examples suffice to illustrate (figures 5–6). Such poems were not simply read but rather performed by the viewer. Corresponding loosely to the two modes of writing that existed in classical Greece, there were two modes of reading.[135] Silent reading, which internalises the reader's voice and makes the text an object of reflection rather than a script to be enacted, is scarcely attested before the second half of the fifth century, and may, like theoretical writing, have been restricted to an intellectual élite. More common was reading aloud, corresponding to the level of craft literacy and instrumental writing. The written text served as a script or cue. The reader enunciated the syllables and the text was rendered meaningful and complete only by its sonorous realisation through the reader's voice. In the case of our poems, visual image and oral enactment become fused in an integrated sensory experience. The poem draws the image (*IvO* 174.1 'standing thus the Pelasgian ...', 170.4–5 'when he took the prize ... thus he was as you see him') into a narrative enacted by the viewer, which makes the past present, re-enacts it and transmits it to future memory (170.5–6 'whom remembering (*mnōmena*) his horse-manship, Hellas sings ...'; 174.3–4 'return once more beautiful fame'). In reading and speaking the poem, the viewer of the statue of Philippos performs the prayer and fulfils it. Philippos is honoured and the *kleos* of Arcadia renewed. The viewer is the mouthpiece of collective memory, ritually enacting and renewing shared understanding

[133] *Ephemeris Archaiologikē* 1893, pl. 6, *c*.350 B.C.
[134] *Hesperia* 6 (1937) 340–1, figs 5 and 6, *c*.350 B.C.
[135] Svenbro (1988), (1990).

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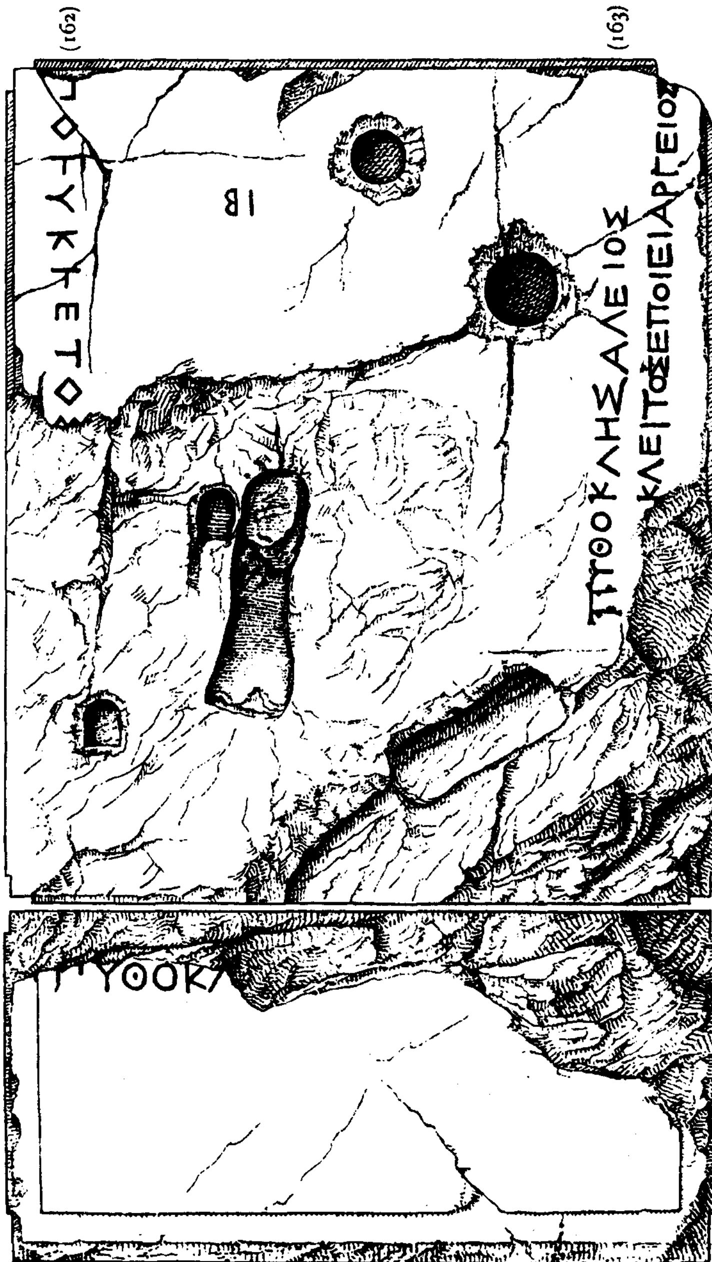

