

**THE DYNAMICS OF INNOVATION**

**Newness and Novelty in the Athens of Aristophanes**

Armand D'Angour

University College London

Thesis submitted for Ph.D. in Classics

March 1998



**ABSTRACT**

This study looks at *the dynamics of innovation*: why innovation occurs, what newness means in diverse areas of life, how social, cultural and individual attitudes to novelty interact, and the wider impact of innovation. The historical focus is ancient Athens, a society well known for its originality and creativity. Despite Athens' well-known competitiveness and flair for innovation, classical historians have tended to emphasise its traditionalism and respect for the past. However, the comedies of Aristophanes testify to the deliberate pursuit of innovation and to the effects of rapid and wide-ranging change in the late fifth and early fourth centuries B.C. They are adduced, together with other sources for the period, as evidence for the kinds of innovation that took place in politics, law, religion and warfare, as well as in specialist skills (*technai*) such as rhetoric, the visual arts, music, and medicine. The sources reveal diverse reactions, ranging from ambivalence and anxiety to excitement and optimism, to the experience of newness in these culturally key areas of Athenian life. Attitudes and behaviour differed between individuals and social groups, depending on the area of innovation. A combination of factors served to encourage the drive to innovate: material circumstances such as commercialism, war, and imperial rule; social pressures such as competitiveness, democratic openness, and the desire for acclaim; and technical imperatives such as the pursuit of accuracy, efficacy, and originality. The proliferation of tools of verbal communication (specifically rhetoric and writing) to express and record new ideas is a pervasive theme. In conclusion, a broad trend is discerned for the period, showing Athenians towards the end of the fifth century to have been unusually interested in the meaning and possibilities of innovation. Aristophanes' characterisation in particular of the climate of newness suggests an intriguing historical analogue to recent discourses of postmodernity.

**THE DYNAMICS OF INNOVATION:  
newness and novelty in the Athens of Aristophanes.**

**Table of Contents**

	Page:
<b>Preface</b>	5
<b>1. Introduction: the meaning of the new.</b>	
i. <i>The pursuit of the new</i>	8
ii. <i>The question of innovation</i>	11
iii. <i>The meanings of 'new'</i>	16
iv. <i>καινός and νέος</i>	21
v. <i>Aristophanes and novelty</i>	27
vi. <i>Psychological perspectives</i>	30
vii. <i>Processes and perceptions</i>	33
<b>2. Dimensions of innovation in Athenian society.</b>	
i. <i>The material perspective</i>	37
ii. <i>Innovation in warfare</i>	39
iii. <i>The effects of the war</i>	44
iv. <i>The influx from abroad</i>	49
v. <i>ποικιλία and play</i>	52
vi. <i>τέχνη and τύχη</i>	57
vii. <i>νόμοι and novelty</i>	60
viii. <i>Conclusions</i>	64
<b>3. The language of novelty and new technologies of the word.</b>	
i. <i>New words for new times</i>	68
ii. <i>Dimensions of verbal novelty</i>	72
iii. <i>Books and writing</i>	79
iv. <i>The limits of orality</i>	85
v. <i>The rhetoric of innovation</i>	90
vi. <i>New words and old</i>	92
<b>4. Athenian art: innovation in theory and practice.</b>	
i. <i>The visual legacy</i>	98
ii. <i>Artistic novelty</i>	101
iii. <i>New canons of form</i>	105
iv. <i>The social status of art</i>	109
v. <i>Art and society</i>	113
vi. <i>Artistic developments</i>	117
vii. <i>Technique and ακρίβεια</i>	121
viii. <i>Limits of illusion</i>	127
ix. <i>Realism and aesthetics</i>	131
x. <i>Conclusions</i>	136

<b>5. The New Music: a tradition of innovation.</b>	
i. <i>Novelty in μουσική</i>	139
ii. <i>The traditional background</i>	144
iii. <i>Evolution of musical τέχνη</i>	148
iv. <i>Sound and ethos</i>	152
v. <i>Music and words</i>	156
vi. <i>The new professionals</i>	161
vii. <i>Reactions to the New Music</i>	168
viii. <i>Conclusions</i>	170
<b>6. New arts of healing and <i>On Ancient Medicine</i>.</b>	
i. <i>Divination and reason</i>	175
ii. <i>Foreign influences</i>	179
iii. <i>Hippocratic medicine</i>	183
iv. <i>φύσις and empiricism</i>	187
v. <i>Asclepius and Asclepiads</i>	191
vi. <i>Newness vs. novelty</i>	196
vii. <i>Conclusions</i>	202
<b>7. New gods: religious innovation in the age of Socrates.</b>	
i. <i>Varieties of religious change</i>	206
ii. <i>Rationalism and science</i>	210
iii. <i>Piety and pragmatism</i>	213
iv. <i>Introducing new gods</i>	219
v. <i>The exotic and the antique</i>	223
vi. <i>Novelty and impiety</i>	227
vii. <i>New gods for old</i>	229
viii. <i>Conclusions</i>	233
<b>8. Case study: the reform of the alphabet in 403 B.C.</b>	
i. <i>The Decree of Archinus</i>	237
ii. <i>The technical background</i>	241
iii. <i>Attic vs. Ionic script</i>	249
iv. <i>The Eucleides connection</i>	254
v. <i>Conclusions</i>	257
<b>9. Conclusions: the postmodern turn in Classical Athens.</b>	264
<b>Index of Themes</b>	269
<b>Editions and Works Cited</b>	274

## Preface

The idea for this research first came to me in the early 1990s. I was managing a family business facing tough competition in a world emerging from global recession. There was a constant annual demand for 'new products', yet I was painfully aware that products designed and produced the previous year often barely penetrated the market. If consumers had never seen them, how could they tell whether or not they were new? How many times might we re-package and re-market the 'old' products and pass them off as 'new'? Was the very process of re-launching an old product sufficient to make it a new one? Was there such a thing as something radically new? And if so, would anyone actually want or recognise such a thing? What were the wider consequences, social and environmental, of this constant drive to innovate? Were generations of consumers becoming addicted to constant novelty, unable to tolerate any kind of familiarity and stability?

'Innovation' is the buzz-word of contemporary commerce. The pressure is stronger than ever, and while the scope for innovation grows ever greater, the tools for producing it have become more specialised and complex, requiring implementation by 'experts'. As I write, the corporate 'guru' Tom Peters has brought out his latest best-seller, entitled *The Circle of Innovation*. Yet few international corporations today, large or small, even ask the questions posed above, let alone know the answers. All they know is that they must 'innovate or die'. This kind of innovation is driven by narrow goals of economic value, and the broader consequences are unknown and incalculable. But on a personal level, many people today, particularly those in the older generation, are aware of a sense of bewilderment and disorientation created by the demands of the new. There is a sense that one must keep running just to keep up with 'progress', or fall by the wayside. The pressures on both consumers and producers of innovation have resulted in a mix of excitement and terror, confidence and concern, justifiable pride and unbounded anxiety.

Social theorists such as Anthony Giddens argue that the consequences of modernity constitute a discontinuity, something qualitatively different from the past in terms of the pace and scope of change, the nature of institutions, and the

incalculability of risk. Some apply the term ‘postmodernity’ to this nexus. But human nature has not undergone an equivalent discontinuity. Human beings are equipped with the same psychological and emotional tools for dealing with the world as they were thousands of years ago. This led me to wonder if there had ever been a period in ancient history where people experienced and reflected on anything approximating to ‘the postmodern condition’ with regard to pressures to innovate and to cope with novelty. For a Hellenist, Athens in the fifth century B.C. is an obvious place to start. A century which began with the establishment of *dēmokratia*, proceeded to invent tragedy and comedy, history, rational medicine, rhetoric and philosophy, and which made substantial innovations in art, law, mathematics, science, and warfare, must have known something about novelty. The brilliant and innovative thinkers and artists of the period laid the basis for two millennia of Western cultural achievement. What did newness mean to them, and to the thoughtful and articulate Greeks who participated in and reflected on this exceptional output?

To answer this question, I have cast my net over a wide area. I am keenly aware that I have only made a start on what is potentially an enormously rich and all-embracing topic, touching on areas of history, language, literature, art, music, religion, science, psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, and many more. The short answer is that ‘newness’ means many different and heterogeneous things. I have therefore thought it best, where possible, to let the Greek sources speak in their own words, and I hope to convey in my own translations something of the immediacy with which the ancient language would have been received and understood by native speakers. While I am conscious of unavoidable inconsistencies in the spelling of ancient names, I have chosen to avoid the gendering usage of ‘she’ and ‘her’ when speaking of Athens *propria voce*, while retaining it in translations.

My research has made clear to me how much the ancient world can still teach the modern. It has also revealed that a focus on the complex facets of ‘newness’ has genuine heuristic potential. One of my most exciting moments in the course of my research was the realisation that the word *omphalos* must occur in some form in line 3 of Pindar’s fragmentary second Dithyramb. My reason for focussing on this vexed fragment was an attempt to understand how it might bear on

a possible innovation of the late sixth century B.C., the reform of the dithyramb from a processional into a circular dance. My restoration provided the key piece of the puzzle and led to a full re-evaluation of 'how the dithyramb got its shape'. Since the findings fell outside my chosen period, the results are not included here (they are now published in *Classical Quarterly*, December 1997). But the experience confirmed my feeling that the study of newness in antiquity might offer an inexhaustible fund of novelty.

I am grateful to the British Academy for awarding me a three-year fellowship to conduct my research, to the examiners of the Grote Prize for the award of a prize for Chapter 8, and to UCL for the award of one of their first two Graduate Interdisciplinary Scholarships to spend a year studying in the Department of Psychology. My perspective has been enriched by discussions with my Psychology supervisor, Peter Lunt, by the lively and wide-ranging social psychology reading groups organised by David Scott, and by the opportunity to attend courses, lectures and seminars at the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, the Warburg Institute, and the Institute of Contemporary Arts. The Institute of Classical Studies has continued to provide welcome facilities for reading and thinking, not least by hosting many stimulating seminars by distinguished classical scholars.

Returning to academia in 1994 after a decade in business was a new start for me. I have greatly enjoyed the experience. Much of the reason for this is the support I have received from my mentors, colleagues and friends in the Department of Latin and Greek at UCL, in particular my supervisor Richard Janko and co-supervisor Alan Griffiths. I am very grateful for their help and advice, and to those at UCL who have personally contributed to my thinking and to this thesis in various ways, including Paddy Considine, Simon Hornblower, Chris Kraus, Herwig Maehler, and Bob Sharples. Thanks are also due to Vivien Nutton and Richard Seaford for their advice on specific areas, and to Anthony Cattle for his help and psychoanalytic wisdom. My partner and fiancée, Karen Ciclitira, will shortly be submitting her own PhD in social psychology: it is thanks to her example and encouragement that I was able to leave business for academia, and her love and critical insight have been an indispensable accompaniment to all that I have done over the past few years.

## 1. Introduction: the meaning of the new.

*Quod si tam Graecis novitas invisafuisset  
quam nobis, quid nunc esset vetus?*

For if novelty had been as invidious to the Greeks  
as it is to us, what would now exist that is old?

Horace, *Epistle* 2.1.90

### I

#### *The pursuit of the new*

An admiring retrospect regularly privileges the familiar presence of the past over the vital experience of the present and the uncertain prospect of the future. Traditionally, the historian's project has been to detect influences and to assert continuities which impose an intelligible pattern on history. The desire to identify origins, to trace events to a founding moment which may be identified as containing the seeds of actions and events to come, is a legacy bequeathed to historiography by its founding fathers. As a result, there is a common tendency to represent the culture of ancient Greece in a seamless discourse, and to construct the disparate strands of its vibrant history into a unity. Observed from a distance of centuries, Greek antiquity thus appears like a colourful patchwork in which the binding threads of tradition and continuity underlie the constant irruptions of chaos and novelty.

The historian's own backward-facing perspective has perhaps been all too readily projected onto the experience of individuals in the Classical world. Emphasis is commonly placed on the Greeks' adherence to tradition and on their respectful awareness of the past. While these are important and demonstrable features of many areas of ancient Greek life, only a selective and over-schematic analysis of the evidence can support the implausibly reductive thesis that

there is nothing essentially new, although there is renovation, and new wine is always put into old vessels...the Greek limits himself in principle to a variation of the existing norms...the Greeks did not like anything totally new...In the world of the Greek mind no



sudden impetuous change of course occurs; nothing but developments and alterations take place, the later events may always be easily connected with the preceding ones.<sup>1</sup>

Such generalisations deny an aspect of human life and thought for which the Greeks, more than any nation in antiquity, were notable: an appetite for novelty. Innovation does not only presuppose and reflect tradition; it can subvert, displace, and even annihilate it. But it would be perverse to suppose that the Greeks innovated despite themselves. The Horatian lines quoted at the head of this chapter are a succinct reminder that the very existence of the 'classical' testifies to the Greek pursuit of the original and the new.

