

### Postscript

My thinking about 'the function of Athenian vases in Athenian social action' (Morris, this volume) proceeds along two paths. The one is pragmatic; it is connected with the concrete function(s) of Athenian black- and red-figured pottery referred to at the beginning of this paper. The other, founded on the empirical basis of function, is concerned with content ('meaning'). I am interested in exploring the symbolism of Attic vase imagery as mediating the structural contradictions inherent in Athenian society. This of course implies studying Attic vases in the context of Greek religion. I am interested, finally, in seeing what sense can be made of the painters' *jeux d'images*. Geertz's 'thick description' (1973: 3–30) comes close to approximating my own method: observing the intricate interweaving of plot and counterplot with the aim of drawing large conclusions from small, but very densely textured facts. The three cardinal questions posed by the Sphinx vase – 'Where do I come from?', 'Who am I', 'Where am I going?' – therefore form part of a discourse of contemporary relevance.

Further to my method: I work outward from the iconographic analysis of details and simultaneously inward from the matrix of religious, social and historical context. As my inquiry progresses, I increasingly focus and limit, and at some point my interpretation gels into a logical synthesis of foreground and background. This is essentially a *Gestalt* approach to iconology, corresponding to the outlook propagated in academic psychology by Wertheimer, Koehler, Arnheim and others, and in art history by Panofsky (1955). *Gestalt*, for which there is no adequate term in English, is approximated by 'meaningful organised whole'. As Arnheim (1969) puts it: 'We don't see three isolated points, we make a triangle out of them.' I might add that I am less interested in 'getting it right all along the line' than in opening up Greek vase imagery to further and deeper exploration. If this paper goes some way to counteract the current devaluation of ritual and religion in the field of archaeology due to 'Western culture's schizophrenia concerning its own ritual life' (Orme 1981: 219), my purpose will have been served. It is not that initiations and funerals go entirely unnoticed in modern life; it is simply that the

specialist and secular bias characteristic of mainstream contemporary academics has banished the study of passage rites as a respectable field for archaeological inquiry. Ritual and religion, it is felt by many, are best left to theologians.

In dealing with the complex passage symbolism of a single Attic vase, understood as being part of the 'total burial assemblage' that includes the funeral rite of passage (I. Morris 1992), I hope to have drawn attention to an important aspect of Attic vases hitherto ignored: their vital function as part of the Athenian immortalising system. Owing to the frequent structural mutuality of their imagery with sacrificial and mortuary ritual, the vases of the age of Pericles – regardless of whether they were employed as votive offerings or as grave goods – contribute substantially to the creation of symbolic immortality (Hoffmann 1988; 1989; forthcoming).

### Acknowledgements

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### Notes

- 1 Lippold 1952: 89–90, fig. 11; Beazley 1963: 764, no. 8 (Sotades Painter, Kekrops and Nike, with two women (daughters of Kekrops?)); Kron 1976: 93–4, pl. 11 (Kekrops with Nike or Iris; Erysichthon with his mother or sister; the Kekropids); D. Williams 1988: 44–6, fig. 50e; *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* I: pl. 213, 29 (Aglauros).
- 2 I will return to maenadism and what Vidal-Naquet (1986: 217) characterises as the 'exclusion of women from the body politic' in my forthcoming book on Sotadean imagery.

## 5 Looking on – Greek style. Does the sculpted girl speak to women too?

ROBIN OSBORNE

The visitor to a Greek sanctuary or cemetery in the sixth century BC will have come face to face with sculpted images of women, both mortal women and goddesses. The visitor to a Greek sanctuary two centuries later will also have confronted statues of females. But the sculpted women of the fourth century looked very different from those of the sixth. The changes in the style of sculptures during these two centuries have been much discussed, but they have been discussed very largely from the formal point of view, with the stylistic features of one period represented as the natural result of the development of the stylistic features and trends of the preceding period. But the communication which a work of art makes with the viewer is a communication in which the style plays as large a part in the message as the 'content', for it is the style as much as the content which determines the viewer's response.<sup>1</sup> In this paper I want to bring back the viewer and examine the changing images of women in sculpture from the point of view of women. What image of women do these sculptures present to the male and to the female viewer? How do the stylistic differences between the sculptures affect the image projected?

### The sculpted goddess

I want to start with the most famous of all statues in antiquity: Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Knidos, carved in the middle of the fourth century BC (fig. 5.1). There are two reasons for starting with this piece: first, 'In the Aphrodite of Knidos, whether or not there were other naked Aphrodites before her in classical art, there can be no doubt that Praxiteles created something profoundly new: a figure designed from start to finish, in proportion, structure, pose, expression to illustrate an ideal of the feminine principle'

(Robertson 1975: 391). This is a statue seen by classical art historians as a radically new image. The second reason for choosing this piece is that we possess abundant testimony on the reaction of viewers in antiquity to it. Several of these viewers are separated by four hundred years or more from the sculpting of this statue, and they cannot be taken as guides to contemporary reaction, but they do give us reactions from viewers who, unlike ourselves, had not been trained in the artistic values of the Renaissance, and whose reactions to female sexuality were unaffected by the Christian tradition. These two advantages outweigh, for my purposes, the disadvantages caused by the loss of the original statue, so that our own reactions have to be based on Roman copies of the work.

From the various ancient comments on the Aphrodite I will quote three: an epigram ascribed to the philosopher Plato (if genuine then fourth-century BC); an account by the ancient encyclopaedist Pliny the Elder (first-century AD) and a fictional piece included with the *belles-lettres* of Lucian (second-century AD).

First, the epigram:

Paphian Kythereia came through the waves to Knidos  
Wanting to see her own image.  
She gazed all round in an open space and  
Said: Where did Praxiteles see me naked?  
Praxiteles did not see what he should not, but  
The iron carved such a Paphian goddess as Ares desired!  
(Page 1976: Plato xxv.

Cf. *Palatine Anthology* 16.159–63, 165–70)

Second, Pliny:

There are works of Praxiteles in the Ceramicus at Athens, but before all the works not only of Praxiteles but all in the whole world is the Venus which many men have sailed to Knidos in order to see. Praxiteles made two statues of Venus and sold them at the same time, the other of clothed appearance, which the Coans, who had the choice, preferred against it, when he had offered them at the same price, because they judged it serious and modest: the Knidians bought the one the Coans rejected and it has had a very different fame. Later King Nicomedes wanted to buy her from the Knidians, promising that he would pay off the whole of the city's debt, which was huge, but they preferred to endure everything, and not without reason, for Praxiteles ennobled Knidos by that image. The whole of its small temple is open, so that the likeness, which, it is believed, was made with the goddess's favour, can be seen from every side. The same wonder is provoked by every view. They say that one man, seized with love, when he had

hidden himself in the night, grasped the statue and that a spot marks his desire. (*Natural History* 36.20–1)

Third [Lucian]:

When we had enjoyed the plants to our fill we entered into the temple. The goddess is sited in the middle, a most beautiful artistic work of Parian marble, smiling a little sublimely with her lips parted in a laugh. Her whole beauty is uncovered, she has no clothing cloaking her and is naked except in as far as with one hand she nonchalantly conceals her crotch. The craftsman's art has been so great as to suit the opposite and unyielding nature of the stone to each of the limbs. Kharikles, indeed, shouted out in a mad and deranged way, 'Happiest of all gods was Ares who was bound for this goddess', and with that he ran up and stretching his neck as far as he could kissed it on its shining lips. But Kallikratidas stood silently, his mind numbed with amazement.

The temple has doors at both ends too, for those who want to see the goddess in detail from the back, in order that no part of her may not be wondered at. So it is easy for men entering at the other door to examine the beautiful form behind. So we decided to see the whole of the goddess and went around to the back of the shrine. Then, when the door was opened by the keeper of the keys, sudden wonder gripped us at the beauty of the woman entrusted to us. Well, the Athenian, when he had looked on quietly for a little, caught sight of the love parts of the goddess, and immediately cried out much more madly than Kharikles, 'Herakles! What a fine rhythm to her back! Great flanks! What a handful to embrace! Look at the way the beautifully delineated flesh of the buttocks is arched, neither too wanting and drawn in too close to the bones themselves, nor allowed to spread out excessively fat. No one could express the sweetness of the smile of the shape impressed upon the hips. How precise the rhythms of thigh and shin extending right straight to the foot! Such a Ganymede pours nectar sweetly for Zeus in heaven! For I wouldn't have received a drink if Hebe had been serving.' As Kallikratidas made this inspired cry, Kharikles was virtually transfixed with amazement, his eyes growing damp with a watering complaint... (*Amores* 13–14)

[Lucian] continues with the story of the young man who made love to the statue.