Fig. 4: Base for a statue of the athlete Pythokles, with the signature of Polykleitos. Late 5th century B.C. Black Limestone. Ht. 24 cm.; br. 50 cm.; dp. 58 cm. After *Inschriften von Olympia*, p. 282, nos. 162–3.

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Fig. 5: Marble base for a statue of the Olympic victor Xenombrotos. Mid 4th century B.C. Ht. 19.5 cm; br. 72 cm.; dp. 65. cm. After *Inschriften von Olympia* p. 294, no. 170.

Αὔτα πευθομένοις ἐτύμα φάτις, ἱππάδα νίκαν
  κεῖναι καλλίσταν εἶναι ὀλυμπιάδι
ἆι Κώιων ὅσιον δρομικοῦ Πισαῖον ἄεθλον
  πρῶτος ἑλὼν Μέροπος νᾶσον ἐσαγάγετο
τοῖος, ὁποῖον ὁρᾶις, Ξεινόμβροτος· ἁ δέ νιν Ἑλλὰς
  ἄφθιτον ἀείδει μνωμένα ἱπποσύνας.

If you would know, the tale is true that the most glorious victory in the horse-race was won in that Olympiad in which Xenombrotos gained the holy prize for speed at Pisa and so was the first to make the isle of Merops known (at Olympia). Such was he as you behold. Greece hymns his fame of horsemanship in deathless song. *IvO* 170, tr. Fraser, ad Paus. 6.14.12.

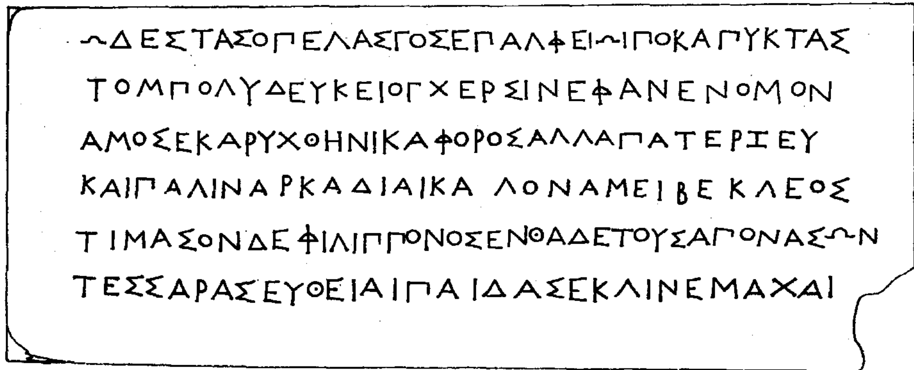

Fig. 6: Bronze plaque for insertion in the base of a statue for the Olympic victor Philippos. Late 4th century B.C. Ht. 8.5 cm; width: 21.1 cm. After *Inschriften von Olympia,* p. 302, no. 174.

Ὧδε στὰς ὁ Πελασγὸς ἐπ' Ἀλφειῶι ποκα πύκτας
  τὸμ Πολυδεύκειογ χερσὶν ἔφανε νόμον
ἆμος ἐκαρύχθη νικαφόρος. ἀλλά, πάτερ Ζεῦ,
  καὶ πάλιν Ἀρκαδίαι καλὸν ἄμειβε κλέος
τίμασον δὲ Φίλιππον, ὃς ἐνθάδε τοὺς ἀπὸ νάσων
  τέσσαρες εὐθείαι παῖδας ἔκλινε μάχαι.

Thus standing, alongside the Alpheios, the Pelasgian once showed the rules of Polydeukes (i.e. boxing) with his hands, when he was crowned victor. But, father Zeus, return once more beautiful fame (*kleos*) to Arcadia, honour Philippos, who here laid low in straight battle four boys from the islands.