The emphasis on the traditional at the expense of the innovative, on the links rather than the ruptures, is an expression of the tendency, bequeathed to us by the Greeks themselves, to view history in evolutionary terms: the roots of novelty lie in the past, the seeds of the old give birth to the new.<sup>2</sup> Underlying such metaphors is an Aristotelian notion of development in terms of potentiality and fulfilment, *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια*.<sup>3</sup> From a historical vantage-point, events and experiences may seem to arise naturally and inexorably from the past. In retrospect, societies, institutions, and ideas appear to have developed from seed to full flowering with the inevitability and directionality of natural growth.<sup>4</sup> But such a perspective tends to obscure the unexpectedness of change in people's lived experience, the sheer unfamiliarity and apparent rootlessness of novelty when it is first encountered. Even if human beings must organise their experience in retrospect, they can only live it forwards.<sup>5</sup> For the conscious and experiencing human subject, the unfolding of life presents at each particular moment the

---

<sup>1</sup> van Groningen (1953) 4, 5, 122. This sort of view persists. See, for example, the response by Griffiths (1995:91) to Nagy (1990:71).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Humphreys (1978) 252: 'Greek influence on our own categories of thought makes it sometimes easy to overlook peculiarities in the structure of Athenian society and social thought which are worth singling out for discussion.'

<sup>3</sup> Lloyd (1968) 62-7.

<sup>4</sup> Instances include Aristotle's views of the development of the *polis* and of the genre of tragedy, as having attained their *φύσις* (*Poet.* 1449a10-15, *Pol.* 1252b33-36).

<sup>5</sup> 'It is perfectly true, as philosophers say, that life must be understood backwards. But they forget the other proposition, that it must be lived forwards'. So Kierkegaard in his journal for 1843 (Dru [1938] 127), as noted in Farrar (1988) 187.

possibility of engagement, which may be charged with excitement or dread, with the new.

By contrast, therefore, to those who seek to define the Greek experience in terms of pre-existing structures and reliance on tradition, this study seeks to reveal the other side of the coin, by highlighting evidence for the experience of newness and change. In this respect, Athens, a city widely known for its innovativeness and positive attitude to innovation, may be unrepresentative. Thucydides has the Corinthian ambassador in 432 B.C. characterise the Athenians vis-à-vis their Peloponnesian adversaries as ‘innovative and sharp at devising new ideas’: νεωτεροποιοὶ καὶ ἐπινοῆσαι ὄξεις.<sup>6</sup> The context is politico-military, and the words express a familiar, rhetorically polarised view of a versatile, quick-witted Athens versus a monolithic, tradition-bound Sparta. But the perception of Athens’ unusually innovative nature could be, and was, extended into many other spheres of thought and action. As the acknowledged source of many of Greece’s more novel ideas and institutions, fifth-century Athens could be famously described as an education for Greece (παίδευσις τῆς Ἑλλάδος) and the ‘City Hall’ of Greek wisdom (τῆς Ἑλλάδος αὐτὸ τὸ πρυτανεῖον τῆς σοφίας).<sup>7</sup> The public enthusiasm for novelty continued to be a noteworthy feature of Athenian society, occasioning remark by St. Paul when he visited the city many centuries later:

Ἄθηναῖοι δὲ πάντες καὶ οἱ ἐπιδημοῦντες ξένοι εἰς οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἠὲ καίρου ἢ λέγειν τι ἢ ἀκούειν τι καινότερον.<sup>8</sup>

All the people of Athens and foreign visitors spent their time doing nothing other than discussing or being told of something novel.

Not only does Athens come across as one of the most innovative of all ancient societies but, in the fifth century at least, it self-consciously embraced a culture of innovation. That very self-consciousness found ample expression in contemporary

---

<sup>6</sup> Thuc. 1.70.2.

<sup>7</sup> Thuc. 2.41.1, Pl. *Prot.* 337d (cf. 319b).

<sup>8</sup> Acts 1.17.

writings, and contributed to its inescapably innovative and distinctively modern character.<sup>9</sup>

The purpose of this study is not merely to restate an aspect of ‘the Greek miracle’ by enumerating the innovations for which fifth-century Athens is famous. Rather, it seeks to explore some of the myriad ways in which novelty and innovation impinged on Athenians, and to ask what these experiences *meant* to those who encountered them. The Athenian experience will have differed in many respects from that of other Greek cities, but it was nonetheless essentially Greek. The breadth and clarity of its expression in the Athenian context can help us to understand a vital, fascinating, and surprisingly under-examined dimension of Greek life and thought.<sup>10</sup>

## II

### *The question of innovation*

There is nothing fundamentally new about the question of innovation. Aristotle, for example, expanded on major preoccupations in pre-Socratic thought with his discussions of the closely related philosophical topics of memory, identity, change and time.<sup>11</sup> In a passage in the *Politics* Aristotle offers some brief reflections, distinguishing different fields of innovation and deferring fuller discussion for an unspecified occasion:

δόξειεν ἄν βέλτιον εἶναι τὸ κινεῖν ἐπὶ γούν τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιστημῶν τοῦτο συνενήνοχεν, οἷον ἰατρικὴ κινηθεῖσα παρὰ τὰ πάτρια καὶ γυμναστικὴ καὶ ὅλως αἱ τέχναι πᾶσαι καὶ αἱ δυνάμεις ὥστ’ ἐπεὶ μίαν τούτων θετέον καὶ τὴν πολιτικὴν, δῆλον ὅτι καὶ περὶ ταύτην ἀναγκαῖον ὁμοίως ἔχειν... ψεῦδος

<sup>9</sup> I thus agree with Edelstein (1967: 35,79) against Bury, who wrote (1932: 7-8) ‘The Athenians of the age of Pericles or of Plato, though they were thoroughly, obviously “modern” compared with the Homeric Greeks, were never self-consciously “modern” as we are.’

<sup>10</sup> Change and novelty are regularly taken for granted as defining aspects of fifth-century experience, but are rarely accorded more explicit analysis. Exceptions include Humphreys (1978) 242-275, Lloyd (1987) 50-108, Meier (1990) 186-221, and Davies in *CAH* 5<sup>2</sup>, 302-5.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. in *Physics* Bks. 1-4 (esp. 4. 218a-224a) and 8, *De mem.* 1 (etc.): Ackrill (1981) 17-23.

δὲ καὶ τὸ παράδειγμα τὸ περὶ τῶν τεχνῶν· οὐ γὰρ ὅμοιον τὸ κινεῖν τέχνην καὶ νόμον...διὸ νῦν ἀφῶμεν ταύτην τὴν σκέψιν· ἄλλων γὰρ ἐστὶ καιρῶν.<sup>12</sup>

A case could be made for [political] innovation. Certainly in other branches of knowledge it has proved beneficial e.g. innovations in medicine, in physical training, and generally in all the arts and skills. So when politics is counted as one of these, clearly the same must hold...But actually the analogy with the arts is false: technical innovation is not the same thing as changing the law...Let us then dismiss this question for now. It is for a different occasion.

In the event, no ancient text survives which focuses on innovation as such, nor does any thinker in antiquity appear to have sought systematically to analyse the meaning of 'new'. While this may seem regrettable for this study, it also presents an opportunity to look into an aspect of Greek cultural psychology and social history from a viewpoint uninfluenced by such a treatment.

As Aristotle indicates, newness is a deceptively complex and multi-layered concept. Many different elements contribute to the notion and to the experience of innovation: their multiplicity, reflexivity and interactiveness are reflected in the title of this study. The complex and dynamic nature of newness urges constant awareness that the very phenomena under investigation, as well as the ideas and feelings aroused in relation to innovation, are changeable and elusive. 'New' will have meant different things at different times to philosophers and artisans, physicians and politicians, musicians and traders, Sophists and countrymen. Novelty will not have been experienced alike by young and old, rich and poor, literate and illiterate, men and women, slave and free. And the interplay of novel experiences with increasingly explicit responses to novelty suggests that newness impinged in irreducible and unprecedentedly diverse ways on Athenians in the course of the fifth century.

The question of innovation is naturally related to the question of progress, but with regard to the ancient world it differs in significant respects. 'Progress' implies the general development of society in a desirable direction, a more ambitious concept than Xenophanes expressed in the sixth century B.C.:

---

<sup>12</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 2. 1268b26-1269a28.

οὐ τοι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς πάντα θεοὶ θνητοῖς ὑπέδειξαν  
ἀλλὰ χρόνῳ ζητοῦντες ἐφευρίσκουσιν ἄμεινον.<sup>13</sup>

In no way did gods reveal everything to mortals from the beginning;  
but in time, through their questing, men discover what is better.

These lines, which form the starting-point for historical investigations of the concept of progress, express a consciousness that human beings can attain success through their own efforts.<sup>14</sup> But unlike the question of 'new', for which there was more than one commonly-used Greek word, the investigation of 'progress' in ancient Greece must reckon at the outset with the absence of an equivalent term.<sup>15</sup>

This does not prevent the conclusion that the Greeks, at least in some periods, expressed and believed in some idea of progress.<sup>16</sup> But it urges caution against too readily assuming that the ancients themselves might have been interested in the sort of questions we seek to ask of them. It suggests the need to clarify presuppositions and to identify methodological goals and principles.<sup>17</sup> For instance, one might ask whether the sources could provide the kind of evidence that makes our questions historically meaningful, and how different cultural assumptions and other aspects of ancient 'otherness' may preclude easy or definitive answers.<sup>18</sup> This caveat does not deny that we can derive illumination from interpreting the past in the light of contemporary concerns and understandings. But rather than contemplate innovations *in* antiquity, imaginative

---

<sup>13</sup> Xenoph. 18 DK.

<sup>14</sup> Edelstein (1967) 3, Dodds (1973) 4. The lines appear to echo and answer Hes. *Op.* 42, κρύψαντες γὰρ ἔχουσι θεοὶ βίον ἀνθρώποισιν ('the gods keep hidden people's means of living').

<sup>15</sup> Dodds (1973: 1-2) rejects Edelstein's ἐπίδοσις ('increase') and the Hellenistic προκοπή. Meier (1990: 192) offers 'consciousness of αὐξήσις' as historically equivalent, but acknowledges that the word has no theoretical connotation.

<sup>16</sup> Dodds (1973) 24.

<sup>17</sup> Cf., for example, Dover (1974: 2): 'There is no reason why we should not formulate a sort of moral questionnaire equally applicable to all cultures which we may choose to investigate, rather as the field-worker recording unwritten languages often begins with a standard word-list.'

<sup>18</sup> Cartledge (1993) 1-17.

recreation and critical scholarship may be more inclined to produce innovations of antiquity.<sup>19</sup>

What did Greeks themselves refer to as ‘new’? Which areas of life constituted the province of innovation for Athenians? The lexical approach, despite its limitations, is valuable in drawing attention to the different scope of Greek and English terms for ‘new’, and in eliciting the different cultural assumptions inherent in them.<sup>20</sup> It initially requires the investigation of νέος, καινός, related lexemes (e.g. νεοχμός, καινότερος), and extended forms and compounds like νεωτερισμός, καινοτομία etc. Other words requiring consideration are those which connote ‘change’, such as κίνησις, μεταβολή and their cognates, those which may signify species or processes of newness such as ἀλλοίως, ξένος, and ἕτερος, and those suggesting origins, inventions and discoveries, such as πρῶτος and words from the stem εὖρ-. Additionally, words with regular psychological connections to novelty like θαῦμα, τόλμα and ἀξιόλογον, raise the possibility that novelty is in question in the context in which they occur, while newness may also be signified even in the absence of a directly connotative Greek word.<sup>21</sup>

Explicit references to newness in Greek sources indicate investigation of the broad spheres of socio-political change and verbal innovation, and the specific subject-areas of music, medicine, and religion, all of which are accorded separate chapters in this study (2, 3, 5, 6 and 7). Inevitably, some of these areas were more specialised and their technical details were less generally accessible than others. The experience of newness varies according to different levels of knowledge and familiarity with the old. One cannot assume that educated Athenians, apart perhaps from renowned polymaths like Hippias of Elis, were fully *au fait* with all the *technai* represented by these areas of investigation. But if we can take the plays of

---

<sup>19</sup> Hexter & Selden, eds. (1992); see, for example, Easterling, ed. (1997), Chh. 10-12, Shanks (1996) Chh. 3-4, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Dover (1974) 46-50.