I want to draw attention to three features of these accounts. First, that the statue is said to induce an overtly sexual thrill in the viewer. This is seen not only in the anecdote of the young man leaving his mark on history, told by Pliny and [Lucian], but also in the reaction of the

imaginary party visiting the temple in [Lucian]'s essay. Second, the high priority on seeing the statue from all round. Pliny states that the statue was so placed as to be seen from every side, in strong contrast to what was usually the case with a cult statue, and [Lucian]'s story, although implying that in fact it could not be seen from *every* side, stresses the special lengths to which the Knidians had gone to make the back as well as the front visible (compare *Palatine Anthology* 16.169.1). Third, the conviction that Praxiteles must have used a model; as well as the epigram cited, other writers claim that the statue was modelled on a mistress of Praxiteles', although they disagree about the identity of the mistress (Phryne in Athenaios 590, Kratine in Poseidippos [Jacoby 1925–58: 447 F1]).

What is it about the statue that calls forth these reactions? Neither the fact of nakedness (there were other naked female statues by the time of Pliny and [Lucian]) nor the skill in carving (about which we can only speculate with the original lost) are likely to be sufficient. Account needs also to be taken of the pose. Modern scholars have felt that Aphrodite's pose, and in particular what she is doing with her right hand, needs to be explained. 'The lifting of the drapery from the vessel and the movement of the other hand imply that the goddess has been washing and did not mean to be seen naked. It is noteworthy that at all periods of Greek art, when women are shown without clothes their nakedness is motivated: it is a situation where nudity is natural... The convention, one of the most characteristic and influential of Greek art by which a man can be shown naked in any action or context without regard to practice or probability, is never extended to the representation of women' (Robertson 1975: 392). 'Even in the fourth century, when prejudice had become relaxed, Praxiteles felt obliged to justify the nudity of the Knidia by the suggestion that she was preparing to bathe' (Carpenter 1960: 216). Or, for the right hand: 'The missing right hand covered the crotch, an action that was accepted as the automatic result of modesty: it is exaggerated into a self-conscious coyness in later Aphrodites' (Lawrence and Tomlinson 1983: 189–90); 'The right hand is brought across in front of the pudenda – a gesture that from repetition now seems prudish or banal, though here there is no hint of self-consciousness' (R. M. Cook 1972b: 137).

The scholars' story is that the representation of the female body was generally taboo, and was acceptable only if realistically 'motivated' (but the claimed explanation of the taboo in K. Clark 1956: 65 is fantasy). At the same time, however, that the publication of the naked female body is deemed to have been acceptable if it reproduces the scenes in which the private female would have been naked, it is felt necessary to have this statue acknowledge that it is public, not private, by the gesture of the right hand.

If we examine further the mismatch between the representation of men and the representation of women, which Robertson points to, it becomes clear that the simple story of taboo and modesty will not do (cf. Pollock 1987a: 50–90). Not only is it common to have the male represented naked without regard to plausible context, but it is actually not at all normal, whether in sculpture or on pots, to have the male represented naked in those situations in which he would privately have appeared naked, or indeed to have the male represented in private, domestic, space at all. Try to find a *man* washing or bathing (as opposed to oiling himself in the gymnasium). The only interior spaces in which men are regularly represented are the workshop (a public space) and the symposion, but symposion scenes are closely related to scenes of outdoor revelling. Men do appear in indoor scenes when they are shown with women (Webster 1972: ch. 16). Broadly speaking, two things can be said of the *classical* sculpted man: that he is a public actor, and that he does not acknowledge the presence of the viewer. As far as sculpted men are concerned, we are anonymous spectators who happen to have glanced their way but who can make no demands on their attention. The sculpted girl, by contrast, inhabits a different world, a world which includes private space as well as public, and indeed the public contexts in which women are shown tend to be very restricted (Webster 1972: ch. 17; Bérard 1989a). The contrasting presentation of mortal men and mortal women comes out very starkly from the Athenian grave reliefs of the fourth century BC: men are shown in public roles (as soldiers, athletes and so on) and in an explicitly public or indeterminate space, or occasionally on the threshold of the domestic space; women are shown in explicitly private space and engaged in domestic roles (Friis Johansen 1951). With goddesses the situation is different. Seeing any god was a potentially dangerous experience for a mortal, and to see a god when that god did not want to be seen was something which, if possible at all, brought a heavy punishment. Sculptures of gods and goddesses thus re-present a highly charged moment, the epiphany of the deity, and they represent the deity as that deity chooses to present itself.

But where does Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite stand with respect to these conventions? Both ancient and modern commentators agree that Aphrodite is engaged in the private activity of bathing, but that the gesture of the right hand acknowledges that a viewer has intruded into that public space. Thus, in as far as this is a private scene, Aphrodite is represented as a woman, but in as far as she acknowledges the spectator she is represented as a goddess. The merging of the artistic conventions thus presents a goddess, but one seen as a woman might be seen; this is the sculptural equivalent of the narrative of the goddess surprised bathing which is



5.1 Praxiteles, *Aphrodite of Knidos*. Copy of original of mid-fourth century BC. Vatican Museum.

manifested in a number of myths, invariably with drastic consequences for the viewer (e.g. Antoninus Liberalis, *Metamorphoses* 17.5; Kallimachos, *Hymn* 5; Photius 1466–7a). The viewer of the sculpture is put in the fantasy position of being able to see Aphrodite naked with impunity: Praxiteles represents the unrepresentable.

But Praxiteles' Aphrodite does far more than simply exploit the productivity of the clash between the conventional representation of women and the conventional representation of a goddess. For at the same time that it invites the construction of a narrative it gives no particular purchase to any particular narrative. Is Aphrodite about to bathe or has she bathed? Modern scholars disagree without appearing to notice the fact (Robertson 1975: 392; Carpenter 1960: 216; Charbonneau *et al.* 1972: 211). Have we surprised the goddess, or was she in fact preparing to receive us? Is the metonymic urn to be filled, full or empty?

That the viewer cannot resist completing, or trying to complete, a narrative for this Aphrodite can be seen not only from the amatory response of the characters in the ancient stories but also from modern scholarly observations. 'From the full front the hand conceals the junction of belly and thighs, but again the least movement reveals it' (Robertson 1975: 392). Or Kenneth Clark in a long comparison of the relation between viewer and sculpted goddess in the Knidian and Capitoline Aphrodites:

Approach the Knidian from the direction to which her gaze is directed, her body is open and defenceless; approach the Capitoline and it is formidably enclosed. This is the pose known to history as the Venus Pudica, the Venus of Modesty, and although the Capitoline is more carnally realistic than the Knidian and the action of her right hand does nothing to conceal her magnificent breasts, a formal analysis shows that the title has some justification. We can see why in later replicas this attitude was adopted when the more candid nudity of Praxiteles would have given offence (K. Clark 1956: 79)

As the modern critic feels obliged to move round the statue, to occupy the position of the object seen by the goddess as well as to look on as a third-party spectator of the goddess' surprise, so also the imaginary characters of [Lucian]'s story feel themselves obliged to see the statue from all round. The result of this becomes very clear from [Lucian]: the goddess of whom a glance is stolen, before whom the stupor of fright and love is the only possible response, to whom love must be made, successively as the viewer adopts changing positions before her, is fragmented and reduced to 'love parts' as she is encircled. This is the incomprehensibility of beauty enacted, destroying the possibility of any present narrative. As Roland Barthes saw:

'Beauty (unlike ugliness) cannot really be explained: in each part of the body it stands out, repeats itself, but it does not describe itself. Like a god (and as empty), it can only say: *I am what I am*. The discourse, then, can do no more than assert the perfection of each detail and refer "the remainder" to the code underlying all beauty: Art. In other words, beauty cannot assert itself save in the form of a citation' (Barthes 1975: 33). But Kallikratidas' response in [Lucian] is not just the reaction of a particular mortal to an encounter with, as it were, the Platonic 'Idea' of the beautiful: it is also an essentially sexual response. For the Athenian's fragmentation of Aphrodite's body is part of his attempt to comprehend the female body in terms of the male: his cry arises only when he can pretend that this is a young boy lover that he has before him, that this is a Ganymede. In Freudian terminology this is a classic case of the fetishism of the female form: 'Parts of her body are taken out of context and made to function both as erotic thrills and threatening dangers for the male viewer' (Pollock 1987b: 242; cf. Pollock 1987a: 120–54; Mulvey 1987).