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of the meaning of athletic victory presupposed in the dedication of the statue itself, rather than exploring an individuated response to the statue as an object of aesthetic interest in its own right.[136] The same structure of viewing and reading is by no means confined to athlete statues. It recurs on the Arcadian victory monument at Delphi. Here, the viewer of the series of statues of Arcadian heroes is precipitated into a myth-historical genealogy of the newly independent people.[137] Preservation of collective memory is at the cost of the autonomy of the viewer–reader, whose own individuality is submerged in the poem he enacts, and at the cost of the independent voices of the poet and the artist, who remain lost in anonymity.

2.2.2 Art and intellect in fourth-century Greece

If the 'charisma' of an occupational role is defined in terms of its proximity to transcendent powers,[138] the attempt on the part of fifth-century and fourth-century artists to rationalise their aesthetic practices can be interpreted as an attempt to infuse their occupation with a charisma, derived from the definition of the sacred as world-immanent reason which was being developed in philosophical thought. In the late fifth and early fourth centuries the premises of this new culture were still in the process of construction, and the specification of these premises to define the situation of the various worldly institutional realms still open. Artists' writings, the self-presentation of the likes of Zeuxis and Parrhasios, and the works of art already discussed by Zeuxis, Praxiteles and Lysippos can be interpreted as an attempt to specify the higher order premises of rationalist culture to the institutional realm of art in such a way as to maximise both the occupational autonomy of visual artists and their cultural esteem.[139] Not being themselves primary bearers of the new culture, and hence in closest possible proximity to the sacred, painters and sculptors were heavily dependent on the new intellectuals, philosophers and sophists, to endorse their claims and provide the kind of charismatic push on which the development of new institutional orders seems to depend,[140] perhaps by sponsoring the most rationalised autonomous examples of the new art, or assisting in the development of new contexts of display and modes of viewing, independent of the civic contexts in which most art continued to be embedded.

There are some indications of philosophical interest in and support for the rationalisation of art in the writings of Anaxagoras and Demokritos prompted by Agatharchos'

[136] For a fuller analysis of the content of victory epigrams in the context of athletic *kudos*, without, however consideration of the epigram as material culture, inscribed on a base, see Kurke (1993) esp. 141–9.

[137] *Fouilles de Delphes* 3.1. 4–10, *c*.369 B.C.

[138] Shils (1982) esp. 147.

[139] On the way in which cultural patterns formulated in very abstract or generalised terms are 'specified' to fit the structure and functional exigencies of more concrete institutional forms see Parsons (1961) esp. 977.

[140] Cf. Eisenstadt (1990) esp. 21.

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perspective constructions in scene-painting.[141] Moreover, Xenophon in *Memorabilia* 3.10 (dramatic date late fifth century) represents Sokrates as contributing to the rationalisation of painting and sculpture by enhancing artists' levels of self-conscious awareness of the nature, possibilities and effects of their representational practices.[142] In the fourth century, however, the increasing codification of philosophy, and its institutionalisation with the foundation of Plato's Academy, gave rise to direct conflicts with artists and their claims to prestige and autonomy.

Whilst Plato's attack in the *Republic* and earlier dialogues concentrates for the most part on poetry – since it was Homer above all who was the traditional educator of the Greeks – he moves freely between poetry and the visual arts, since both are held to be mimetic or imitative arts, and Plato's argument is intended to hold good for all imitative arts, regardless of medium. Plato's hostility to poetry and painting is in part sociologically determined by an antagonism between two modes of cultural transmission borne by distinct social strata. On the one hand was the new intellectual élite, comprising primarily those sufficiently socially privileged to enjoy the leisure and freedom from necessity of satisfying everyday wants that were prerequisite to consuming their time in intellectual dispute and contemplation. On the other hand was the mass of the citizen body in democratic Athens, possessed of sufficient leisure for occasional participation in civic business, but preoccupied primarily with the satisfaction of their everyday needs through labour-intensive peasant-farming or craft-manufacture. These latter were committed to traditional religious representations and modes of cultural transmission based in and adapted to the constraints of everyday necessity: a ritual calendar related at least in part to the agricultural year, and cults – like that of Athena and Hephaistos for artisans – which offered access to powers capable of assisting the adherent in the pragmatic necessities of life on an occasional basis as required.