<sup>21</sup> In this respect is striking how often the word ‘new’ is appropriate to use in English when there is no homonymous Greek term, as shown by the following examples chosen at random from various translations: ἀπὸ τούτου τοῦ χρόνου...Λακεδαιμόνιοι ἔθεντο νόμον (Hdt. 1.82.12), ‘the Spartans adopted a new custom’, tr. A. de Sélincourt, rev. A.R. Burn (Penguin 1972); Ἀδριαναί τε γυναῖκες τρόπον ἔξουσι γόων (Aesch. fr. 35 [71 Nauck]), ‘the women of Adria will adopt a (new) way of mourning’, tr. H. Lloyd-Jones (Loeb Classical Library 1962); ἄλλο αὖ τοῦτο εἶδος ἐλέγχου (Pl. *Gorg.* 473e2) ‘a new type of proof’, tr. W. Hamilton (Penguin 1960).

Aristophanes as a general guide, most Athenian citizens of his time were acquainted with all of them to some extent. The Athenian public as a whole, including women, foreign visitors, metics, and slaves, would have been aware in different degrees that these areas were subject in their time to a conspicuous degree of change and innovation.

As well as the notable impact of innovation in the intellectual sphere, novelties in sensory experience which are not as often formally articulated - new sounds, smells, sights and tastes - all contribute to a climate of novelty. The generation of novelty means the potential for variety, which is the broad theme explored in Chapter 2. In one important area of Greek achievement, the aesthetic of the visual arts, newness is not found as an explicit attribute in extant contemporary sources. Visual artists were generally treated as artisans, and their skill was considered a specialist 'banausic' *technê*. This makes the question of innovation in art more abstruse than political, religious or musical innovation. Various approaches to the question of innovation in the art, architecture, and sculpture of the late fifth century, for which we must rely on later sources and oblique references, form the subject of the central Chapter 4.

Additionally, there are *prima facie* instances of novelty where the terminology of innovation seems to have been deliberately avoided, so that the new might appear as less conspicuous or be presented in the guise of the old. This is notably the case with political and administrative revolutions and reforms which took place between 411 and 403 B.C. I focus on one important practical and symbolic innovation, the official reform of the Greek alphabet at Athens in 403/2 B.C., in Chapter 8. Its low-key presentation draws attention to the changing nature of the response to innovation over the period in question. After decades of war and turbulence, Athenians at the turn of the century, while producing innovations arguably no less radical than those of earlier generations, were less inclined than their predecessors to promote and extol newness as an explicit goal. The very idea of innovation was tainted by their experience, and many observers would have concurred with the sentiment of Montaigne, written in the wake of the 16th-

century Reformation: 'I am disgusted with innovation, in whatever guise, and with reason, for I have seen very harmful effects of it.'<sup>22</sup>

### III

#### *The meanings of 'new'*

The temporal dimension of novelty means that philosophical analysis of 'new' is bound to raise similar problems as the meaning of 'time'. Thus, if time is perceived as a circular continuum, is everything somehow a repetition of the past so that in reality there can be 'nothing new under the sun'?<sup>23</sup> Conversely, if time is envisaged as a fixed linear framework within which events occur in continuous succession, is everything new all the time?<sup>24</sup> If the flow of time is considered analogous to a river, can one never step into the same river twice, or, since identity too is in a ceaseless process of change, not even once?<sup>25</sup> While we regularly and unselfconsciously attribute newness in everyday discourse, its philosophically perplexing nature evokes an echo of St. Augustine's lament:

*Quid est ergo tempus? Si nemo ex me quaerat, scio. Si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio.*<sup>26</sup>

What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know. If I want to explain it to someone who asks, I cannot.

A preliminary understanding of innovation may emerge from surveying contexts in which 'new' and related terms are found in English and Greek. The logic of 'new' will have involved much the same *aporiai* for the Greeks as it does for us, but its

<sup>22</sup> From Montaigne's essay 'Of custom, and not easily changing an accepted law' composed 1572-74: Frame (1948) 86.

<sup>23</sup> This expression first appears in *Ecclesiastes* 1.9, but the earliest attribution of the notion may be that attributed to Pythagoras by Dicaearchus *apud* Porph. *Vit. Pyth.* 19 (= fr. 8A DK), in the context of cyclical rebirth: κατὰ περιόδους τινὰς τὰ γενόμενά ποτε πάλιν γίγνεται, νέον δὲ οὐδὲν ἀπλῶς ἐστὶ ('whatever comes into being is born again in the revolutions of time, and nothing is absolutely new').

<sup>24</sup> Gell (1992) analyses the ways in which time is commonly conceived, identifying two common perspectives, those of a dynamic movement of past-present-future and of a continuous 'now'.

<sup>25</sup> Heraclitus' expression (fr. 91 DK) with Cratylus' rejoinder (Pl. *Crat.* 402a): Kahn (1979) 168-9.

<sup>26</sup> Aug. *Conf.* 11.15. Cf. Wittgenstein (1976), paras. 89-90, 607-8.



contexts and associations took characteristically different forms. It is more fruitful to consider the diverse implications of everyday, superficially unproblematic, uses of 'new', 'novel' etc. and their Greek counterparts than to attempt to pin down any uniform positive connotation of these concepts. Their meaning clusters around a core of affective as well as logical notions, connoting different things in different contexts and exhibiting less a precise signification than a Wittgensteinian 'family resemblance'.<sup>27</sup>

'New' is predicated of a bewilderingly disparate variety of subjects, abstract and concrete: ideas, events, experiences, roles, and institutions, as well as people, places, physical objects, artefacts and material structures. It presents itself in normal discourse as an objective and descriptive term. On inspection, however, it is both relative and context-sensitive, like its temporal relation 'now', with which 'new' is etymologically cognate as νέος is to νῦν. Its connotations include recent, different, additional, unusual, extraneous, unprecedented, hitherto non-existent and hitherto unknown, and any inclusive or exclusive combination of these meanings. An object may be new in one sense and not new in another: in 'the new papyrus of Simonides', 'new' connotes different, additional and recently identified, but not unusual, hitherto non-existent, or of recent origin or manufacture. Newness is more often a function of knowledge and ignorance, of difference in perspective, and of the state of mind of the perceiving subject. For instance, a fact or an experience may be 'new' in the sense of 'previously unfamiliar' to one person but not to another. The attribution of 'new' has psychological and rhetorical implications rather than indicating ontological properties.

Some modern theorists of innovation lay weight on this 'private' aspect in defining innovation as

any idea, practice or object perceived as new by an individual. It matters little, so far as human behaviour is concerned, whether an idea is objectively new as measured by the lapse of time since its first use or discovery. It is the perceived or subjective newness of the

---

<sup>27</sup> Wittgenstein (1976), paras. 66- 67.

idea for the individual that determines his reaction to it. If the idea seems new to the individual it is an innovation.<sup>28</sup>

However, 'new' regularly masquerades as an objective attribute in both private and public contexts. The apparently greater stability of written rather than spoken attributions of newness encourages such an illusion, which has implications for a period in which the use of the written word was becoming increasingly widespread. Thus 'new' may act as a fixed and publicly accepted marker of a time, place, or institution (New Year, New World, New Deal), sometimes surviving in a fossilised form when the original temporal signification has long passed (New College, τὸ Καινόν).<sup>29</sup> Nowadays it is commonly over-used in a rhetorical and marketing-conscious environment, where the ascription of newness is made with a persuasive purpose in view ('New Labour', 'New Persil'); but Athenian orators and promoters of innovation also seem to have recognised the term's rhetorical possibilities (see Chapter 3).

In many instances, 'new' signifies distance from a previous identity and at the same time points to some pre-existent manifestation or forerunner. The New Testament, Καινή Διαθήκη, both fulfils and supersedes the message of the Old. Its message both requires and displaces that of the latter. In this respect 'new' implies some kind of *renewal* while remaining vague as to how or whether that renewal partakes in, improves or updates the earlier identity, or whether the new element augments, replaces or rejects the earlier manifestation. But insofar as the new puts older 'truths' in question, the absolutist and the fundamentalist are likely to have problems with the idea of innovation.<sup>30</sup>

The attribution of newness may presuppose a consciousness of fashion, where for instance the newness involved is related to a cycle of change in ideas, dress-codes, musical tastes, modes of social behaviour and so on. In the latter

---

<sup>28</sup> Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) 19.

<sup>29</sup> The latter term is used *tout court* to refer to Athens' 'new' δικαστήριον: Ar. *Vesp.* 120.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. E. Rosen's contribution to the discussion of 16th-century innovation in Hall et al. (1975) 325-6: 'There is one trend of thought in this period that should be emphasized. It is that innovation is equal to renovation. In other words, new is old... This is Copernicus' view. Both he and his disciple Rheticus (even more emphatically) explicitly disclaimed that what they were doing was done for the sake of novelty'.

cases, newness is identified within a larger context public conventions, and its recognition and ascription is dependent on awareness of these conventions. In this regard, 'new' also carries the notion of 'more recent' or 'most recent' (νεώτερος, νεώτατος), often with the implication that the latest fashion has superseded earlier ones, so that adherence to the latter may be considered old-fashioned and *passé*. Equally, the idea of fashion may suggest the prospect of meretricious novelty. Newness that is acknowledged as superficial or transient may have a correspondingly limited or negative value, and a contrast may be drawn between genuine and spurious innovation.

This suggests the need to consider not just of words for 'new', but also of occurrences of words like ἀρχαῖος and παλαιός. Understanding what is considered to be 'old' is one way of discovering what may be thought of as 'new'. In the context of such an opposition, the rhetorical significance of the words may be paramount. In the case of ancient medicine, for instance, the Hippocratic treatise entitled Περὶ ἀρχαϊκῆς ἰητρικῆς (*On Ancient Medicine*) seeks to eschew the idea of 'new' theoretical models (*hypotheses*) in medicine, while representing as time-honoured an ultimately more productive approach to medical treatment.

In many of the above senses, the idea of newness implies some view of what has gone before, indicating a modification occurring within a wider notional framework or system. What is new is essentially a young or recent version of an already existing thing, a sense which make νέος (with variants) an appropriate counterpart in Greek, since the word primarily represents 'young' in the context of natural growth.<sup>31</sup> Even the connotation 'recent' (νέον) strictly speaking connotes the past, albeit what is just past. By contrast, the notion of 'radical novelty', inherent in some uses of 'new' and expressed in Greek by καινός more often than νέος, implies a more supervenient quality. It suggests, with or without good reason, that the new may come to exist and be experienced *ex nihilo*, in a way that defies repetition of the old or the expectation of a predictable evolution from pre-existing elements within the system. In this sense, 'the new' can represent the ultimate manifestation of externality and otherness. It may appear as an alien and

---

<sup>31</sup> LSJ s.v., I.

unnatural intrusion, an exciting and unpredictable epiphany, or a full-scale qualitative change such as a ‘paradigm shift’ in the nature of human knowledge and experience.<sup>32</sup> Modern physical theory seeks to explain the potentially paradoxical occurrence of a radical newness which transcends existent structures in terms of the ‘emergent’ properties of complex systems.<sup>33</sup> This takes us back full circle to the ancients. Whether and how novelty can occur at all is at the heart of one of the earliest philosophical questions, that of the nature of change, represented *par excellence* in the thought of Parmenides, Heraclitus and the Eleatic school.

A general sensibility of the new vis-à-vis the old slides into the idea of the ‘modern’. There are psychological associations, both positive and negative, with the notion of modernity, which find inescapable parallels in the ancient world. While the term ‘modern’ is not an ancient one, its connection of newness with ‘now’-ness may indicate where its Greek counterpart is sometimes to be found: in the words τὸ νῦν. When innovation and fashion in ‘the present’ are experienced as rapid and pervasive, the sense of change may be overwhelming. Responses range from deep anxiety to enthusiastic opportunism. Newness may acquire a dimension that even seems to exceed the present, so that terms like ‘New World Order’ and ‘New Age’ suggest hopeful attempts to anticipate the future.

A desire to characterise the sense of radical discontinuity in structures of knowledge and experience has given rise to the notion of the ‘postmodern’, whether this is taken to mean after, beyond, or outside the structures of the modern.<sup>34</sup> The experience and effects of rapid change and innovation, which were aspects of the characterisation of τὸ νῦν in the late fifth century B.C., may allow us to read into the Athenian experience elements of what we call modernity and postmodernity.<sup>35</sup> Arguably, it takes a postmodern sensibility to recognise a

---

<sup>32</sup> Kuhn (1970).