Clark wrote of the Knidian Aphrodite that 'beyond the geometrical harmony, there is, in her whole bearing, a harmonious calm, a gentleness even, much at variance with the amatory epigrams which she inspired' (K. Clark 1956: 76). I have tried to show, by contrast, that it is precisely the delicacy with which she is posed that created the amatory epigrams. But if that is true, then it must also be clear that the viewer whom I have in the above account struggled to keep sexless, is assumed to be male. Aphrodite may be the first female nude in Greek sculpture, but she is already centrally placed in the tradition of the Western nude: 'Her body is arranged in the way it is, to display it to the man looking at the picture. This picture is made to appeal to *his* sexuality' (Berger 1972: 55, of Bronzino's *Allegory of time and love*).

But we should resist Berger's further move in implying that because the female nude of art and the girlie pin-up both offer up their femininity to be surveyed they belong to the same category. Praxiteles' goddess does not feed the male appetite in at all a straightforward way. This is in part a matter of Aphrodite being in a very strong sense a sculpture in the round: placed as a cult statue in a temple the official view of the statue is certainly the full-frontal one, but placed in such a way as to be seen all round it is in fact up to the viewer which position he adopts, and as he adopts a particular position so he opens up or forecloses the possible narratives. 'Pin-up and softcore pornography's interest in the female body is confined to a small repertoire of parts – those which mark the woman as feminine, not-male, different' (A. Kuhn 1985: 38), but Knidian Aphrodite allows the viewer, like Kallikratidas in [Lucian], to make his own selection. According as he adopts a position the viewer is, or

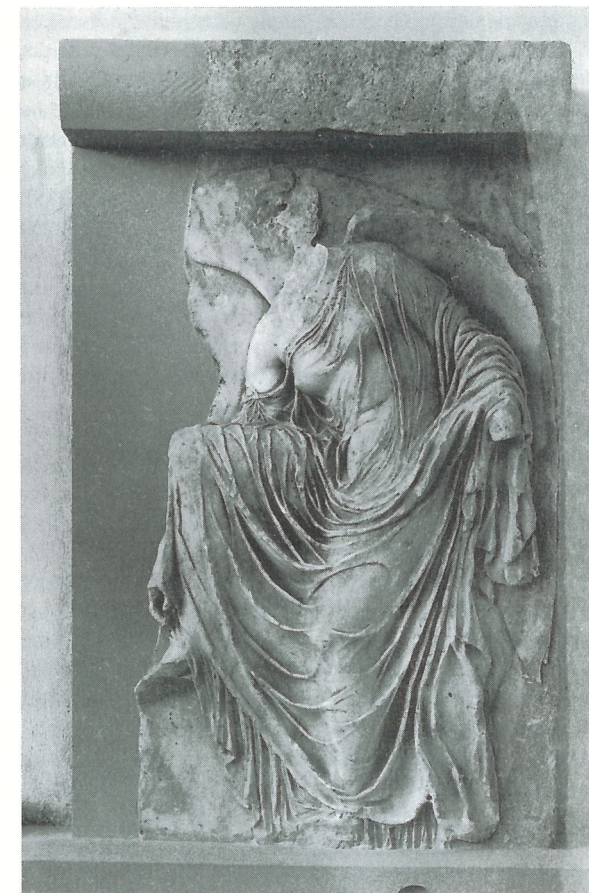
is not, the viewed person who has called forth the 'gesture of modesty', he is viewer or voyeur; Aphrodite smiles for him or at him or both; and so on. Both actor and observer, not simply in turn but at the same time, the viewer finds himself and his male appetite, his male sexuality, framed. Before this goddess (who is not as unselfconscious as Cook imagines, from some points of view not unselfconscious at all) the viewer becomes himself self-conscious; for as he occupies the position of the viewed, the object of Aphrodite's gaze, so he becomes the actor observed by the viewer who watches the drama from the full-frontal position. The invitation to drama is clearly seen in the way in which [Lucian] has the Aphrodite seen by a *group*. This is not a statue at which you can gaze in private.

Rich though the message of this statue is about male sexuality, it has very little to say about female sexuality. What separates Aphrodite from the Page 3 girl also stops her saying anything to women. The Page 3 girl may invite female 'sexual enjoyment, sexual freedom and active participation in heterosexual activity' (Holland 1987: 111), but this statue does not. That Robertson could call this statue an illustration of 'the ideal of the feminine principle' is indicative of the way in which the 'feminine principle' is constructed by male desire.<sup>2</sup>

Praxiteles' Aphrodite is an uncommonly powerful work, but is it breaking new ground as Robertson claimed? In an attempt to answer this question I want to look at two more sculptural representations of goddesses, one an architectural relief and the other a cult statue. The architectural relief is part of the balustrade put up around the temple of Athena Nike on the acropolis at Athens in the 410s, and it shows Nike, the divine personification of Victory, adjusting her sandal (fig. 5.2). No ancient reactions to this work survive, but here is the account of Jerome Pollitt (1972: 115–18):

The most conspicuous example of the new style is found in the reliefs of the parapet which surrounded the graceful little Ionic temple of Athena Nike on the Acropolis. These reliefs, which ran around three sides (north, west, and south) of the bastion on which the temple stood, depicted Nikai (Victories) erecting trophies and bringing forward sacrificial bulls in the presence of Athena, whose seated figure appears three times on the frieze (one on each side). The expressive effect of the Nikai was created almost wholly by the carving of their drapery. Smooth surfaces where the drapery is pressed against the body, revealing the anatomy beneath it, are contrasted with deep swirling furrows created by the use of a running drill. The relief medium enabled the sculptors to carry these furrows beyond the surface of the body itself, creating patterns of line and of light and

shade which were totally independent of anatomical structure and could be elaborated for their own sake. The impression the Nikai give of being calligraphic designs quite as much as sculptural figures is further reinforced by their often arbitrary and only vaguely functional actions. The pose of the 'Nike adjusting her sandal', for example, strikes one as a formal device designed to provide a semi-circular pattern in which the sculptor could give a virtuoso's display of his ability to vary the texture of the drapery in a series of parallel ridges; and the animated Nike from the north side of the parapet who is enwrapped in a beautiful flourish of waving furrows seems to lay her hand on the head of the adjacent bull only as a token of duty. In these sculptures ornamental beauty has become an end in itself and to a great degree has usurped the role of meaning or 'content' in the



5.2 Athena Nike temple balustrade relief panel, Athenian acropolis, late fifth century BC. Acropolis Museum, Athens.

specific narrative sense. It is true that they do have a general overall theme – victory, and that the Nikai may be thought of as engaged in a very casual processional movement towards Athena, but compared to the Parthenon frieze where each group of figures was planned so as to contribute through both its form and meaning to a single great design and subject, the parapet seems almost aimless. The very fact that Athena appears thrice, like an ornamental motif, seems to say that the subject is just for show and that it is the ornamental function which counts. The Nikai perform a beautiful ballet, but the choreography seems designed to divert one from giving too much thought to the question of just what the dance is about.

Leaving aside, here, the claim that form and content are separated in these reliefs, I want to concentrate on Pollitt's contention that the sculptor was only interested in the calligraphic design, the Nikai simply constituting a frame on which this is hung. The Nike adjusting her sandal provides the most appropriate framework for this consideration since she is the only figure whose action can truly be said to be gratuitous. But what is her action? She is traditionally known as the Nike Sandalbinder, but others refer to her as Nike untying her sandal (Woodford 1986: caption to fig. 209). Nor will the neutral 'adjusting her sandal' do: the truth is that the sculpture does not make explicit the action. Still less does it make explicit the motive. As soon as we ask *why* Nike is taking off/putting on/adjusting her sandal we raise the further question of what this Nike was doing before, and what she is about to do. And to answer, or try to answer, this question is to attempt to construe the sculpture.