Plato's attack on *mimesis* is not, however, a mere rationalisation of that sociological opposition – common to most of the axial age societies – but is independently rooted in a conception of the sacred as world-immanent divine reason manifested in the Forms and apprehended only through pure reason. The implications of such a conception of the sacred, once fully worked out, are almost unavoidably hostile to cultural practices such as the visual arts which are necessarily tied to sensuous modes of expression. Plato's attack on *mimesis* has two prongs. First, he discounts the knowledge claims of practitioners of the mimetic arts, on which basis they had claimed autonomy. Second, he suggests that the mimetic arts as currently practised, are positively deleterious for the integrity of the *psychai* of those who participate in or appropriate them.

Plato had called into question the wisdom traditionally ascribed to poets from his earliest dialogues. In the *Apology*, Sokrates argues that poets lack true knowledge or wisdom since they are unable to give a rational account of their work and the matters

[141] Vitr. 7.praef.11.
[142] Preisshofen (1974).

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they speak of in their poetry.[143] In the *Ion*, it is suggested that the poet's wisdom is an alien, divinely inspired madness taking possession of the poet who mechanically enacts the poem with no knowledge of the truth or falsity of what he pronounces.[144] In the *Republic*, Plato's disapproval of poets and mimetic artists more generally receives full articulation in terms of the systematised metaphysics of the theory of Forms. God, Plato argues, has produced the one true couch which really is, the *eidos*, Form or essence of couch, which exists in nature (ἡ ἐν τῆι φύσει οὖσα). Contrary to what one might infer from most translations, God is not conceived by Plato as a creator analogous to the Judaeo-Christian God, but as a kind of divine principle of Nature, immanent in the world and constrained by the necessity of world-immanent reason, whereby he can make no more than one couch in nature which really is 'couch' (597b-c). This couch is not 'created', but 'brought naturally into being by the Divinity (ἐφυτεύθησαν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ)'. God is thought of as the 'planter' (φυτουργὸν), 'since it is by nature that he has made this (the Form of couch)' (597d). He is of Nature and subject to its laws, not the creator of and transcendent to Nature. True reality is this world of Forms, through which Nature constitutes itself and the world. True knowledge is knowledge of this ultimate reality, the world of Forms. Craftsmen, the carpenters who make empirical couches, operate at one remove from true reality. They look towards the Form 'couch' for guidance, but their knowledge concerns not the Form 'couch' as such but the manufacture of particular couches which are a lower kind of reality than 'the couch itself', that is to say the Form 'couch' (596b). Such a particular sensuous empirical couch does not have 'true being'. It is not 'the real, but something that is like the real, though not real itself' (597a). The painter of a couch is an imitator 'one who produces that which is bred at two removes from nature' (597e):

> Mimetic art is far removed from the truth; and, as it seems, the reason why it offers a rendering of everything is that it has only a small grasp of each object and this as a mere simulacrum (εἴδωλον). (598c; cf. 601a).

Only the naïve, children and stupid adults, are taken in by imitators' representations and knowledge claims, 'deceived by an encounter with a magician (γοήτι) and imitator, so that the latter seemed all-knowing (πάσσοφος)', because of the dupes' 'inability to distinguish knowledge, ignorance and imitation' (598c–d). Poets, imitators like painters, represent the products of all kinds of crafts of which they have no true knowledge (598e–600a). The claim of such ignoramuses to be the educators of Greece is, we must conclude, risible (600a–c). The same conclusion – placing painterly and sophistic image-making at the maximum possible distance from the charismatic centre of reason and knowledge – is reached in the *Sophist* (235ff.; 264ff.).

Mimetic art, according to Plato, was not merely itself distant from Reason, it was

[143] 22a–c; cf. Halliwell (1988) 3ff.

[144] Keuls (1978) 135–7; Ferrari (1989) esp. 92–7.