<sup>33</sup> Waldrop (1993) 147: ‘complex adaptive systems are characterized by perpetual novelty’.

<sup>34</sup> The usefulness of the word is hotly debated. Lyotard (1984) is an influential text which sums up the postmodern sensibility as ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’ (p. xxiv). But there are many other angles of approach, usefully surveyed by Bertens (1995). I take its key feature to be a critical, ironic and de-centring stance towards ‘modern’ values and certainties: see Shanks (1996) 108-11.

<sup>35</sup> Connor (1977) is an early articulation of the adoption of a postmodern perspective in classical scholarship. Cartledge (1990a) 29 talks about Pheidippides in *Clouds* ‘finding especially pleasing what his father considers to be the postmodernist immoralities of Euripides’.

corresponding stratum of experience in the ancient world.<sup>36</sup> Such a perspective may be no less valid and illuminating than reading classical antiquity through, say, Victorian, Renaissance, or even Hellenistic eyes. In my conclusions, ‘The Postmodern Turn in Classical Athens’, I suggest that a modern understanding of postmodernity may be reflected in the Athenian experience of the new.<sup>37</sup>

#### IV

#### καινός and νέος

It is a striking fact that καινός is virtually unattested before the fifth century B.C.<sup>38</sup> Unlike the opposition old/young, the explicit dualism of old/new appears to come late in Greek thought.<sup>39</sup> While νέος and καινός cover a range of connotations with a variable degree of overlap, in texts from earlier periods the common way of expressing newness, and hence the way the notion itself seems overwhelmingly to be perceived, is in terms of νέος and its variants. Thus there is not a single occurrence of καινός or its compounds in Homer, Hesiod or the Homeric Hymns.<sup>40</sup> It is not found in the extant elegies of Tyrtaeus or Solon, Callinus or Mimnermus, in the poems and fragments of Alcman or Stesichorus, Sappho or Alcaeus, in the pre-Socratic philosophers (with the possible exception of Thales, discussed below), in Simonides or Pindar: its occurrences in the texts of numerous lesser authors, papyrus fragments and inscriptions dating from before the fifth

---

<sup>36</sup> The social psychologist M. Billig outlined in 1987 an approach to social psychology based on classical rhetoric and Sophistic (especially Protagorean) ideas, but identified its ‘postmodern’ character only in the second edition of his book (1996: 11-12). Rocco (1997) offers a sustained dialogue between classical texts and postmodern political thought.

<sup>37</sup> For the phrase, cf. Seidman, ed. (1994).

<sup>38</sup> The *TLG* offers one indirect testimony to its use by Thales (discussed below) and three insecure papyrus readings. In the 19th century, without the benefit of subsequent papyrus attestations, it was thought that the word first occurred in Herodotus (Chantraine s.v. νέος cites Porzig in *Festschrift Debrunner*).

<sup>39</sup> Old/young: *Il.* 9.57 f. (νέος/γεραιός), 14.108 (νέος/παλαιός) etc. Neither kind of dualism is found in the Pythagorean table of opposites given by Aristotle in *Meta.* 986a22 f. A table of opposites compiled for the Indonesian people of Amboyna includes new/old: Lloyd (1966) 32-3.

<sup>40</sup> The word appears in the pseudo-Homeric *Batrachomyomachia* (116), now thought to be as late as the 1st century B.C., to describe a mousetrap(!): καινοτέραις τέχναις ξύλινον δόλον ἐξευρόντες.

century amount to a handful of attestations.<sup>41</sup> It therefore seems worthwhile to explore how the connotations of νέος and καινός differ, and to ask what implications the late attestation of the latter might have for the way the Greeks developed their understanding of novelty.

The semantic spectrum constituted by the ways Greek uses νέος and καινός ranges from 'recent' at one end to 'unforeseen' at the other. Etymological speculation appears to offer some clues but little certainty regarding a distinction between the words' meanings. The English word 'new' itself derives from a common Indo-European stem (cf. Sanskrit *návas*), the root of Greek νέος. However, Latin *novus*, whence French *nouveau*, German *neu* etc., mean 'new' rather than 'young', a sense for which other Indo-European languages, but not Greek, use the root found in Latin *iuvenis*, *iunior*, French *jeune*, German *jung* etc. No morphological equivalent of the latter is found in Greek, which connotes 'young' solely by νέος, νεαρός, νεανίας etc. (*ne-wo* is found in Mycenaean Greek).

By contrast, the uses of καινός are found almost exclusively at the end of the spectrum where 'new' connotes ideas such as 'novel', 'previously non-existent', or 'unexpected', often with some degree of negative emotional association. These ideas are also expressed in fifth-century writings by extensions of νέος such as νεοχμο- and νεώτερο-.<sup>42</sup> But unlike καινός, simple νέος rarely appears to bear the connotations of or the affect associated with abrupt or unforeseen novelty.<sup>43</sup> The derivation of καινός is obscure. Etymologists standardly cite Sanskrit *kanînah* 'young' and *kanyâ*, 'young girl', as cognate, suggesting that the *kan-* element, presumed to occur in 'recent' (Latin *re-cen-s*), also originally denoted 'young'.<sup>44</sup> However, this does not account for the word's usual connotation of 'new' or its morphological properties. Like δει-νός ( $\sqrt{\delta\phi\epsilon\iota}$ -, 'fear'),

<sup>41</sup> For the purpose of this survey I conducted a comprehensive search for the lemma καιν- on the TLG CD-ROM as well as making use of specialised lexicons and word-lists. Its earliest appearance is in the name Kaineus (*Il.*2.746 etc.), whose etymology is obscure but may be speculatively connected with the meanings 'young girl' (cf. Skt. *kanyâ*) or 'new': the myth tells that the lapith Kaineus, originally a girl Kainis, was given a new sex by Poseidon, together with invulnerability (refs. in *OCD*<sup>3</sup> s.v.).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. LSJ s.vv. In some citations (s.v., II) νεώτερον connotes 'worse' (Soph. *Phil.* 560, v. βούλευμα) and νεώτερον πρήσσειν 'to contrive calamity, injury' (Hdt. 5.106).

<sup>43</sup> However, the question τί νέον; means much the same as τί καινόν;

<sup>44</sup> Chantraine s.v. καινός.

κεδ-νός (√κεδ-, 'care') and κλει-νός (√κλει-, 'celebrate'), καινός would consist of a basic verbal stem with the adjectival ending -νός. It might therefore be appropriate to seek an Indo-European equivalent of the root *ka(i)-* rather than *ka(i)n-*.<sup>45</sup> This puts one in mind of the Greek καίω (√καϜ-γω, 'burn'), for which a suggested Indo-European root *\*kêu-* signifies 'shining' or 'burning bright', as found in Sanskrit words like *ζό-cati* 'to shine' and *ζό-nah* '(bright) red', and perhaps also in καθ-αρός and Latin *cas-tus*, 'pure'.<sup>46</sup> This derivation finds a suggestive echo in the English term 'brand new' (from 'bran-new'), which seems originally to have connoted 'newly-forged' or 'new from the fire' (cf. the term 'fire-new').<sup>47</sup> The 'new' in origin is something that 'shines out', distinguishing it from the old: this sense may also be linked with the root of the Homeric word κáινυμαι (pf. κέκασμαι) 'surpass, be distinguished'.<sup>48</sup> On this account, the semantic area covered by καινός may have differed substantially in origin from that of νέος, as manifested in the characteristic later tendencies of the words.

In Homer, νέος commonly signifies 'young' or 'recent'. While it is also used in ways which appear to approach 'novel', the contexts rarely or never allow the easy substitution of καινός. Thus 'new-made', 'newly-polished' etc. of physical objects, is regularly expressed in epic by compounds with νέο-: the recent action or event is what imparts the quality of newness to an object.<sup>49</sup> When Menelaus is berated for leaving the dead Patroclus' wife bereft in her new bedchamber (*Il.* 17.36 *μυχῶ θαλάμοιο νέοιο*), the epithet is better taken to signify the recentness of the marriage rather than the recently constructed (i.e. previously non-existent) room; and in *Il.* 2.232 *γυναῖκα νέην* may simply signify a young wife rather than an

<sup>45</sup> Most earlier speculation (neglected by Chantraine) revolved around cognates with *n* in their stem: cf. Boisacq (1923) 391-2.

<sup>46</sup> Boisacq (1923) s.vv. καίω, καθαρός. Buttmann (1846: 119) has the following footnote: 'As soon as we acknowledge the root of καθαρός to be in the first syllable, we have κεδνός akin to it (like ψεδνός and ψαθαρός) and Lat. *castus*; and if we suppose some such idea as *blank* to be the ground-idea, we have also καινός.'

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *OED* s.vv.

<sup>48</sup> Pindar has ἐλέφαντι φαίδιμον ὤμον κεκαδμένον, 'his shoulder *shining bright* with ivory' (*Ol.* 1.27). The form of the verb, Doric for κεκασμένον (cf. δέδασμαι from δατέομαι, cognate with δάινυμι) has suggested a root \*καιδ-νός as if from \*καιδ-νυ-μαι (or perh. orig. \*καδ-(ν)γομαι): Boisacq (1923) 391-2.

<sup>49</sup> Cunliffe (1963) 277-8 lists twelve compound epithets formed like νεοτευχής (*Il.* 5.194) and νεόσμηκτος (*Il.* 13.342).

additional or recently-acquired bride.<sup>50</sup> The adverbial form νέον is commonly used to mean ‘recent’, sometimes in explicit opposition to ‘of old’, as in *Il.* 9.527 πάλαι, οὐ τι νέον γε. Even when there is an explicit aspect of futurity as, just once, in *Il.* 9.462, σοὶ δ’ αὖ νέον ἔσσεται ἄλγος, the αὖ shows that what is imagined is the *recurrence* of an earlier experience rather than a ‘novel’ event. The *Odyssey* contributes a well-known instance of the superlative form νεωτάτη (the ‘newest’ song). Its meaning is famously discussed in Plato’s *Republic*, where Socrates rules out any implication of radical musical novelty; Homer, he says, should be taken as referring simply to the ‘latest’ song, not to any novelty of musical style.<sup>51</sup>

The earliest direct, though insecure, attestation of the use of καινός is from a fragmentary papyrus (fr. 91 West) containing part of a tetrameter composition by Archilochus.<sup>52</sup> Its context is from certain, but on one reconstruction it seems that Zeus’ intervention is being sought to prevent the slaughter of war.<sup>53</sup> The next attestation of the word in Greek is an anecdotal testimony dating to the early sixth century, where a different implication arises, that of ‘unexpected’. Thales, when asked what was καινόν, was said to have replied ‘For a tyrant to be old’ (γέροντα τύραννον):<sup>54</sup> here καινόν connotes ‘out of the ordinary’ rather than ‘new’. However, when Epicharmus uses the word, perhaps around the turn of the sixth and fifth centuries, it seems to come in a familiar context of novelty. His play entitled *Komasts or Hephaestus* told the story of Hephaestus’ revenge on his mother Hera, in which ‘he sent her a golden chair so contrived that no one but himself could release her from it’.<sup>55</sup> The word καινῶν (the Doric genitive plural)

<sup>50</sup> Pace Cunliffe (1963) s.v., sections (3) and (6), who selects these instances as indicating ‘new’ *tout court*.

<sup>51</sup> *Od.* 1.352; *Pl. Rep.* 4.424b; see Ch. 5, Section 1.

<sup>52</sup> West suggests emending καινῶν to κλινῶν.

<sup>53</sup> Using the readings of Lasserre (1958: fr. 127), with my supplements *exempli gratia*:

ἔς μέσον δ’ ἡμῖν ἔπελθε, Ζεῦ πάτερ, καὶ μὴ λάθου]  
μήτε τῶν καινῶν μέτ[ασχ]ε [πρηγμάτων, οἷς δεύεται]  
γῆ φόνω, μακρὰ δὲ νῆες καὶ λόφ[οι]...

Descend into our midst, fa[ther] Zeus, [and do not hide],  
and [take] no [part in] the new-found [troubles, for which]

earth [is being soaked] with slaughter, and warships and cre[sts]...

<sup>54</sup> D.L. 1.36.