Any such attempt immediately involves the viewer not in admiring the calligraphic design of the drapery, but in trying to read the actions of the body beneath the drapery. But for all that the clinging drapery has been called 'a transparent veil over what is in effect a female nude' (Robertson 1975: 391), the body here will not construe and the drapery cannot be removed. The lower part of the body is effectively in profile or close to it, while the upper part of the torso is close to being frontal. Not only does the drapery mask the very awkward transition involved here by masking the position of the left hip, but it also renders initially credible the combination of an almost upright back with breasts aligned at an angle of 45° (with the result that the right breast is improbably close to the right thigh) and the fact that if you put the right leg down on the ground it proves longer than the left.

Is the impossibility of construing this relief a product of incompetence? Is it proof that the pattern was all that the sculptor was interested in? Perhaps, but another explanation

is worth canvassing. What the semicircular patterns of the drapery folds, and what the unrealistically small distance between breasts and right thigh, do is create a focus to the composition, and this focus is not upon the binding or unbinding of the sandal, nor is it upon the now missing head: it is precisely upon the 'junction of belly and thighs' which is also the area most deeply concealed in dark pools of shadow and multiple folds of cloth. Like it or not, viewers find their attention focused upon a female body which cannot be construed. Here is a Victory which eludes the male viewer; desire is tended and cultivated and representation is (a)voided. This is 'a radically dehiscent image whose construction further disintegrates the longer one examines it' (Bryson 1984: 175 of Ingres' *Grande Odalisque*, to which I owe a considerable debt here). As with Praxiteles' Aphrodite, so with this relief the viewer is framed, and here that framing takes the form of constructing a promise that this winged victory can be real, can be sited in the life in which sandals are removed and put on again, and then of having that promise necessarily unfulfilled. The convention that in a man's world of war Victory should be represented as a woman is here put under close scrutiny as both what representation is and what Victory is are questioned.

But if Praxiteles' nude cult statue of Aphrodite and the relief of Nike fiddling with her sandal can both be seen to play upon male desire, male sexuality, and male expectations and values, and to say nothing to women, what of the most important new cult image in classical Athens, the cult statue of Athena Parthenos by Pheidias in the Parthenon (fig. 5.3)? Although again we know this statue only from later copies, these make it very apparent that we are dealing with a statue of a very different kind from either of those we have looked at so far. It differs in scale (it was colossal), in material (it was made of gold and ivory), and in the complexity of the iconography: not only did Athena have griffins and a sphinx on her helmet, a gorgon on her breast, a victory on her outstretched hand, and a snake by her feet, but her shield had scenes of Amazons fighting on the outside, of gods and giants fighting on the inside, her sandals had scenes of lapiths and centaurs fighting, and the base of the statue showed the birth of Pandora. Moreover, the viewer was prepared for his encounter with the goddess by the sculptures of the temple as a whole (Osborne 1987b).

This is not the place to attempt to unravel the complex of ideas explored by this monument, but a few general points can be brought out. Although known as the statue of Athena Parthenos, it is not Athena's maidenly qualities but her involvement in the warlike activity of men that is stressed by the accumulation of scenes and symbols of war. From top to bottom it is Athena's participation in the male world of martial combat that is brought out, with two motifs excepted:

the Gorgon on Athena's breast and the scene of Pandora on the base. Since Freud's classic analysis of the gorgon Medusa, the sexual connotations of the gorgon do not need to be emphasised (Freud 1977: 351; cf. Napier 1986: 83–134). The story of Perseus' decapitation of Medusa enacts male fears of being unmanned in the encounters of war and in encounters with women, and the not uncommon



5.3 *Athena Parthenos*. Miniature copy of second century AD of Pheidias' chryselephantine cult statue of the 430s BC. National Museum, Athens.

practice of having a gorgon's head blazon on one's hoplite shield turns this threat onto the enemy. But worn on her breast by Athena, the gorgon's head acquires a new charge. Athena may offer Victory, but she does not thereby remove the dangers of war or change the stakes involved.

This challenge not to forget Athena's own sexuality is reinforced by the presentation of the birth of Pandora on the statue base. Pausanias, in his description of the statue, notes this in the following way: 'The birth of Pandora is worked on the base of the statue. Hesiod and others have written in their poems that Pandora was the first woman to be born' (Pausanias 1.24.7). Pliny seems to have said that the birth was shown with twenty gods present (Pliny, *Natural History* 36.18 reads 'There are twenty gods being born', but this is manifest nonsense and straightforward emendation gives the sense 'Twenty gods are present at the birth'), and from models of the Athena Parthenos and a neo-Attic relief in Rome it seems that the base presented a central frontal figure of Pandora flanked by standing and sitting deities with the rearing chariot team of Helios at one end and the departing horsemen of Selene at the other. If this is correct then this composition echoed the scene of the birth of Athena herself from the east pediment of the Parthenon and the array of gods observing the arrival of the Athenian procession with the peplos on the east frieze. Thus the worshipper coming from the east and entering the temple was presented with three parallel scenes in turn: the gods are seen to observe first the birth of Athena from Zeus; then the arrival of the autochthonous Athenian worshippers; finally the birth of Pandora fashioned from clay. But, as Pausanias' invocation of Hesiod makes clear, the birth of Pandora cannot be separated from her indiscretion which brought misery to man (Hesiod, *Theogony* 570–612; *Works and Days* 70–105; cf. Vernant 1980: 168–85). The viewer had to face up to the question of how he or she related to these very similar but also very different creation stories, the creation of the immortal goddess and the creation of the mortal woman. Both men and women are challenged to find a place in the service of the city, but it is the man, whose martial duties the cult statue brings to the fore in all its other scenes, who is left uncomfortably reminded of his inability either to cope with, or to survive without, the female sex.

### The sculpted mortal woman

Classical statues of goddesses, I have argued, address themselves most powerfully and most richly to men and have little directly to say to women.<sup>3</sup> I now want briefly to show that the same is true of Classical statues of mortal women, and then to look back into the late Archaic period and claim that this had not always been the case.

I take as my example of a Classical statue of a woman a piece from the early fifth century which is, on the face of it, rather short on explicit sensual charm, by comparison with the Nike balustrade figure or Praxiteles' Aphrodite: 'Amelung's goddess' (fig. 5.4). This is perhaps the most heavily draped of all ancient statues, the heavy himation covering all but face, left hand, bottom inches of tunic, and feet. Chronologically not far separate from the last of the *korai*, a series of small changes mark this out as very different: the expression is much more severe, the dress plain and sober, the right hand invisible, and the head slightly turned. This turn of the head ensures that, unlike the *korai*, this is not a 'statue to be met' (Martin Robertson's phrase). The turn of the head ensures that we are not ourselves the sole object in the gentle drama in which this figure has a part; it turns us into spectators at a drama.

But what is the drama? The clues are few: the extended left hand was restored by Amelung to hold a flower, but we cannot know if that is right. Whatever is extended, to whom is it offered or from whom received? Even if the hand held nothing some exchange is taking place, an exchange to which we are witness but to which we are not party. To get any further in the analysis of this narrative of which we are given a glimpse, we must turn to the information that will have been given on the statue base. One late copy of this statue is inscribed 'Europe' on its base, and Martin Robertson has ingeniously argued that a figure on a late fifth-century krater by the Kekrops painter, which is certainly a representation of this statue seen from the side and with minor adjustments, should be identified as Europe (Robertson 1957). Once we have the name Europe then our puzzle as to what this modest woman is engaged in is given an answer: the name Europe gives us a narrative, and for all the ancient variations in detail, that narrative is basically a narrative of *rape*. What then is the exchange to which we are witness? Given the subtitle 'This woman was/will be a victim of rape by Zeus', the inarticulate signs constituted by her difference from the tradition of *korai*, her right arm clasped to and drawing attention to her breast, her gaze which resolutely refuses to engage with the viewer's, all become redolent with meaning. The viewer, who approached the statue and looked to read the inscription thinking that he was observing a fragment of someone else's drama to which he was merely a spectator, finds himself the one whose gaze is shunned, himself being warded off, himself framed as an outsider. But Europe's story is again one of male desire, this narrative too is a narrative that speaks to men. To caption this statue 'Europe' is the ancient equivalent, in some ways at least, of the modern advertising slogan 'Underneath they are all lovable', and it has cognate overtones for women (Coward 1987).