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corrosive of it.[145] By virtue of a natural deficiency rooted in human embodiment, we encounter the world through the senses as well as conceptual reason. Sensuous appearance, unlike pure reason, is often confused. The same stick which outside of water appears straight, when partially inserted in water appears bent. 'It is this disability of our nature which perspective painting (σκιαγραφία) exploits by using every sort of magic (γοητείας)' (602d), making the flat appear to have depth, a stage-painting to seem a house. Measurement, arithmetic and weighing – rational mathematics – allow us mastery over the tyranny of appearances. If we measure both, we can know that a large box in the distance is larger than a nearby small box which appears larger by virtue of its proximity to us. Measurement and calculation is the 'function of the rational element in the soul (τοῦ λογισπκοῦ ἐν ψνχῆι) ... the best part of the soul (602d–603a)'. 'The element in conflict with this', which bestows the accent of reality as real on merely apparent variations in the distance of objects painted on flat surfaces with the use of perspectival effects, 'must be one of the base things in us' (ibid.). Perspectival painting stirs up this irrational element, creates a conflict within the individual as to the nature of the represented reality, and thereby threatens the integrity of the soul.

The base, irrational element of the soul is also stirred up by the content of mimetic representations, whether poetic or pictorial. The mythic narratives of Homer, tragedy – and of course the pictorial representations of myths on temples and in sanctuaries – strengthen the base, emotional elements of the soul against the rational controlling element. The representation of others' afflictions – the travails of a Medea or Ajax, both popular themes in classical drama and painting – and the emotive responses to their own experiences of the characters represented in these mythic dramas, encourage a 'pathology of identification', which subverts audiences' and viewers' limited capacity for emotional self-control (606a–b).[146] The same considerations apply, Plato argues, to other emotions – anger, erotic desire and so on, *mutatis mutandis* (606d). Tragedy, epic and the traditional mythic narratives of the conflicts and travails of gods and heroes are to be barred from the ideal city. Only hymns celebrating the virtues of gods and eulogies of good men are to remain.

Plato's hostility to the visual arts is unavoidably an embarrassment to conventional art historians whose work is premised on a positive valuation of 'the creative arts'.[147] From a sociological perspective, most of the efforts to discount Plato's testimony are largely misplaced. Keuls and Rouveret suggest Plato's attack on painting is really only an attack on Pamphilos and the Sikyonian school for integrating painting with more general intellectual education and spuriously claiming scientific knowledge beyond the limits of their own *technē*.[148] But this hardly mitigates the implications of Plato's

[145] *Rep.* 605b; Havelock (1963) 26; Halliwell (1988) 9; Ferrari (1989) 132–8.
[146] Quotation: Havelock (1963) 207.
[147] E.g. Keuls (1978) passim.
[148] Keuls (1978) 141ff.; Rouveret (1989) 35.

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arguments, which strike at the core of artists' institutional project to enhance their status and secure through claims to reason the autonomy of painting and sculpture as cultural practices.

It is sometimes suggested that Aristotle's somewhat different account of visual art represents a radical repudiation of Plato, and the development of a notion of artistic creativity. Rouveret, for example, argues that Aristotle constructs parallels between poetry and painting no longer, as Plato had done, simply to pillory painting, but to valorise it as an autonomous aesthetic domain, 'passing from the plane of artisanal execution to that of aesthetic and conceptual reflection'.[149] According to Pollitt, Aristotle provides the conceptual basis for a theory of artists as 'human "creators" who by a special wisdom imitate the processes first established by the divine creator of nature'.[150] These arguments, however, depend on very selective reading of Aristotle's accounts both of *technē* and of the the role of visuality in civic culture.

According to Aristotle '*technē* imitates nature' (ἡ τέχνη μιμεῖται τὴν φύσιν)'.[151] The products of *technē* differ from those of nature – plants, men and animals – only in so far as the form or *eidos* of a bed for example is present in the mind of a craftsman before being used to construct a bed, whereas the final form of a plant is immanent in the seed from which it grows.[152] *Eidos*, essence, substance without matter is the active principle whether immanent in the seed and determining its pattern of growth, or present in the craftsman's mind and shaping the house (for example) which he, the craftsman, through the agency of the form as the active principle in his soul, 'begets out of' the material with which he works.[153] The *eidos* of the house is no more created or conceived by the craftsman than the *eidos* of an oak tree is created by its seed. *Eidos*, essential form, is unmade. It is given by nature, directly in the case of plants and animals, mediately in the case of artifacts like houses. The *eidos* of a ship's helm is known by its user, the helmsman, who instructs the craftsman accordingly. The latter knows what material is appropriate to the form of helm – namely the kind of wood – and the movements (*kineseōn*) neccesary to beget the helm out of the wood.[154] The *eidos* of a helm or a house, knowable only by its users (helmsmen and humans in general in these two cases), is in turn given in nature as prerequisite to meeting man's natural needs for transportation or shelter. The process of production in craft as in nature is one of teleology guaranteed by the world-immanent reason that is nature.[155] Craft is not set apart from nature as a specifically human, cultural activity which masters and transforms nature. Rather, craft is embedded within nature and, ideally, conforms with it.[156]