<sup>55</sup> Pickard-Cambridge (1962) 265; on Epicharmus, see *ibid.* 230-288. A (probably spurious) verse of Epicharmus runs οὐ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος τέχνην τιν’ εὗρεν, ὁ δὲ θεὸς τὸ πᾶν (57 DK).



occurs shortly after the lexeme ενακριβί, and it is reasonable to suppose that it qualified a word such as τεχνᾶν.<sup>56</sup>

A central context for Greek innovation, that of μουσική, provides the first secure attestation of καινός: Bacchylides' Dithyramb for the Athenians (19 SM). In vaunting his own novelty, Bacchylides departs from the use of νέος-words for 'new':<sup>57</sup>

Πάρεστι μυρία κέλευθος  
 ἄμβροσίων μελέων . . .  
 ὕφαινε νυν ἐν  
 ταῖς πολυηράτοις τι καινὸν  
 ὀλβίαις Ἀθάναις.<sup>58</sup>  
 There is many a path  
 of immortal songs...  
 So create something brand-new  
 for much-adored, blessed Athens.

The poet's task is conceived as an act of creation, a diligent manufacture like the weaving of a new *peplos* for Athena, presented annually at the Panathenaea.<sup>59</sup> The first securely-attested use of καινός seems to testify to a burgeoning fifth-century consciousness that novelty is the desired end-result of τέχνη.

The innovative, variegated use of words and metre was considered to be a characteristic feature of fifth-century dithyrambs. Later dithyrambists seemed intent on creating something 'bright new' and plucked out of the blue, as suggested by the exchange between Peisthetairus and the dithyrambist Cinesias in Aristophanes' *Birds*:

ΚΙ. ὑπὸ σοῦ πτερωθεὶς βούλομαι μετάρσιος  
 ἀναπτάμενος ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν καινὰς λαβεῖν  
 ἀεροδονήτους καὶ νιφοβόλους ἀναβολάς.

<sup>56</sup> ἀκρίβεια was a notable feature of fifth-century artistic τέχνη. Cf. Ch. 5, Sect. 10.

<sup>57</sup> For examples cf. Ch. 5, Sect. 1.

<sup>58</sup> Bacch. *Dith.* 5 (19 M) 1-2, 8-10. A<sup>3</sup> actually has κλεινόν in line 9, but Maehler (1997: 252) gives examples of parallel corruptions by the copyist.

<sup>59</sup> There is also a pun on the supposed etymology of ὕμνος from ὑφαίνω: Maehler (1997: 251).

ΠΕ. ἐκ τῶν νεφελῶν γὰρ ἄν τις ἀναβολὰς λάβοι;  
 ΚΙ. κρέματαί μὲν οὖν ἐντεῦθεν ἡμῶν ἡ τέχνη.  
 τῶν διθυράμβων γὰρ τὰ λαμπρὰ γίνεταί  
 ἀέρια καὶ σκότιά γε καὶ κυαναυγέα  
 καὶ πτεροδόνητα· σὺ δὲ κλύων εἴσει τάχα.<sup>60</sup>

Cin: O give me wings, I want to soar on high  
 to fly up and pluck novelties from the clouds  
 airy-whirling snow-driven preludes.

Pei: So would you get your preludes from the clouds?

Cin: Our art depends upon the clouds;  
 The brightest features of dithyramps are  
 airy, misty, from the gleaming blue,  
 feathery whirligigs. You'll soon know when you hear them.

On the basis of the above survey, it might be tempting to assign the connotation of 'radically new' to *καινός*, while letting *νέος* and its relatives do the work for less conspicuous kinds of novelty or those that were less potentially subversive of tradition. But ultimately no precise distinction can be made without setting arbitrary limits on the connotation of the words. However, the basic sense of 'young' gives *νέος* a greater semantic affinity with connotations which imply recentness and a recognition of origins, so that even *νέος* as 'new' appears to signify a newness that is rooted in the (recent) past. *καινός*, on the other hand, points to a newness where such rootedness is either less implicit or not pertinent: this kind of novelty is what reveals itself as 'brand' new. A sense of this distinction may lie at the root of the striking increase in the use of *καινός* in the course of a century where tradition was increasingly being rejected or called into question, and when creative thinkers in many spheres turned away from reliance on the past towards a vista of unbounded novelty.

---

<sup>60</sup> Ar. Av. 1387-90.

## V

*Aristophanes and novelty*

To study an elusive and Protean phenomenon like novelty, it helps to choose a period in which the experience was frequently encountered and articulated. The nature, depth and quality of the written record that survives makes late fifth-century Athens a particularly appropriate focus. Γνῶθι σαυτόν, urged the Apolline precept. While the fifty years which followed the Persian Wars might in many respects have been a more confidently innovative period of Athenian history, the ensuing half-century was a crucial age of transition and self-questioning. If a keen awareness of human life vis-à-vis the gods and the *polis* is considered a defining aspect of the Hellenic spirit, many of the innovations of classical Athens may be seen to have resulted from a further refinement of that very urge to self-knowledge, a continuing evolution of the nature and methods of self-perception.

Rather than subjecting to logical scrutiny the experience of novelty that was so much a part of the current sensibility of his times, Aristophanes makes the topic of social change a recurrent and in some cases the central concern of his comedies. ‘The age of Aristophanes’ is both a conveniently vague and appropriately specific designation for a period of the ancient world chosen as the focus for this study. Aristophanes’ earliest play, *Banqueters*, was produced in 427, suggesting a likely birth-date for the poet some time after the middle of the century. His last surviving comedy, *Wealth*, was staged in 388 B.C. and he is known to have written at least two more comedies after that date. Dover writes:

Aristophanes does not directly express or reflect the spirit and culture of Periclean Athens, for he did not begin to write until after the death of Pericles. His Athens is the Athens which fell from wealth, power and confidence to starvation and humiliation, and rose again, before his death, to a stability and prosperity in which the least curable weakness was nostalgia.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>61</sup> Dover (1993) 4.

The transitional nature of the post-Periclean period makes it an interesting focus for the study of novelty. In the latter half of the fifth century Athens was intensely and explicitly devoted to innovation over a broad range of social, cultural, and technical areas. But the period was also notable for socio-political change and crisis, beginning with the Peloponnesian War and the plague, and ending with an Athens, stripped of its empire, miraculously surviving to reconstruct an effective democracy in which social and intellectual creativity continued unabated, albeit in a different manner from before. The increasingly diverse written sources which survive from the age of Aristophanes allow us to get a feel for the attitudes and actions of ordinary Athenians as well as those of exceptional individuals.

In the latter decades of the fifth century both the experience of change and its articulation had a marked influence many areas of Athenian life. One consequence of the intellectual and social turbulence of the period was a new reflectiveness which threw the very question of innovation, how it felt and what it meant, into sharp relief. Considerations of the meaning and value of novelty implicitly inform much of the surviving literature of the period, not least the rationalistic writings of what has been termed 'the Athenian Enlightenment'.<sup>62</sup> Aristophanes' plays were written to entertain a broad Athenian audience, and they tackle questions of old and new directly and indirectly over a wide spectrum.<sup>63</sup> This makes them a key resource for investigating features which offer a marked contrast to those of a society imagined as continually harking back to earlier times, illustrative of a Greek mentality allegedly caught 'in the grip of the past'.

Through Aristophanes' comedies we can recognise that novelty and innovation had come to be considered not merely as facts of Athenian life, but elements which evoked, for the first time on record, explicit consideration by proponents and practitioners, victims and beneficiaries, in a new idiom of speech and a newly self-reflexive fashion. His plays offer us an opportunity to interrogate his characters about their opinions and experiences of novelty. Such an exercise inevitably requires caution, as the exaggeration, humour, irony and distortion

---

<sup>62</sup> Solmsen (1975).

<sup>63</sup> The question appears most explicitly in *Clouds*: Dover (1968) lviii-lxiv discusses the 'new education', Marianetti (1992) concentrates on religious and political elements.

manifest in the playwright's treatment of many of his subjects make them potentially idiosyncratic and unreliable witnesses.

Supporting testimony to the varying perspectives on innovation elicited from Aristophanes comes from other contemporary sources, including tragedy, oratory, history, philosophy, and inscriptional evidence; and retrospective consideration on fifth-century innovation is available from writers such as Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, Lucian and others. Although Aristophanes presents us with a distorting mirror on Athens, it is nonetheless one which, as the ancients themselves believed, potentially give us the fullest and truest reflection of his age. When Dionysios I of Syracuse sought to know about the πολιτεία of Athens, Plato is said to have recommended Aristophanes.<sup>64</sup>

An explicit aim of Athenian comedy was to present novel ideas.<sup>65</sup> Much of what comes to our attention in the surviving plays of Aristophanes has a distinctive flavour of novelty and immediacy. This has implications for the investigation of innovation through the playwright's words. While we may credit him with knowing what *felt* like novelties to his audiences, we can hardly trust him not to exaggerate his own innovativeness. Equally, it is clear that the earliest appearance of an innovation in other extant sources does not necessarily indicate that it was in fact new at the time, even if historians may be inclined to treat it as such in the absence of other evidence. However, there may be reasonable grounds for making such assumptions with some of the literature that was produced in the fifth century, precisely because of the cultural presuppositions we can detect in that period about the competitive demand for novelty and the purpose of writing to record novel and important ideas. If the perception that an idea was new encouraged authors to articulate and fix it in written form, we may perhaps infer that the appearance of novel ideas in written form at least points to their quality of newness for the author and his intended audience.<sup>66</sup> What *seemed* new was bound to contribute to the

---

<sup>64</sup> Ar. *Vita* 42-5 KA.

<sup>65</sup> Antiphanes fr.189 KA claims that comedy is harder than tragedy because it has to 'invent everything'.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. E. Eisenstein in Hall et al. (1975) 325: 'the modern concept of innovation is the offspring of preservation after printing. You can see more clearly where you are innovating because previous steps are more permanently fixed and also made more visible'. This perception must also relate, to a degree, to the use of writing.

climate of novelty, at a time when the idea of identifying innovation from a genuinely 'historical' perspective had barely been formulated in theory or practice.<sup>67</sup>

## VI

### *Psychological perspectives*

Whether something new is seen as organically connected to the old, or whether it is felt to spring into existence ungenerated by the past, is a matter both of perception and presentation. The perception is dictated by psychological factors which affect the formation of individual responses and cultural norms. To a greater or lesser degree, the new may appear to pose a threat to the old. The emotional dimension that regularly accompanies novelty charges the question of innovation with a meaning that may be exploited, consciously or unconsciously. Linguistic representations provide a *prima facie* argument for there being something inherently ominous about novelty: words for 'new' in Greek as in other Indo-European languages rarely appear emotionally neutral, but are often associated with the expression of danger or anxiety.

However, closer attention to the specific forms and contexts of the words used cautions against an over-facile identification of 'newness' in Greek with negative emotional associations. Negative connotations of Greek words for 'new' are frequently found in the comparative forms νεώτερον and καινότερον. What is abjured may be not so much the new itself as something *too* novel or *more* novel i.e. than might be safe or desirable. Moreover, it is the context that has the decisive influence on the words' emotional charge. Many of the literary contexts which provide instances are passages in tragedy, where there may be a generic supposition that newness, perceived as a disturbance to the *status quo ante*, is likely to spell danger and presage disaster in the minds of the character, the author and the audience.

---

<sup>67</sup> 'The Aristotelian word "historian" and the concept behind it were slow to develop, and slow to catch on even after they had been thought of': Hornblower (1987) 10. Monographs entitled Περὶ εἰρημιάτων started appearing in the fourth century: Kleingünther (1933) 136 f.

On the other hand, newness in Greek music (whether expressed using νεώτατος, νεαρός, νέοχος, or καινός) is widely perceived and presented by its practitioners, and presumably some elements of their audience, as a desiderandum. Novelty may mean something different to its purveyor from what it means to its receiver. It follows that if our information comes from purveyors of novelty, it may not alert us to the attitude of its recipients, and *vice versa*. The fact that novelty may be viewed with pleasure by some and alarm a by others shows that the term 'new' by itself cannot guarantee positive or negative associations, and suggests that the word's affective impact must be evaluated by the context in which it is found.

The word's ambivalent possibilities mirror human psychology. The desire for novelty and the fear of the new are both enduring human characteristics. Human beings seem innately geared towards novelty: the German word for 'curiosity', *neugierig*, literally connotes 'greedy for the new'. Aristotle's *Metaphysics* begins with the observation that 'all human beings by nature reach out for knowledge', πάντες ἄνθρωποι τοῦ εἰδέναι ὀρέγονται φύσει.<sup>68</sup> Plato and Aristotle traced the beginnings of philosophical thought to *thauma*, the wonder that leads to curiosity and the desire to know.<sup>69</sup> Modern psychoanalytic theory has posited the operation of an 'epistemophilic' instinct to explain observed tendencies in infant development.<sup>70</sup> The fact that people react to novelty positively or negatively, but rarely with indifference, indicates the psychological feature of *salience* represented by novelty. It is something that makes a difference or creates an impact. It testifies to the operation for good or bad of a vital force or current, whether in personal life, art, society, or intellectual endeavour.