Like Praxiteles' Knidian Aphrodite and the Nike fiddling with her sandal, Amelung's 'goddess' challenges the viewer to construct a narrative in order to comprehend the image, and like them this statue makes the construction of a definitive narrative impossible and ensures that the act of building a story frames the viewer and exploits and exposes his male desire. Faced with any of these statues, as faced with the Athena Parthenos, men are reduced to a common denominator, and the factors which separate one man from another are shown up as superficial. But it is by exploiting the male image of what it is to be a woman that all these sculptures achieve their effect, not by questioning that image; and no independent voice is allowed to women, no purchase given to the woman viewer. For all the marked changes in style between these sculptures there is no basic change in the way in which women are construed.

But if the classical construction of women stays unchanged through all the changes of sculptural style in the 150 years after the Persian Wars, was it itself an inheritance from the Archaic period? Was the major stylistic change that occurred early in the fifth century also of no importance with regard to the question of what sculptures had to say to women, or did *this* stylistic change at least make a difference?

Archaic free-standing sculpture is dominated by two types, the *kouros* and the *kore*. The *kouros* is a naked beardless male, standing with arms by sides, left leg advanced, and gaze straight ahead. The *kore* is a draped female figure, either with feet together or with one slightly advanced, one arm by the side and the other either folded across the breast or held out with some object, a bird or a piece of fruit, for instance, in it. In Attica, at least, both *korai* and *kouroi* were used both as dedications to the gods in sanctuaries and as markers on tombs (D'Onofrio 1982). On tombs *kouroi* always mark dead men, *korai* dead women, but men dedicate *korai* as well as *kouroi* in sanctuaries, and female deities receive *kouroi* as well as *korai*. Thus *kouroi* and *korai* stand neither universally for the deity nor universally for the dedicator: they have a life of their own.

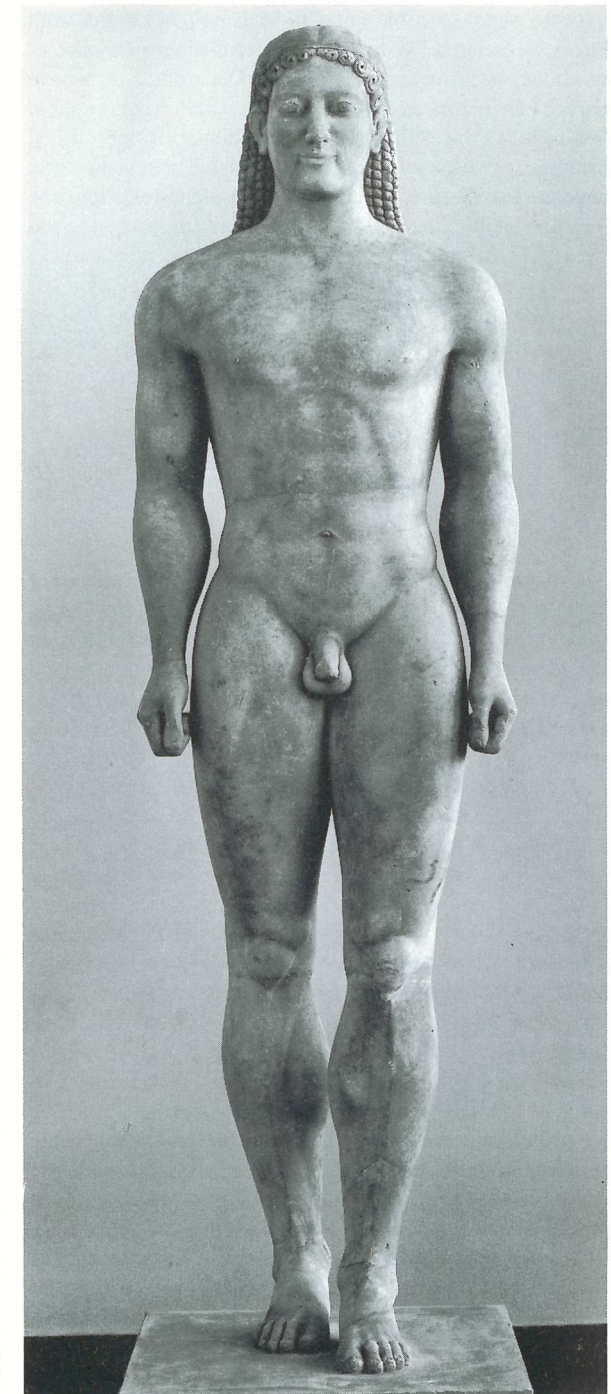
Despite their similar configuration and use, the differences between *korai* and *kouroi* are important. Hands by his sides and feet flat on the ground, the *kouros* refuses any engagement in a narrative, gives no purchase to any identification as athlete, warrior, or god (fig. 5.5). His resolutely forward gaze makes contact with nothing but the viewer whose own gaze is mirrored. The *kouros* re-presents man to himself and to god and god to man (Osborne 1988a). *Korai* too gaze straight ahead and have their feet firmly on the ground, but more is at stake here than an exchange of looks: for these are dressed up statues whose offered or received gifts hint at a narrative (fig. 5.6). Before the *kore* the

viewer is called to take part in her story, not merely to subsume her identity.

As dedications on graves, *kouroi* and *korai* were accompanied by inscriptions, and the difference between *kouroi* and *korai* as sculptures is paralleled by the difference between the inscriptions. The simple dedicatory formula 'X dedicated me to Y' is frequently found on both *kouroi* and *korai*, as is the fuller 'X dedicated me to Y as a tithe'. Few *kouros* dedications follow any other form.<sup>4</sup> *Korai*, by contrast, not infrequently bear dedications expanded in



5.4 'Amelung's goddess', Roman copy of an original of the second quarter of the fifth century BC. National Archaeological Museum, Naples.



5.5 Kouros from near Anavyssos, Attica, third quarter of the sixth century BC. Base gives the name 'Kroisos'. National Museum, Athens.

various ways. One of the earliest *korai*, Nikandre from Delos, is inscribed 'Nikandre dedicated me to the far-shooter of arrows, the excellent daughter of Deinodikos of Naxos, sister of Deinomenes, wife of Phraxos' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 403 = Lazzarini 1976: no. 157 = Richter 1968: no. 1), situating her very surely in a man's world. The tithe idea gets expanded in the inscription on 'Antenor's *kore*' from the Athenian acropolis (fig. 5.6), traditionally restored to read 'Nearkhos the potter dedicated me as a tithe of his works to Athena. Antenor the son of Eumares made the *agalma*' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 193 = Lazzarini 1976: no. 636 = Richter 1968: no. 110 = Raubitschek 1949: 197); and again on a base from the Athenian acropolis which is the only Athenian dedicatory inscription to use *kore* of the object dedicated (as opposed to referring to Athena as the '*kore* of Zeus'): 'Naulokhos dedicated this *kore* as a tithe of the catch which the sea-ruling one with the golden trident gave to him' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 266 = Lazzarini 1976: no. 639 = Raubitschek 1949: 229).

The term most frequently used in the inscriptions to refer to the statue is not *kore* but, as in Antenor's *kore*, *agalma*. A simple example of this is another Athenian acropolis base: 'Aiskhines dedicated this *agalma* to Athena having vowed a tithe to the child of great Zeus' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 202 = Lazzarini 1976: no. 680 = Raubitschek 1949: 48). More complex are the ideas conveyed in a slightly earlier dedication: 'Alkimakhos dedicated me to the daughter of Zeus, this *agalma* as a votive offering and he boasts that he is the son of a good father, Khairion' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 195 = Lazzarini 1976: no. 732 = Raubitschek 1949: 6). A further Athenian example associated the sculptor in this act of relating to the goddess: 'Lyson dedicated to Pallas Athena a tithe of his own possession, and Thebades the son of Kyrnos made this gracious *agalma* for the goddess' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 205 = Lazzarini 1976: no. 638 = Raubitschek 1949: 290). Outside Athens the only certain uses of *agalma* on *korai* come from Samos where Kheramues dedicated two *korai* to Hera, one inscribed 'Kheramues dedicated me to Hera, an *agalma*', and the other 'Kheramues dedicated me to the goddess, a very beautiful *agalma*' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 422 with note = Lazzarini 1976: nos. 727–8 = Richter 1968: nos. 55–6).