[149] Rouveret (1989) 132ff.
[150] Pollitt (1974) 35–7.
[151] *Ph.* 2.2/194a22. The best secondary account of Aristotle on work and *technē* is that of Vernant (1983a–c) 260ff., 271ff., 293ff.
[152] Arist. *Metaph.* 7.8–9/1034a–b. Cf. Panofsky (1968) 17.
[153] *Metaph.* 7.7–8/1032b–1033a.
[154] *Ph.* 2.2/194b.
[155] *Ph.* 2.8/199a.
[156] Vernant (1983a) esp. 262–3.

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It follows from this understanding of craft, that the knowledge or wisdom of craftsmen such as sculptors and carpenters is a partial or limited wisdom, dealing with empirical matters that admit of variation, the particular manner for example, in which the Form 'bed' is variably instantiated in wood, according to the variable grain of the wood and the quality of the tools used in its manufacture. This partial wisdom of technicians like Pheidias, dealing with 'things that admit of variation' is explicitly contrasted by Aristotle with the true wisdom of the wise man, 'consummated knowledge of the most exalted objects ... universals and things that are of neccessity'.[157] This relatively low placing of the visual arts and their practitioners in the hierarchy of reason is in perfect accord with Plato's evaluation of them, and rooted in the same principle of charismatic reason.[158] For Aristotle, as for Plato, the visual arts are far from the realm of truth. Perspective paintings (*skiagraphiai*) are classifed with dreams as false because 'the appearance which results from them is that of something which does not exist'.[159]

We have already considered Plato's and Aristotle's accounts of viewing and the formation of the good citizen in undifferentiated civic contexts and their ambivalence about the kinds and contents of conventional civic representations. What, however, of the wise man? The fully wise man, secure in his rationality, was of course immune to those specifically sensuous, affective attractions of the visual arts which constituted a threat to the integrity of the *psychē* of the ordinary man. Could the viewing of sculpture and painting play a positive role in the self-formation of the wise man in the same way in which philosophical dialectic and rhetorical mastery of the word did, as components of the new education? Lysippos, Zeuxis and Praxiteles produced works of art which broke with civic frames for viewing and demanded a specifically aesthetic response in terms of the rationalised representational *technē* of the artist. The institutionalisation of such a frame, of art as an autonomous province of meaning, however, required a public prepared to view in those terms, patrons prepared to commission or purchase art produced on that basis, and the development of contexts of appropriation distinct from traditional civic contexts. In brief, it required the legitimation of non-civic autonomous modes of viewing as a practice on a cultural level, as well as the enhanced occupational autonomy of artists on a social level.

Both Plato and Aristotle thematise viewing as such, in some degree independently of the civic and religious contexts in which the kinds of work they consider might conventionally have been viewed, but they do so only in a residual way. The Greek philosophical conception of *logos* as word/reason was intrinsically antipathetic towards the visually

[157] *Eth. Nic.* 6–7; cf. 4–5.

[158] Cf. Keuls (1978) 119ff. See Pl. *Philb.* 55e–58a for a hierarchy of manual *technai* rooted in their scientificity defined in terms of the level of arithmetic, weighing and measuring that they require. Without that rational element they would be 'pretty worthless' (*phaulon*), for 'all that would be left for us would be conjecture and to drill the perception by practice and experience'. The emphasis of Aristotle on apodeictic logical knowledge is typically Platonic: cf. *Pol.* 285c–86e, esp. 285e–86a.