The ways in which newness is recognised, understood, thought about, reacted to, and created, are as complex as the nature of each individual percipient. But historical societies and periods may be distinguished in their approach to the new, their desire and capacity to innovate, and the manner in which they create or restrict the circumstances in which novelty and innovation can flourish. In some,

---

<sup>68</sup> Arist. *Meta.* 1.980a.

<sup>69</sup> Llewelyn (1988) develops the idea as expressed in Pl. *Tht.* 155d and Arist. *Meta.* 1.982b.

<sup>70</sup> Klein (1928).

the specific form in which novelty is manifested may be apparently unspectacular and poorly understood by observers who do not form a part of the social or cultural milieu in question. But in others, such as Athens, it is an inescapable feature, and seems to be reflected in many symbolic manifestations. In Greek myth and art, Athena, goddess of τέχνη and σοφία, springs fully-formed from the head of Zeus. Athens was thus dedicated to a patron goddess who provided a religious aetiology and a psychological validation for the creation of unprecedented innovation through the application of craft and intellect.

Innovation means change, and change means loss. The inability to acknowledge and mourn loss leads to a shut-down of vital creative mechanisms. In psychoanalytic terms, unresolved trauma leads to repetition, while the resolution of loss allows for continued creativity.<sup>71</sup> A society that does not have time or space to mourn is likely to be wary of innovation: mourning provides psychological closure, which allows for a new start. Rapid social change may not give individuals time to digest, absorb, or come to terms with the loss of the old, resulting in anxiety, inertia, *anomie* (a sense of being out of control) and other symptoms of disorientation.<sup>72</sup> It may lead to a loss of the sense that the individual can influence change, because it is hard enough just to keep up with it.

The reaction of helplessness may be exploited by influential and unscrupulous individuals, and an inward-turning individualism, such as social historians have perceived as increasingly influencing the practices of Athenians in the fourth century B.C., can take over from confident belief in the individual's power to affect events. The idealisation of the 'good old days', for which Aristophanes' plays offer abundant evidence, was one way of acknowledging and mourning change. But the serious attempt to reinstate the past only began with the oligarchic coup of 411 B.C. and its aftermath, and became a formal program for Athenian reconstruction only after its defeat in 404 B.C. It led to the paradoxical situation whereby fourth century orators sought to validate and preserve *nomoi* of recent origin by appeal to the intentions of lawgivers lost in the mists of antiquity.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> The classic exposition is Freud (1917).

<sup>72</sup> Giddens (1990) 2-3.

<sup>73</sup> Thomas (1994).



## VII

*Processes and perceptions*

The study of the new is an interdisciplinary task. There can be no comprehensive theory about innovation, since it potentially covers every aspect of human endeavour. This study takes two broad approaches to the question. One is to explore the processes involved in the creation and reception of innovation, while the other seeks to investigate and understand the way novelty was perceived by individuals and groups. For the historian, the former perspective is ultimately dependent on the latter. Whatever else it may be, newness is inescapably a matter of perception. The notion that accounts of human action are themselves a function of discourse, relative to the conditions of their articulation, is a modern idea.<sup>74</sup> But its roots lie in the radical relativism first articulated by thinkers like Protagoras and Gorgias in fifth-century Athens.

Modern social sciences have attempted to analyse innovation as a process rather than a mental construction. A sociological approach might propose a schematic analysis of stages of innovation, though the boundaries are rarely well-defined in practice. These would generally comprise the appearance of the innovation (its discovery or invention), its initial impact, wider social acknowledgement (including expressions of resistance), and its eventual fate in terms of diffusion and absorption (or rejection and obsolescence).<sup>75</sup> While in any particular society or group, active innovation tends to be the province of a minority of individuals, the experience of innovation is a much more widely-based phenomenon, affecting different groups, classes and individuals in different ways. The diverse areas of thought and action in which innovation is pursued depends on differing social needs and pressures, and the identification of what constitutes an innovation, beneficial or otherwise, varies with different interests, perceptions, and beliefs. Such perceptions are themselves not static, but are prone to be altered or modified according to new circumstances and new political, social and educational conditions.

---

<sup>74</sup> Foucault (1972).

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Spratt (1989), McGlade and McGlade (1989).

Cultural anthropologists distinguish 'primary' and 'secondary' innovations.<sup>76</sup> The former term is applied to the discovery of a new principle (such as the use of fire to bake clay), the latter to the deliberate application of known principles leading to novelty (such as the making of pottery from clay). The general usefulness of such distinctions may be doubted.<sup>77</sup> Fifth-century Greeks had different criteria for distinguishing between levels of invention. Democritus observed that in matters like clothing, building, and utterance, human beings were simply imitating nature; music, he said, was the 'newest of the arts' because it was essentially superfluous.<sup>78</sup> Basic human 'discoveries' like fire, farming and clothing were apt to be attributed to divine providence, while more sophisticated innovations were ascribed to exceptional individuals such as 'first discoverers' and culture heroes.<sup>79</sup> But a Sophist might reverse the notion of divine providence, and argue that even the gods were invented by men for their own purposes.<sup>80</sup>

The predominant connotations of the word in any age are an index of the preoccupations of the time. In the twentieth century, for example, 'new' and its relations have been increasingly appropriated, in 'public' use, as an attribute of commercial technology. This reflects both a common perception of what is appropriate to label 'new', and the social fact of widespread involvement with the fruits of material progress. In a technological context, 'new' makes a self-conscious statement intended to carry a positive psychological charge. It is associated with speed, efficiency, productivity, and qualities which offer increased control over nature or the environment. The ascription of newness invites and elicits reactions of desire, interest, excitement or admiration. Often coincident with these associations are notions of financial profit or hedonistic gain, values widely promoted as positive and largely divested of the moral ambivalence they have evoked since ancient times.

As a process innovation is interactive, existing in dynamic relationship to social needs and perspectives. It can be a way of initiating change, or arise in

---

<sup>76</sup> Haviland (1990) 413-5.

<sup>77</sup> Barnett (1953) 8-9.

<sup>78</sup> Democr. fr. 154, 144 DK.

<sup>79</sup> Kleingünther (1933).

<sup>80</sup> Crit. fr. 25 DK.

response to changing circumstances. The initiation of change is a means to power, whether financial, political, or psychological, and it can also be one of the ways in which power is symbolised and manifested. The attribution of novelty often brings with it the implicit promise of pleasure, in the possession, mastery or appreciation of the new. Nowadays, such associations may be more or less explicit, for instance in the promotion or advertising of an allegedly new system, product or service. 'New' invites a public audience to share pride, with or without good reason, in achievement and progress. It carries the message, often wholly disingenuous, that the mass can enjoy the unexamined benefit of sharing in and identifying with the creativity or ingenuity of the few. In such cases, the rhetorical dimension of innovation comes to the fore.

For the Greeks, the technological domination of nature was limited by the lack of both knowledge and inclination. It was *hubris* to meddle in matters which were not in the human domain, something which was best left to semi-divine heroes, kings or tyrants. The study of physical science, which grew out of intellectual wonder (*thauma*), was not directed to practical ends. What was characteristically of more concern was to discover methods of gaining control over one's own nature and that of others. *Technai* were predominantly directed at areas relevant to the control of human behaviour, rather than control over forces of nature and *tuchê*. Music, poetry, art, medicine and rhetoric had higher status and value than practical techniques of mining, building, and manufacture.

As the sphere in which such activities took place was pre-eminently that of the *polis*, the most important expressions of human endeavour were all perceived as being of broadly political significance. Man, in Aristotle's words, is a *politikon zoön*. All the *technai* were ultimately embraced by and subordinate to *politikê technê*, and in the fifth and fourth centuries, the philosophical question arose regarding the way this might best be exercised. While Plato rejected the idea that it might be reduced to the artificial manipulations of rhetoric, Isocrates sought to make a broader understanding of *rhêtorikê technê* the basis for political and practical wisdom.

In the turbulent decades of the late fifth century, Athenians showed awareness of innovation both as a real social process and a rhetoric of change.

Ironically the Sophists, who were accused of subordinating politics to rhetoric and substance to presentation, came to be thought of as prime representatives of unwelcome social and intellectual innovation. Men such as Protagoras and Prodicus, Antiphon and Critias, and above all Socrates, all suffered partly as a result of this perception of their role. In the fourth century, the Athenian 'age of enlightenment' gave way to a more practical-minded and materialistic age of social reconstruction. *Kainotomia*, a word first attested in Aristophanes, becomes the common Greek term for 'innovation' in the fourth century.<sup>81</sup> The root meaning of *kainotomia* is 'cutting new channels in a mine for the extraction of precious metal'. The extraction of silver from the mines at Laurion was a real and significant source of material wealth for Athens. But the discovery of treasure lying hidden in the earth also provides an apt metaphor for innovation, and might even be applied to the study of classical antiquity:

[It is sometimes suggested that] all the work of major importance has long ago been done and the mine is approaching exhaustion, what remains being at best low-grade ore.<sup>82</sup>

It is fitting that this metaphor of *process* should cede to the discourse of *rhetoric* - the intellectual creation *par excellence* of the age of Aristophanes.

But in classical scholarship, as in all the historical sciences, the more usual and more important type of progress consists in the statement and solution of problems which are themselves entirely or partly new...new insights have been achieved by putting fresh questions to old witnesses.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Ar. *Vesp.* 876; MacDowell (1971) *ad loc.*

<sup>82</sup> Dodds (1973b) 27.

<sup>83</sup> Dodds (1973b) 28, 29.

## 2. Dimensions of novelty in Athenian society.

The ultimate causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in the minds of men, in their increasing insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the mode of production and exchange; they are to be sought not in the *philosophy* but in the *economics* of the epoch concerned.

Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring*

### I

#### *The material perspective*

Stimuli to innovate vary between different societies and circumstances. The modern world's construction of innovation is anchored in technological progress, and the public discourse of newness commonly revolves around objects of technology and consumerism.<sup>1</sup> In an environment of expanding global capitalism and economic growth, commercial gain is considered a primary incentive to innovate. Innovation is regularly promoted as an inevitable and desirable process, and politics, international relations, and military strategy are driven by the logic of commerce and technology. Although alarm is voiced over the ecological and social impact of uncontrolled innovation and its insidious influence on private life and community values, it has come to represent a pervasive aspect of modernity.<sup>2</sup>

The perspective of historical materialism draws attention to the need to take material conditions into account in considering the reasons for innovation. But the pre-capitalist societies of ancient Greece lacked the economic sophistication, the large-scale market structures and consumerist pressures which lead to the requirement for constant product innovation. The socio-economic basis of ancient societies, and in particular the widespread exploitation of slave labour, removed much of the incentive to practical inventiveness in commercial and technological matters.<sup>3</sup> The conservative tendencies of predominantly agrarian communities

---

<sup>1</sup> The terminology of 'anchoring' and 'objectification' is characteristic of the theory of social representations derived from Durkheim: Moscovici (1984) 28-43.

<sup>2</sup> Giddens (1990) 169-70.

<sup>3</sup> Finley (1983) 176-195.

restricted the scope of class struggle and the opportunity for radical change in social structures.<sup>4</sup> But in the course of the fifth century, Athens underwent unprecedented social, material and demographic development as a cosmopolitan urban centre and the focus of a maritime empire. This brought about a new perspective on novelty and offered new opportunities for social and material innovation.

Marxist theory would suggest that, prior to the evolution of capitalist modes of production and exchange, the impulse to innovate in ancient societies might best be theorised as the response to specific crises of an economic, military, demographic or ecological nature. The notion of a society changing its habits in response to critical circumstances recalls Thucydides' observations on the *stasis* in Corcyra in 427 B.C.:

ἐν μὲν γὰρ εἰρήνῃ καὶ ἀγαθοῖς πράγμασιν αἱ τε πόλεις καὶ οἱ ἰδιῶται ἀμείνους τὰς γνώμας ἔχουσι διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐς ἀκουσίους ἀνάγκας πίπτειν· ὁ δὲ πόλεμος ὑφελὼν τὴν εὐπορίαν τοῦ καθ' ἡμέραν βίαιος διδάσκαλος καὶ πρὸς τὰ παρόντα τὰς ὀργὰς τῶν πολλῶν ὁμοιοῖ.<sup>5</sup>

In times of peace and prosperity, societies and individuals have finer inclinations because they are not subject to unwelcome pressures. But war is a harsh teacher, in confiscating the easy ability to satisfy daily needs and in bringing the temper of the masses into line with prevailing conditions.