*Agalma* is not only used of *korai* in the Archaic period in epigraphic dedications: on the Athenian acropolis it is firmly attested for sculptures of horses, or horses and riders, for a four-horse chariot group, and for seated figures and figure groups (Raubitschek 1949: 374, 234, 248, 155, 273, 64, 336, 40, 295 (= P. A. Hansen 1983: 183, 190, 194, 212, 224–7, 234), 195, 206; P. A. Hansen 1983: 281, 285, 289–92). With a single exception, however, *agalma* is never used of *kouroi*. Not only were *kouroi* dedicated on the Athenian acropolis,

but there was a sanctuary full of *kouroi* dedicated to Apollo Ptoios in Boiotia, none of which is referred to as an *agalma*, although *agalma* was used of three non-*kouros* dedications there (P. A. Hansen 1983: 302, 334, 423 = Ducat 1971: nos. 141, 262, 238 = Lazzarini 1976: nos. 856, 796). The one exceptional use of *agalma* on a *kouros* comes from Samos, where the leg of a *kouros* is inscribed 'Kharmues dedicated me to the goddess, a very beautiful *agalma*' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 423 = Lazzarini 1976: no. 727), that is, it is dedicated by the same man who dedicated the two *korai* with identical or near-identical dedicatory epigrams.

In the face of the strength of the epigraphic testimony for *korai* as *agalmata*, and the very weak testimony for *kouroi* as *agalmata*, claims that 'le formule, homérique et traditionnelle, *perikalles agalma*, convient à n'importe quel type d'offrande, mais particulièrement à un *kouros*' (Ducat 1971: 386), or that '*Agalma*, come si è visto, può essere un oggetto di qualunque genere, anche se fra gli *agalmata* hanno netta prevalenze la statue, generalmente di *kouroi* o *kourai*, cioè di offerenti ideali che con hanno alcun rapporto specifico col dedicante' (Lazzarini 1976: 96), seem insufficiently well founded. It is worth exploring the possibility that the two sorts of statue related humankind to the gods in different ways. In tragedy, for example, a heroine *in extremis* is on several occasions likened to an *agalma*. In Euripides, we read, 'Taking hold of her gown she tore it from her shoulders to her waist beside the navel, and showed her breasts and her body, most beautiful, like those of an *agalma*' (*Hecuba* 558–61); and 'Well, what hill is this I see, with sea-foam flowing around it? And there is some image of a maiden, chiselled from the very foam of the rock itself, an *agalma* made by a skilled hand' (*Andromeda* fr. 125 Nauck; cf. *Helen* 262–3. I am indebted to Edith Hall for these references). In inscriptions of the Classical period and later '*agalma* customarily designates the statue of a god' (Lewis and Stroud 1979: 193), but in the Archaic period its use is much wider: 'Founded on the same symbolism of wealth, the *agalma* puts into action sacred powers, social prestige, and bonds of dependence among men; its circulation through gifts and exchanges, engages individuals and mobilises religious forces at the same time as it passes on possession of goods' (Vernant 1980: 360; cf. Gernet 1981: 73–111). In identifying *korai* as *agalmata* the inscriptions situate them in this world of exchange of precious objects whose value cannot be exhausted by putting a price on them, but is bound up with social prestige and sacred powers.

The *kore* which insists that she is part of a narrative, comes offering and receiving gifts, and demands a response, embodies just this idea of exchange. In a society where women are the prime source of symbolic capital, where it is women who are given in and move with marriage, where it

is women who confer prestige by their movement and by the gifts they bring, and where the women have special access to religious power because they alone can hold certain priest-hoods, including some of those most central to the community such as the priesthood of Athena Polias at Athens, and they alone can celebrate certain central rituals (there were no festivals limited to men in classical Greece, it appears, but there were several restricted to women, including the most widely dispersed of all Greek festivals, the Thesmophoria), it is not just appropriate but inevitable that *korai* be used to mark the relationship between *men* and the gods, and that by coming face-to-face with a *kore* the viewer should be obliged to enter into an exchange. *Kouroi* reflect a man's gaze back on a man, and demand and provoke introspection; *korai* draw men's attention to the necessary exchange outside themselves, and to the world where dressing up in finery, offering gifts and offering them in a particular manner, where women, matter.<sup>5</sup>

*Korai* were appropriate gifts to the gods, returns to the gods for their goodness in bestowing economic capital, only because of their value as symbolic capital in the exchanges between men. In the act of the man who repays the god for a successful fishing season by dedicating a *kore* we see part of the 'endless reconversion of economic capital into symbolic capital'; Naulokhos' *kore* signals his success, wealth and power and legitimates his claim to authority. But the use of the *kore* in this context reinforces the position of women which made it possible in the first place. Naulokhos' dedication creates symbolic capital not only for himself but for women. *Korai* as dedications speak to women too, and they speak of power: the role of women as objects of exchange opens up for them a role as agents able to extract a price for the offering they bring; theirs is a hand outstretched ready to receive as well as to give.

But if *korai* as dedications carry a burden of ideas quite other than that borne by *kouroi*, so also as funerary monuments they encourage a rather different sort of mediation on death and the dead. Scarcity of evidence renders all hypotheses in this area fragile, but the accompanying inscriptions on funerary *korai* seem to support the claim that they had a distinct role. Three inscriptions survive from *korai* grave-markers. One is simple: 'Alas for the dead Myrrhine, whose marker I am' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 49 = Jeffery 1962: no. 54). The other two are longer and more complex: '[Philton](?) set down this memorial of his dear child, a memorial fine to behold and Phaidimos made it' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 18 = Jeffery 1962: no. 44); 'Marker of Phrasikleia. I will always be called *kore* having been allotted this name by the gods instead of marriage. Aristion of Paros made it' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 24 = Jeffery 1962: no. 46).



5.6 *Kore* from the acropolis, Athens, 520s BC. Base names: dedicant as Nearkhos, sculptor as Antenor. Acropolis Museum, Athens.

The formula 'I am a marker of X' is plentifully paralleled for the male dead, including dead marked by *kouroi*. The epitaph of [Philton]'s daughter belongs to a small group which draws attention to the beauty of the monument. A stele from Kalyvia Kouvara in Attica reads 'This is the monument of Arkhias and his dear sister; Eukosmides had this fine monument made and skilled Phaidimos placed the stele on it' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 26 = Jeffery 1962: no. 48); a *kouros* base from the Piraeus gate of Athens reads: 'This is the marker of the boy Nelon son of Nelonides, and it was he who had this delightful memorial made to a good son. Endoios made him' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 42 = Jeffery 1962: no. 19). Phrasikleia's epitaph, by contrast, is unique in its identification of statue and dead girl and the direct role ascribed to the god in bringing that situation about. The peculiarity of this epitaph comes out particularly clearly when it is compared with that on the base of the funerary *kouros* of Xenophantos: 'His father Klebolos placed this marker to the dead Xenophantos to stand in place of his *arete* and *sophrosune*' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 41 = Jeffery 1962: no. 9. For the sense of virtues lost, cf. Jeffery 1962: nos. 2, 23, 49, 51, 56 (all for men), and more general expressions of grief in nos. 16, 24, 25, 31, 50). Both inscriptions draw attention to what was lost in death, but while Klebolos looks to his son's good qualities in life as he lived, Phrasikleia laments the future life of which she was deprived, and sees death as an exchange substituted for the exchange of marriage.