[159] *Metaph.* 6.29/1024b23. Cf. Keuls (1978) 80.

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sensuous. According to Plato, the 'greatest and most valuable conceptions have no parallel visual image (*eidolon*) designed to illustrate them for mankind', requiring instead 'rational definitions' (*logon dunaton*): 'immaterial things which are the noblest and greatest can be exhibited by reason only'.[160] Pleasures are hierarchised on the basis of their contribution to human learning and their degree of intellectual purity. The pleasure derived from the study of geometry (in which visual images are not subject to sensuous elaboration) ranks relatively highly, though not so highly as the pleasure derived from pure intellection of the Forms, which dispense with the need for visual figures as illustrations. Amongst the lower pleasures are enjoyment of the purely phenomenal beauty of animals or, worse, paintings, which are an inadequate source for learning the truth about geometry or proportions.[161] Just as ultimately the only really real true knowledge is of the Forms, 'the knowledge that has to do with being, reality and eternal immutability',[162] so 'only the pleasures of the man of intelligence (τοῦ φρονίμου) are entirely true and pure (καθαρά), and all others an empty sham (*eskiagraphēmenē* – mere shadow-paintings!)'.[163]

Aristotle draws a sharp distinction between the sensory bodily pleasures 'which man shares with the lower animals and which consequently appear slavish and bestial', such as touch and taste, and pleasures of the soul such as love of honour (*philotimia*) or love of learning (*philomatheia*). Pleasure taken in objects of sight 'like colours and shapes and pictures' are pleasures of the body, but – not being so directly sensuous as touch – do not raise questions of temperance and profligacy in their indulgence.[164] While not so polemical as Plato in his dismissal of lower forms of pleasurable ratiocination as hardly true pleasures or true reason at all, Aristotle can construe the viewing of visual art (independent of its civic functions) in a positive light only as a low, sub-philosophic mode of intellectual learning:

> Learning things gives great pleasure not only to philosophers but also in the same way to all other men, though they share this pleasure only to a small degree. The reason why we enjoy seeing likenesses is that, as we look, we learn and infer what each is, for instance 'that is so and so'. If we never happen to have seen the original, our pleasure is not due to the representation as such but to the workmanship or colour or some other reason.[165]

This somewhat limited account of viewing and visuality is all the more striking when its context is taken into consideration. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle sets out to give a rational

[160] *Pol.* 285c–86e. C.f. Keuls (1978) 121–2.
[161] *Rep.* 529d–530b; *Philb.* 51c2–5, 57a–b. Cf. Keuls (1978) 122–4.
[162] *Philb.* 58a.
[163] *Rep.* 583b; 585d–87b.
[164] *Eth. Nic.* 3.10.2–5.
[165] *Poet.* 4/1448b12–19. Cf. *Rh.* 1.11.20–4; Pl. *Leg.* 2.667c–9b, esp 668d–e for comparable rationalist accounts of aesthetic pleasure.

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account of poetry.[166] Just as in the case of other *technai*, so poetry is rooted in nature and man's instinctive disposition for *mimesis*. Like the 'Forms' of houses or beds, the types (*eidē*) of poetry are given in nature. The history of poetic development takes the form of a teleology, whereby genres such as comedy or tragedy grow to completion along the lines set by their naturally given *eidos*, like a seed growing into a tree. Nature discovers and makes available the appropriate elements – like the iambic metre for tragic dialogue – to poets drawn to higher genres (like tragedy) or lower genres (like comedy) according to their nature (κατὰ τὴν τὴν οἰκείαν φύσιν). Tragedy, for example,

> gradually evolved as men developed each element that came to light and after going through many changes it stopped when it had found its own natural form.[167]

This natural form of tragedy provides a set of dimensions according to which particular tragedies may be criticised and evaluated. For our purposes, two aspects of Aristotle's criticism of tragedy are striking. First, the extensiveness of his *literary critical* tools; second, the consistent slighting of the visual and sensuous dimensions of tragedy. Aristotle's literary critical tools – building on his sophistic predecessors' analyses of language – are as rich as his tools for the analysis of visual representation are poor. Contrary to Rouveret's suggestion, the few limited passing comparisons of painting to dimensions of tragedy do not represent a valorisation of painting as an autonomous aesthetic domain – indeed the valorisation of tragedy (against Plato) is achieved only by excising its visual and skenographic dimensions; they merely point up the fact that Aristotle and other contemporary intellectuals had not developed (or bothered to appropriate from contemporary artists) a vocabulary for visual analysis of comparable richness to that for literary analysis.