Athens' leaders might prefer to suggest that Athenian innovations were the consequence of moral and intellectual pressures rather than material factors. The Periclean Funeral Oration, for example, a classic instance of the genre whereby Athens sought to 'invent' herself, would associate the city's intellectual and artistic innovations with civic pride, the praiseworthy desire to excel in the eyes of fellow-citizens and vis-à-vis non-Athenians, and the competitive pursuit of ἀρετή in cultural and political domains.<sup>6</sup> Such impulses and their idealised representations

---

<sup>4</sup> De Ste Croix (1981) 278-300; Lintott (1978) 257-262.

<sup>5</sup> Thuc. 3.82.2.

<sup>6</sup> Thuc. 2.35-46; Loraux (1986).

undoubtedly contributed to the vigorously innovative culture of fifth-century Athens.

But the impulse to innovate, viewed both in terms of individual initiative or as a more discernibly social phenomenon, was also theorised in this period as a response to changing material circumstances. The theme of ‘necessity, mother of invention’ occurs in Athenian drama and contemporary sophistic *epideixeis*, offering a rationalistic counterpart to mythical accounts of man’s evolutionary ascent and technical development.<sup>7</sup> In justifying their domination of fellow-Greeks, Athenians appealed to ἀνάγκη:

ἔξ αὐτοῦ δὲ τοῦ ἔργου κατηναγκάσθημεν τὸ πρῶτον προσαγαγεῖν αὐτὴν ἐς τόδε, μάλιστα μὲν ὑπὸ δέους, ἔπειτα καὶ τιμῆς, ὕστερον καὶ ὠφελίας.<sup>8</sup>

As a result of these circumstances, we were first compelled to increase our empire to its present extent, principally out of fear. Subsequently we did so out of self-respect, and later in pursuit of self-interest as well.

An analysis of the manifold sources of Athenian innovation points to the interaction of such culturally determined psychological imperatives with circumstances which arose as a result of the growth and development of the Athenian empire. This chapter looks at some key areas of social change in the Athens of Aristophanes, and seeks to illustrate aspects of the dynamic relationship between changing social and material conditions and the pursuit of innovation.

## II

### *Innovation in warfare*

A psychological perspective on Athenian innovation might stress the primacy of internal psychic mechanisms in promoting productive as well as destructive rivalry.<sup>9</sup> Competitiveness, envy, the pursuit of fame, the desire to look good,

<sup>7</sup> Soph. *Antig.* 332-75, [Hippocr.] *VM* 3-4; cf. Pl. *Prot.* 320c-328d, Chaerephon fr. 21 Nauck, Moschion fr. 6 Nauck.

<sup>8</sup> Thuc. 1.75.3

<sup>9</sup> Walcot (1978) touches on the psychoanalytic theories of Melanie Klein (1957). Comedy itself may have functioned as an outlet for *phthonos*: Carey (1994) 74-5.

intellectual curiosity, and receptivity to external influences all emerge as especially prominent features of ancient Greek society.<sup>10</sup> In the Athens of the 420s and 410s, such characteristically outward-directed elements of Greek cultural psychology were combined with new techniques of verbal self-expression to create conspicuous pressures to pursue innovation and to accord explicit value to novelty.<sup>11</sup> Pressures of this kind had social and material consequences and manifestations, but the application of innovation to the conduct of war was a novel and a surprisingly late development in Greece's conflict-ridden history.

Athens' conspicuous military and political success in the previous half-century was seen to owe much to its spirited response to challenging conditions. Thucydides' Corinthian ambassador to Sparta ascribed Athens' unusual and effective innovativeness to its experience and to the pressure created by war to develop its technical resources:

νῦν δ' ὅπερ καὶ ἄρτι ἐδηλώσαμεν, ἀρχαιότροπα ὑμῶν τὰ ἐπιτηδεύματα πρὸς αὐτούς ἐστιν. ἀνάγκη δὲ ὥσπερ τέχνης αἰεὶ τὰ ἐπιγιγνόμενα κρατεῖν· καὶ ἡσυχάζουσα μὲν πόλει τὰ ἀκίνητα νόμιμα ἄριστα, πρὸς πολλὰ δὲ ἀναγκαζομένοις ἰέναι πολλῆς καὶ τῆς ἐπιτεχνήσεως δεῖ. δι' ὅπερ καὶ τὰ τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἀπὸ τῆς πολυπειρίας ἐπὶ πλεόν ὑμῶν κεκαίνωται.<sup>12</sup>

Now as we just demonstrated, your practices are old-fashioned compared with theirs. In politics, as in all technical matters, the latest development necessarily retains the upper hand. When a state is at peace, established customs are best left unchanged, but when it is forced to face a variety of problems there is need for considerable innovation. Because Athens has faced a variety of experience she has innovated far more than you.

In urging the Sicilian expedition in 415, Alcibiades similarly stressed the positive benefits of conflict as the spur to innovation:

καὶ τὴν πόλιν, ἐὰν μὲν ἡσυχάζῃ, τρίψεσθαί τε αὐτὴν περὶ αὐτὴν ὥσπερ καὶ ἄλλο τι, καὶ πάντων τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐγγηράσεσθαι, ἀγωνιζομένην δὲ αἰεὶ

<sup>10</sup> *Timê*: Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1095b19-31; Dover (1974) 229-236.

<sup>11</sup> Lloyd (1987) 50-108. On verbal innovation see Ch. 3 below.

<sup>12</sup> Thuc. 1.71.3.



προσλήψεσθαι τε τὴν ἐμπειρίαν καὶ τὸ ἀμύνεσθαι οὐ λόγῳ ἀλλ' ἔργῳ μᾶλλον ξύνηθες ἔξειν.<sup>13</sup>

If the city remains inactive, she will wear herself out as would anything else, and her capabilities in every sphere will obsolesce. But through conflict she will constantly acquire new experience and grow used to defending herself, not in speeches but in action.

This was not the kind of new experience that appealed to Dicaeopolis or Trygaeus in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* and *Peace*, nor to Lysistrata and her coterie of women from the different states of Greece.<sup>14</sup> Whatever Aristophanes' own views on the war were, these characters are represented in different ways as keenly desiring the fruits of peace.<sup>15</sup> In *Peace*, the picture of happy civic and rural life is concretely represented by Trygaeus' re-introduction to earth of *Eirene*, *Theoria* and *Opora*.<sup>16</sup> When one path of innovation appears to be leading only to discomfort and destruction, the return to a fantasy of the *status quo ante* manifests a different and more welcome kind of 'novelty'.

While aspects of Athenian innovation may be traced to critical situations in war and peace, practical efforts were largely determined by cultural inclinations. This may explain why Greeks did not resort earlier to technological innovation in warfare:

The Greeks developed weapons and tactics suited to their own political, sociological and psychological paradigms and, having done so, were essentially satisfied with them. Better weapons might have meant victory in certain instances. Yet winning outside the accepted military conventions implied the sacrifice of more deeply held values.<sup>17</sup>

In the early years of the Peloponnesian War, considerations of military success forced the Athenians to recognise that military innovations gave them the edge over their adversaries. When Philocleon is besieged in his own house in *Wasps*, he is urged by the chorus of jurymen to think up 'ingenious tactics' such as those used

---

<sup>13</sup> Thuc. 6.18.6.

<sup>14</sup> The 'peace plays' reflect different aspects of the Athenians' attitude at different junctures: Newiger (1996).

<sup>15</sup> On Aristophanes' 'Cimonian' political outlook see de Ste. Croix (1996).

<sup>16</sup> Ar. *Pax* 520 f., 706 f.

<sup>17</sup> O'Connell (1989) 57, quoted by Snooks (1996) 291.

in the subjugation of Naxos in the 470s. In displacing the action to less critical circumstances, Aristophanes mocks the reminiscing of old soldiers, as if to suggest that they are out of touch with the more serious nature of modern warfare:

ἀλλ' ἐκ τούτων, ὦρα τινά σοι ζητεῖν καινὴν ἐπίνοιαν...  
 μέμνησαι δῆθ', ὅτ' ἐπὶ στρατιᾶς κλέψας ποτὲ τοὺς ὀβελίσκους  
 ἴεις σαυτὸν κατὰ τοῦ τείχους ταχέως, ὅτε Νάξος ἐάλω;...  
 ἀλλὰ καὶ νῦν ἐκπόριζε μηχανὴν ὅπως τάχισθ'.<sup>18</sup>  
 In the circumstances, it's time you found a novel plan...  
 do you remember the old campaign, when Naxos was taken,  
 how you stole the spits and scrambled down the wall?...  
 Now again, devise a plan as swiftly as you can.

In the *Clouds*, Strepsiades misinterprets the way intellectuals apply the term *μηχαναί* to non-military 'mechanisms':

ΣΩ. ἄγε δὴ, κάτειπέ μοι σὺ τὸν σαυτοῦ τρόπον,  
 ἰν' αὐτὸν εἰδῶς ὅστις ἐστὶ μηχανὰς  
 ἤδη 'πι τούτοις πρὸς σὲ καινὰς προσφέρω.  
 ΣΤ. τί δέ; τειχομαχεῖν μοι διανοεῖ, πρὸς τῶν θεῶν;  
 Soc: Right, describe your own character to me:  
 with this information I can decide  
 what new *device* to bring to bear on you.  
 Str: What? Heavens, are you proposing to besiege me?<sup>19</sup>

The tactical conduct of siege-warfare, which first springs to Strepsiades' mind on the mention of *mêchanai*, was a paramount military concern for an Athens engaged in a policy of indefinitely withstanding siege. The following decades were to see notable changes in the conduct of siege-warfare, as a result of the development of offensive artillery with which to break sieges. Significantly, the first comprehensive military treatise of which we know, perhaps dating to the 350s was the

<sup>18</sup> Ar. *Vesp.* 346, 354-5, 365-6.

<sup>19</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 476-80.

*Poliorkêtica* ('Siegecraft') of Aeneas the Tactician. It may have incorporated ideas found in literary predecessors dating to the turn of the century.

The consequence of prolonged war was bound to bring *polemikê technê* to new prominence. The Peloponnesian War was the stimulus to crucial changes in the nature of Greek warfare, in the development of naval tactics, in the use of light-armed troops and mercenaries, in the idea of training, and in the general turn towards military professionalism.<sup>20</sup> The seeds of change in this conservative field of action have been traced to the unorthodox campaigns of the Peloponnesian War. As his subsequent actions on Sphacteria showed, Demosthenes' defeat in Aetolia in 426 was a turning-point for the introduction of light-armed troops on the battlefield.<sup>21</sup> The organised use of peltasts by Iphicrates at Lechaeum in 390, and the unorthodox hoplite tactics of Epaminondas at Leuctra in 371, represented the new freedom from conventional restraints of the subsequent conduct of war.<sup>22</sup>

Written works on military matters began to appear: Plato and Xenophon were dismissive of Sophists like Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, who professed to teach the art of war.<sup>23</sup> Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* reads like an informal handbook of strategy and military training, and in later times fulfilled that role.<sup>24</sup> New military hardware was also being invented from the late fifth century on. Flame-throwers were used at Delium in 424 B.C.<sup>25</sup> In response to the public competition sponsored of Dionysios I of Sicily, various types of catapult were invented in the first half of the fourth century.<sup>26</sup>

Warfare had emerged from the realm of morality and honour. It had become something more than a way of life to be conducted according to ancestral expectations of 'men of honour'. As the Greeks moved rapidly towards the creation of integrated armies, they began to view warfare as a complicated social activity. Warfare had become innovative rather than traditional.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Hornblower (1983) 156-166.

<sup>21</sup> Thuc. 3.94-8, 4.33-6.

<sup>22</sup> Xen. *Hell.* 4.5.10-16, 6.4.12.; Ferrill (1985) 157-62, 166-70.

<sup>23</sup> Pl. *Euthyd.* 271d, 273e etc., Xen. *Mem.* 3.1.11 f.

<sup>24</sup> Scipio Africanus used it as such: Cic. *Tusc. Disp.* 2.62.

<sup>25</sup> Thuc. 4. 100. 2-4.

<sup>26</sup> Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.27, D.S. 14.42.1; Ferrill (1985) 170-75.

<sup>27</sup> Ferrill (1985) 165.