In a sample of three, arguments from silence can scarcely be broached with confidence, but it is to be noted that no funerary *kore*, and no archaic stele on the grave of a woman, makes the direct address to the passer-by and viewer which is far from infrequent in archaic grave epitaphs for men, both on *kouroi* as in 'Stand and shed a tear at the tomb of the dead Kroisos, whom Ares came and slew as he stood in the first rank' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 27 = Jeffery 1962: no. 57), and probably on stelai, as in 'Looking upon the memorial of Kleitos the deceased son of Menesaikhmos shed a tear; he died a *kalos*' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 68 = Jeffery 1962: no. 67). Nor is a woman involved in either of the two Archaic grave stelai which invoke a 'nameless first person mourner', to which David Lewis has drawn attention (1987): 'Looking at this tomb of the young Autokleides I feel pain . . .', and 'I shed a tear looking at this tomb of the dead boy Smikythos who has destroyed the good hope of those who loved him.'<sup>6</sup>

All this might be held to encourage the view that *korai* and *kouroi* function in discrete ways as funerary markers, ways that connect closely with differing attitudes to male and female dead. *Kouroi* with their mirroring gaze and refusal to constitute another's story turn the fact of death back upon

the viewer, promoting contemplation of death as loss, and sympathy that comes from putting oneself, or having oneself put, in the position of the deceased. The male life is presented as constituted of virtues and martial achievements, both of which death puts an end to. *Korai*, by contrast, have a narrative of their own. The object-bearing hand involves them in a transaction in which they are both clearly separated from the viewer and into which, by their forward gaze, they draw the viewer. Death is construed not in terms of loss, but in terms of an exchange: the monument itself is a positive return for the loss of life; setting up a *kore* fine to behold leaves a beautiful mark in the world where the woman once was; the value of the marriageable girl is translated into the statue which stands in her stead for the future as a thing of delight. But this is not a thing of delight to behold and pass by, it is a thing of delight which gains its value from the exchange which it transacts: as the woman's value was intimately connected to her being 'given' in marriage, so the *kore* acquires, creates, value by the exchange with the viewer which the frontal gaze insists upon.

That *korai*, like classical statues of women, are playing parts in a drama scripted by men is undeniable; but the particular drama in which they act, and the part which they play, is strikingly different. For the *kore* plays an active starring role, vital to the plot of the 'institutionally organized and guaranteed misrecognition which is the basis of gift exchange and, perhaps, of all the symbolic labour intended to transmute, by the sincere fiction of a disinterested exchange, the inevitable, and inevitably interested relations imposed by kinship, neighbourhood, or work, into the elective relations of reciprocity' (Bourdieu 1977: 171). And in this role she speaks to women too, encouraging the realisation of the power which belongs to those who create, as well as to those who possess, symbolic capital. Essential in giving the *kore* a speaking part is her forward gaze: 'Her look of allure is always directed at us, her eyes always engage with ours' (Holland 1987: 110); written of the Page 3 girl, this observation is no less true of the smiling *kore*. Just as the imaginary 'narrative' which surrounds the Page 3 girl and situates her in real life is the key to her speaking to women too, so with the *kore* the gaze unpacked by the object-bearing hand and the fine costume ensures that she has a message. The Classical sculpted girl, by contrast, parades before but will not engage with the viewer, and her part in her drama is a non-speaking one. The narratives she suggests frame the male viewer and make him scrutinise his own desire, but however much they prove good for men to think with, they say not a word to women.

I set out in this paper to explore the question of whether and in what ways the images of women communicated by Greek sculpture changed over time. In the course of it I have

examined sculptures of widely divergent styles and of several different types, from the formal cult statue to the private dedication, from low relief to three colossal gold and ivory dimensions. It requires relatively little training in Classical sculpture to be able to distinguish the drapery treatment in the Nike parapet reliefs from the drapery treatment in Amelung's 'goddess', or the treatment of flesh in either of those from its treatment by Praxiteles. Within the broad ambit of Classical sculpture both style of execution and content (that is, what precisely the sculptor chooses to portray) vary very palpably. But I have argued that none of these changes make any basic difference to the way in which these sculptures present women. From Europe to Aphrodite of Knidos the sculpted woman is presented for observation, the viewer is given the option of being a fly-on-the-wall at the, often overtly trivial, drama in which this female character is engaged. The woman is presented to the viewer's gaze as an object to behold, an object to sense. From the severe drapery of Europe through the transparent drapery of the Nike to the undraped flesh of Knidian Aphrodite, the sculptor's skill is devoted to evoking a sensory response as he offers a tactile experience to the viewer whilst allowing the viewer the fiction of maintaining an aloofness from the action in which the sculpted woman is engaged. By contrast, the viewer of the Archaic *kore* is unable to stand aloof, he is directly implicated in the woman's gaze and made to enter into an exchange, not offered a free gift on the side. Here is none of the particularity of the classical narrative of Pandora or Nike or Europe or Aphrodite, here is woman establishing her centrality in the male world of exchange, exploiting her symbolic role in order to make clear that woman, that sexual difference, lies at the root of symbolic possibility in general.

What is it that makes the *kore* function in a way so different from Classical statues? What is it that lets the male viewer off the hook after the Archaic period? On the face of it, the most important change is the change of pose: what the *kore* has that later sculptures of women lack is the frontal gaze and the hand extended towards the object of the gaze who is also the viewer of the sculpture. The engagement of the *kore* with the viewer is essentially established by these two features. But these two features themselves are closely related to and indeed dependent upon a further development: the new interest in the sculptural representation of particular forms rather than of types. Where the *kouros* and the *kore* stand for man and maiden but not for particular men or maidens, classical sculpture models human forms in a less generalising way, and achieves its effects at least in part by evoking the possibility that this is a *particular* human being. This increasing suggestion that a *particular* narrative is

being referred to by the gestures and poses of the sculpted figures makes it possible for the viewer to be a spectator at a tableau. It enables all sorts of additional subtleties to be introduced into the spectator's reactions to the sculpture because of the allusiveness of the associations of the particular narrative, but it also insulates the viewer from the direct impact of the sculpted action.

But if the changing style of sculptures of women does, in this one instance, have profound implications for what those sculptures have to say, not just to men but to women too, what is it that determines the change of style? Are we dealing here merely with a chance product of a 'naturally evolving' sculptural style, or is the change in artistic expression linked to wider social change? There is no doubt that in the Greek world in general, and in Athens in particular, the period from 550 to 450 saw very marked changes not only in the mechanics of political life but in various aspects of social expression.

Elite public expression changed in two ways closely related to the theme of this paper. These are marriage and burial. Of marriage Vernant has written:

One can speak in terms of a break between archaic marriage and marriage as it became established within the framework of a democratic city, in Athens, at the end of the sixth century. In the Athens of the period after Cleisthenes, matrimonial unions no longer have as their object the establishment of relationships of power or of mutual service between great autonomous families; rather, their purpose is to perpetuate the households, that is to say the domestic hearths that constitute the city, in other words to ensure, through strict rules governing marriage, the permanence of the city itself through constant reproduction. (Vernant 1980: 60)

Although it is necessary to be careful not to overstate the case for a change in the use of marriage, for there can be no doubt that marriages continued to be made at Athens for broadly political reasons (witness the intertwining of the major families shown by Davies 1971: Table I), that there was a change is undoubted. The marriages between the elites of different cities for which there is much evidence from the seventh and sixth centuries (a Kypselos appearing as archon at Athens in the early sixth century, Peisistratos' marriage to Timonassa of Argos, Megacles' marriage to the daughter of Cleisthenes of Sicyon) are no longer a prominent feature in Athenian fifth-century history, and after 451 BC were effectively ruled out by Pericles' citizenship law which limited Athenian citizenship to those with both an Athenian father and an Athenian mother. Vernant noted that in Archaic marriage two contrasting aspects of the union are stressed:

As a daughter offered in marriage to a foreign *genos*, she fulfils the role of wealth put into circulation, weaving a network of alliances between different groups, just as do the *agalmata* exchanged at the wedding, or the herds that, in order to win his wife, the husband must present to her father. But as a mother who bears a man children that are truly his own and that directly continue his line, she is identified with the cultivated land owned by her husband, and the marriage has the significance of an exercise of ploughing, with the woman as the furrow. (Vernant 1980: 73; cf. Gernet 1981: 289–302, especially 299)

Pericles' citizenship law put all the emphasis on the latter aspect of marriage, ruling out the former aspect except within the boundaries of the *polis*. Thus in the fifth century women are effectively removed from the realm of *agalmata* – a suggestion to which the epigraphic record lends some support as we have already seen. Ties between elite families in different cities certainly continued, but they were carried on by different means, not involving the exchange of women (see Herman 1987 on the developing institution of ritualised friendship).