The verbal elements of tragedy are carefully analysed. The parts of language – letter, syllable, connecting words, articles, nouns, verbs, inflexion, case and statements – are distinguished and analysed (20). Poetic diction is discussed – the coining of unusual word forms, and the whole range of literary tropes and metaphors (21), as is the question of poetic style and elevated language (22). Although Aristotle recognises that tragedy is conventionally staged, and that the poet must consequently bear in mind the visual effect of entrances and exits (17, 24), he consistently slights the visual dimension of tragedy:

> Spectacle, or stage effect, is an attraction of course, but it has the least to do with the playwright's craft or with the art of poetry. For *the power of tragedy is independent both of performance and actors*, and besides, the production of spectacular effects is more the province of the property-man than the playwright.[168]

He accepts the premise of detractors of tragedy that purely verbal forms like epic 'appeal

[166] Halliwell (1989).
[167] 4/1449a13–15.
[168] 6/1450b15–20; cf. 14.

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to the cultivated reader/beholder who does not need the help of visual forms (*schematōn*)', whilst tragedy, by means of its visual spectacle 'appeals to meaner minds'. However, he argues that the debased visual aspect is not inherent in tragedy as such, which 'fulfils its own special function even without the help of movement (*kineseōs* – i.e. performance) … *for its quality can be seen from reading it*'.[169] Aristotle's legitimation of tragedy for the better sort of person is, in short, tied to a radical transformation in its mode of appropriation. Tragic drama in the democratic city is an example of what Bernstein calls a restricted code.[170] Its complex meanings were articulated on a range of parallel channels – word, music, dance, spectacle.[171] The performance was embedded in the context of a civic ritual – the Dionysiac festivals – and the implicit meanings explored in the mythic dramas were inseparable from its specifically political, particularistically Athenian context.[172] It was from this fusion of the cognitive and the moral – as paradigms articulated according to a logic of the concrete in mythic narratives rather than explicit conceptually elaborated ethics such as philosophers like Aristotle produced – with an emotional toning derived from their sensuous expression in music, dance and visual spectacle that the traditional *paideia*, of which tragedy was one element, derived its cultural force and to which Plato so violently objected. Aristotle overcomes Plato's objections by disembedding tragedy from its civic and theatrical context. Just as the philosophical schools broke with civic institutions and patterns of cultural transmission, so Aristotle integrates the corpus of tragedy with rationalist culture by constituting it as a text to be read and reflected upon. The relevant stock of knowledge to be invoked by the reader is no longer the set of traditional myths which articulate and explore Athenian civic identity, nor experience derived from participation in the civic, religious and military life of the *polis* (including its choruses), nor indeed the normative discourses of the democratic *polis*. It is instead an array of universally communicable critical tools which establish the reader's aesthetic distance from the text, allow him to make explicit the bases upon which the text constructs meaning, and thereby to master it intellectually. Far from being a straightforward counterblast to Plato's account of *mimesis*, and hence a resource by which visual artists might have sought to legitimate their own claims, Aristotle's poetics brings tragedy, the Dionysiac, under the control of reasonable philosophic discourse, *logos*, by excluding its non-verbal components, music, dance and visual spectacle. Greek rationalism valued the word and expended great effort on its analysis. Owing to its particular nature as a form of material culture, the tragic text was more easily separated from its civic context and inserted in a new context of appropriation than works of visual art like civic portraits or cult statues. By the time a similar break was established between the city and its images, in the art collections of the Hellenistic kings, the institutional project of the visual artists had collapsed, subverted by the sociologically and culturally rooted antagonisms of their models and potential allies, the philosophers.

[169] 26/1462a1–12.
[170] Bernstein (1971).
[171] On the centrality of the visual in the experience and the thematics of Greek tragedy: Zeitlin (1994).
[172] Goldhill (1986).

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