Marriage was one of the two ceremonies at which the doings of the elite impinged on the wider mass of citizens. The other was burial. Tradition in Classical Athens had it that at the beginning of the sixth century Solon, as part of his measures to improve Athenian social relations, restricted funerary display (Plutarch, *Solon* 12.5, 21.4–5). The restrictions Solon is supposed to have imposed are such as to leave no material trace, and it is clear that in other ways at least funerary display continued, with impressive built tombs and elaborate sculpted grave monuments (including *kouroi* and *korai*). Cicero (*De legibus* 2.25.64–5) claims that some time after Solon a law was passed limiting the size of grave monuments (or more precisely the labour that went into them) and certainly at around the end of the sixth century sculpted grave monuments disappear from Attic cemeteries, not to reappear until three quarters of a century later. This disappearance approximately coincides with an enormous increase in the proportion of Athenians who got buried with some pottery grave goods in their tombs (I. Morris 1987: 72–3 and fig. 22). Exactly what is happening is unclear, but we seem to be witnessing mass emulation of those features of elite burial which could feasibly be emulated by the poorer members of the citizenry and forcible suppression of those features which could not be emulated. In the middle of the fifth century almost the only Athenians whose deaths were celebrated by the erection of monuments were those who died in war, whose names were displayed, according to the artificial tribal affiliations created by Cleisthenes, on pillars erected in the Kerameikos cemetery, and even these

men were listed by personal name alone with no patronymic or demotic, so that it was in fact impossible to attach securely a name from the list with a particular person. All these names were necessarily those of *men*.

Less secure, but also suggestive, are the changing practices with regard to making dedications to the gods. The Athenian acropolis, which in 500 was packed with sculptures dedicated to individuals (some of whose dedicatory epigrams have been studied above), looked completely different fifty years later, and by the end of the fifth century it was packed with buildings erected at the expense of the city and celebrating the communal festivals of the city. Part of what made the difference here was the sack of the acropolis by the Persians, which destroyed the archaic dedications for the Athenians and preserved them for us in the pits where they were buried when the Athenians tidied up. But was the Persian sack the only factor involved? Unless the archaeological record, not only from the acropolis but from other Attic, and indeed Greek, sanctuaries is very deceptive, elite dedications never dominated sanctuary space after 480 in the same way as they had before. It seems that sculptures of men and women cease to be central to the mediation between human and divine: the *agalma* has been hijacked to be solely a statue of a deity.

It is difficult to believe that all these changes are independent. None, certainly, can plausibly be seen as cause of the other, but the general similarities between them point to their all being correlated with broader social change. Do they also correlate with political change? For the political historian the major event at the end of the sixth century in Athens is the democratic reform of Cleisthenes, giving an increased formal role to the people, ensuring the participation in the day-to-day running of the city of men from all over Attica, and promoting the idea of equal rights to have one's views heard. Herodotus, an outside observer writing perhaps around 420 BC, had no doubt that it was this promotion of citizen equality which transformed Athens, turning her into the crucial political and military power in Greece (5.78). The meagre records of Cleisthenes' reforms in our ancient sources (Herodotus 5.69; [Aristotle] *Constitution of the Athenians* 21) do not allow us to see in detail what he actually did in the social realm, but by the time we can observe Athenian politics in detail in the fifth century there is no doubt that it is no longer in the hands of rival factions centred on a particular family or charismatic leader, as Athenian politics had been in the sixth century. Directly or indirectly, therefore, Cleisthenes' 'cobbling together' (Farrar 1988: 1) of democracy had involved an attack upon established relations and on all that sustained them – 'feasts, ceremonies, exchanges of gifts, visits or courtesies, and, above all, marriages' (Bourdieu 1977: 171). Assisted in part

by events outside its immediate control, Athenian democracy was able to offer a substitute for the 'symbolic' violence of the archaic *polis*: overt violence – against the Chalcidians and Boeotians immediately the Spartan threat to establish Cleisthenes' rival Isagoras as tyrant had disappeared, against the Aeginetans in the 490s, against the Persians in 490 and 480/79, in the establishment of her empire, against Sparta and Sparta's allies. This overt domination by the city over outside powers transcended the demand for symbolic domination within the citizen body; indeed one of the things that the lists of war dead was doing was asserting that the Athenians were a single body, not divisible into parts. Whether forcibly excluded or simply rendered unattractive by the success of the new image of what it was to be Athenian, symbolic capital was no longer avidly accumulated.

The changing demands made of and by Athenians can be seen to correlate with artistic change in two ways. At the most obvious level, two of the most important areas of artistic expression, individual funerary monuments and individual dedications, were, explicitly or otherwise, ruled out. It was not just the monuments themselves that had ceased to be acceptable, but also, for this was intimately bound up in them, what they expressed. More overtly in some cases perhaps than in others, these monuments had constituted a claim by those who had them made and erected to stand in a privileged way for mankind at large both in the face of natural forces (especially death) and in the face of the gods. They erected their life as the model life for all to think with and through. For the classical Athenian the horizons had narrowed, it was important for the political and social relations of the city that it was now the *citizen* who was privileged, and that it was the *citizen's* life that should be the model for all. While the *individual* citizen continued to be effaced, the status and values of the citizen were required to be invoked. This created a demand for, and sympathy with, works of art that could suggest the particular status of the human beings represented as well as simply their humanity. It is against this background that the change from the *kore* as the outstanding sculptural monument of the late sixth-century Athenian acropolis to the Parthenon sculptures as the outstanding sculptural monument of the late fifth-century Athenian acropolis needs to be seen.

Finally, let me return to the images of women. Is the sea-change in the sculpted image of woman merely a by-product of a change of artistic style which came about in connection with events essentially independent of any question of women's roles? Hardly so. 'Athenian politics shaped man's self-understanding along civic lines' (Farrar 1988: 276). The premium put upon *man's* self-understanding, and the focus of reflective questioning on 'the connection between *politics*

and the human good' (Farrar 1988: 276, my emphasis) eclipsed and silenced women as much in life as in art. If the argument of this paper has anything to recommend it, it is the artistic expression of this Classical Athenian obsession with *man* as a political animal which laid the foundation for the treatment of women in the whole tradition of Western art.

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#### Notes

- 1 I talk here of 'the viewer's response'. Not all viewers react in the same ways to works of art in our own society and there is no reason to believe that all viewers will have reacted identically in past societies. Likewise the same viewer may react differently at different moments. Nevertheless for the work of art to be a work of communication at least some degree of shared reaction must be experienced by different individual viewers, and artistic 'style' is one of the factors which affect the sorts of ways in which the viewer responds.
- 2 But does this statue speak to women if what Aphrodite is seen to be doing is pointing to and conspicuously drawing attention to her genitals? Against this I note two points: first that the direction of Aphrodite's gaze ensures that there are always three people present – Aphrodite, the object of her gaze, and a 'voyeur'; and second, that the recuperation of the female genitals as the imagery of a celebratory affirmative exposure of female sexuality is highly problematic. On this second point see Pollock 1987b and Tickner 1987.
- 3 That women did look at sculpture (e.g. Euripides, *Ion* 184ff; Theokritos 15.76ff) and that there were some women artists (Kampen 1975; Pomeroy 1977) does not alter this point.
- 4 A *kouros* of colossal size from Delos has its base inscribed 'I am of the same stone, both statue and base' (P. A. Hansen 1983: 401), and the twin *kouroi* from Delphi traditionally known as Kleobis and Biton seem to



have had a long inscription on their base, which survives only partially. It is to be noted that the number of inscriptions which can be securely attached to their dedications or markers, or even to a particular type of dedication or marker, is very small, and that this renders all generalisation hazardous.

5 I borrow heavily here from Bourdieu 1977. Note especially p. 179: 'Thus we see that symbolic capital, which in the form of the prestige and renown attached to a family and a name is readily convertible back into economic capital, is perhaps the most valuable form of accumulation in a society in which the severity of the

climate (the major work – ploughing and harvesting – having to be done in a very short space of time) and the limited technical resources (harvesting is done with the sickle) demand collective labour.' An introduction to these ideas can be found in Appadurai 1986a.

6 Autokleides' stele from Nikaia was first published in *Horos* 4 (1986), 31–4. Smikythos' stele base, from Athens, appeared in *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung* 78 (1963), 118–22, no. 4 (= *SEG XXII.78* = P. A. Hansen 1983: 51, although there it is wrongly restored).

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### PART III

## Artefacts as traded objects