While naval training was long-standing Athenian tradition, military training on land was considered, somewhat disdainfully, to be confined to Sparta.<sup>28</sup> It gradually became widespread in the fourth century, and Aristotle was unequivocal about its importance in a world of professional armies:

ἔτι δ' αὐτοὺς τοὺς Λάκωνας ἴσμεν, ἕως μὲν αὐτοὶ προσήδρευον ταῖς φιλοπονίαις, ὑπερέχοντας τῶν ἄλλων, νῦν δὲ καὶ τοῖς γυμνασίοις καὶ τοῖς πολεμικοῖς ἀγῶσι λειπομένους ἑτέρων· οὐ γὰρ τῷ τοὺς νέους γυμνάζειν τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον διέφερον, ἀλλὰ μόνον τῷ πρὸς μὴ ἀσκοῦντας ἀσκεῖν.<sup>29</sup>

Again we know that so long as Spartans subjected themselves to strenuous military discipline, they were superior to others, but now they fall behind others in gymnastic and military contests. The reason for their superiority was not that they trained their young men in this way, but that they trained and others did not.

Demosthenes, speaking in 338 B.C., identified warfare in retrospect as the paramount sphere of innovation in his time:

ἐγὼ δ' ἀπάντων ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν πολλὴν εἰληφότων ἐπίδοσιν, καὶ οὐδὲν ὁμοίων ὄντων τῶν νῦν τοῖς πρότερον, οὐδὲν ἡγοῦμαι πλεον ἢ τὰ τοῦ πολέμου κεκινήσθαι καὶ ἐπιδεδώκεναι.<sup>30</sup>

My view is that, in a period when virtually everything has advanced and nothing is the same as it was in the old days, nothing has seen a more revolutionary advance than the art of warfare.

### III

#### *The effects of the war*

Whatever the stimuli to innovate, and whether newness is initiated by an individual or by collective agency, the communication and adoption of novelty takes place in the social domain. New ideas bring about new events, objects and institutions,

---

<sup>28</sup> Thuc. 2.84 f., 2. 38-9.

<sup>29</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 8. 1338b.

<sup>30</sup> Dem. *Phil.* 3. 48-51.

which in their turn present the opportunity for further innovation. The wartime period brought about a change in daily rhythms and concerns in Athens which contributed to the intensifying climate of newness and socio-cultural discontinuity. While Alcibiades promulgated the idea that war produced creative innovation, in belittling the power of Sicilian *poleis* he also painted a telling picture of the effects of social turbulence:

ὄχλοις τε γὰρ ξυμμείκτοις πολυανδροῦσιν αἱ πόλεις καὶ ῥαδίας ἔχουσι τῶν πολιτῶν τὰς μεταβολὰς καὶ ἐπιδοχάς. καὶ οὐδεὶς δι' αὐτὸ ὡς περὶ οἰκείας πατρίδος οὔτε τὰ περὶ τὸ σῶμα ὄπλοις ἐξήρτυται οὔτε τὰ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ νομίμοις κατασκευαίς· ὅτι δὲ ἕκαστος ἢ ἐκ τοῦ λέγων πείθειν οἴεται ἢ στασιάζων ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ λαβὼν ἄλλην γῆν, μὴ κατορθώσας, οἰκήσειν, ταῦτα ἐτοιμάζεται.<sup>31</sup>

Their cities teem with mixed rabbles and easily alter and add to their citizen populations. As a result no-one has a sufficient stake in their city to equip themselves with armour for their own person or to establish themselves properly on the land. Because they all reckon that by clever speeches or through civil agitation they can live off the state or, if they fail, can settle elsewhere, they make preparations accordingly.

The style is curiously reminiscent of passages in which the Old Oligarch expresses dismissive views of the Athenian *dêmos*.<sup>32</sup> Despite Alcibiades' rhetorical intention, the changing nature of the Athenian populace might provide an apt analogy with the conditions he depicted in Sicily.

The 420s had seen the Athenians conducting a protracted series of skirmishes with Sparta. The unsettled circumstances of wartime accompanied the rise of disturbing social and educational novelties which formed the themes of Aristophanes' earliest play *Banqueters* and his *Clouds* of 423. This kind of novelty seemed to contrast with the admired technical innovations of Periclean Athens, produced in a secure framework for experimentation and for the expression of creativity.<sup>33</sup> In the decade following the start of the war, the response to innovation

<sup>31</sup> Thuc. 6.17.2-3. All the MSS except one read *πολιτείων* in the first sentence, but it makes less sense in this context to speak of alterations and additions to 'constitutions' (*HCT ad loc.*).

<sup>32</sup> E.g. [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.6-9, 2.7-9, 14-16.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Ch. 4, Sect. 1 below.

was likely to have been intensified by the enforced and recurrent urbanisation of Athenians from rural demes during the Spartan invasions of Attica. Thucydides depicted the plight of Athenian countrymen as being in exile from their own *poleis*:

ἐβαρύνοντο δὲ καὶ χαλεπῶς ἔφερον οἰκίας τε καταλείποντες καὶ ἱερὰ ἃ διὰ παντὸς ἦν αὐτοῖς ἐκ τῆς κατὰ τὸ ἀρχαῖον πολιτείας πάτρια, δίαιτάν τε μέλλοντες μεταβάλλειν καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἢ πόλιν τὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπολείπων ἕκαστος.<sup>34</sup>

They were distressed and resentful at having to leave the houses and the temples which had been their ancestral dwellings throughout all the years since ancient times. They recoiled from the prospect of changing their way of life, and abandoning what to all intents and purposes were their own cities.

For some of these temporary exiles, the experience of living within the confines of the Long Walls provided the opportunity to acquaint themselves better with the extent of their civic powers. The recurrent relocation of the predominantly agrarian population of Athens into the city and the Long Walls made many Athenians more intimately aware of and involved in many aspects of Athens' cultural and political life. On reaching Olympus in *Peace*, Trygaeus identifies himself to Hermes as a countryman for whom city life was associated with an unwelcome level of political involvement:

Τρυγαῖος Ἀθμονεύς, ἀμπελουργὸς δεξιός,  
οὐ συκοφάντης, οὐδ' ἐραστής πραγμάτων.<sup>35</sup>

Trygaeus of Athmonon, an expert vine-dresser -  
no sykophant and no passionate busy-body!

The dubious advantages of war in encouraging activities like sykophancy cast a cynical light on Pericles' disavowal of ἀπραγμοσύνη.<sup>36</sup> Many αὐτουργοί had little choice but to involve themselves with πράγματα.<sup>37</sup> The mass of Athenian citizens,

---

<sup>34</sup> Thuc. 2.16.2.

<sup>35</sup> Ar. *Pax* 190-1.

<sup>36</sup> Harvey (1990) 116-19.

<sup>37</sup> Thuc. 2.40.2, 2.63.2; Carter (1986) 78-87.

deprived of their farms and livelihoods, were faced with periods of discomfort and enforced idleness which allowed them to acquaint themselves, not just with jury-service as portrayed in the *Wasps*, but with the mass of new ideas and commodities which flowed into Athens through the Piraeus.

The physical convergence of Athenian households confused boundaries of social interaction and opened up new lines of communication, helping to alter traditional patterns of social relationships. This was the period in which the Old Oligarch complained about his inability to distinguish citizens from non-citizens.<sup>38</sup> Strepsiades blamed the war for having to treat his slaves with undue care:

οἱ δ' οἰκέται ρέγκουσιν· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἄν πρὸ τοῦ.  
ἀπόλοιο δῆτ', ὦ πόλεμε, πολλῶν οὔνεκα,  
ὄτ' οὐδὲ κολάσ' ἐξεστί μοι τοὺς οἰκέτας.<sup>39</sup>

The servants are snoring. It would never have happened in the old days.  
Damn you, war, for lots of reasons, but particularly because  
I can't even whip my servants any more.

The recursive interrelation of incentive and effect was encouraged by new mechanisms and opportunities of communication.<sup>40</sup> In the context of a compact, competitive, and tightly-knit form of social organisation such as the Athenian *polis*, rapid innovation occurring in many diverse fields was likely to have had an impact on different classes and social groups.

The fact that we can only speculate about the impact of such innovation on Athenians whose voices are not preserved highlights the dangers of accepting the predominantly elitist and conservative value-judgements about manifestations of newness. The public response to novelty engendered and shaped the kind of innovation that characterises Athenian society in our sources. But novelties deplored by one section of Athenians might well have been welcomed by others. Xanthias in *Frogs* and Carion in *Wealth* are not short of independent opinions, and

<sup>38</sup> [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.10. The pamphlet is generally thought to date from the 420s., but the date has been challenged by Hornblower (refs. in *OCD*<sup>3</sup> s.v. Old Oligarch). However, even if the author was writing in the 370s/80s, the contents clearly reflect the earlier period of empire.

<sup>39</sup> *Ar. Nub.* 5-7.

<sup>40</sup> See Ch. 3 below.

in stark contrast to the modest silence enjoined on them by Pericles' Funeral Speech, the women of Athens were portrayed by Aristophanes in *Lysistrata*, *Thesmophoriazousae* and *Ecclesiazusae* as vocal, sharp-witted, and politically radical.

At times of crisis and war, when men are absent from home and being killed, women's roles and activities commonly undergo some reevaluation. The relatively isolated witnesses of Aristophanic comedy testify to the possibility of change in the understanding of women's status and identity in the late fifth century:

It becomes ever clearer how far previous study of Athenian society has yielded descriptions based almost entirely on male-created documentation and biased accordingly towards the actions and attitudes of men. Techniques for redressing the balance, created in the last twenty years, are beginning to let us see, for example, what the public (male) / private (female) division meant, both generally and in the use of space within the house, what (considerable) powers went with a dowry, or what roles in production and wealth creation, not least managerial, within and outside the house were assumed by women.<sup>41</sup>

What emerges more clearly from the sources, and is emphasised in Aristophanes' *Knights*, *Clouds* and *Wasps*, is the impact that the younger generation was felt to make on the atmosphere of novelty. Demographic change may have played a part in creating this impression. It has been argued that the plague of 430-426 could have affected men in their thirties more than the teenagers of the 430s who were to become prominent in political life in the 420s.<sup>42</sup> Younger men made their mark as prosecutors (*sunêgoroi*),<sup>43</sup> and under-thirties were conspicuous among the 'new politicians'.<sup>44</sup>

By the time of the Sicilian Expedition, οἱ νεώτεροι could be spoken of as forming a caucus in the Ekklesia.<sup>45</sup> The idea of a 'generation gap' is reflected in diverse literary and oratorical sources.<sup>46</sup> In Euripides' *Hippolytus* of 428, the way in which Hippolytus is drawn suggests points of contact with Alcibiades, and in

---

<sup>41</sup> Davies in *CAH* 5<sup>2</sup>, 290.

<sup>42</sup> Strauss (1993) 138; Sallares (1991) 258-260.

<sup>43</sup> *Ar. Vesp.* 686-95, 1096, *Av.* 1430-1.

<sup>44</sup> Connor (1971) 147-151

<sup>45</sup> *Thuc.* 6.12.2-13.1, 17.1.

<sup>46</sup> Forrest (1975); Ostwald (1986) 229-250.



*Supplices*, Adrastus speaks of the ‘clamour of young men’ (160, νέων ἀνδρῶν θόρυβος) urging war against Thebes.<sup>47</sup> The Sophist Thrasymachus lamented that contemporary Athenians were living in ‘the hour of the son’, with its attendant danger and uncertainty:<sup>48</sup>

ἐβουλόμην μὲν, ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, μετασχεῖν ἐκείνου τοῦ χρόνου τοῦ παλαιοῦ, ἡνίκα σιωπᾶν ἀπέχρη τοῖς νεωτέροισι, τῶν τε πραγμάτων οὐκ ἀναγκαζόντων ἀγορεύειν καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ὀρθῶς τὴν πόλιν ἐπιτροπευόντων... ἄλις γὰρ ἡμῖν ὁ παρελθὼν χρόνος, καὶ ἀντὶ μὲν εἰρήνης ἐν πολέμῳ γενέσθαι καὶ διὰ κινδύνων <ἐλθεῖν> εἰς τόνδε τὸν χρόνον, τὴν μὲν παρελθοῦσαν ἡμέραν ἀγαπῶσι, τὴν δ’ ἐπίουσαν δεδίοσι... ἡμεῖς δὲ μετὰ μὲν τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἐσωφρονούμεν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς κακοῖς ἐμάνημεν, ἃ τοὺς ἄλλους σωφρονίζειν εἴωθεν.<sup>49</sup>

I could wish, men of Athens, to be living in the days of old when the young were content to remain silent because political affairs did not urge them to speak, and the older men were guiding the state properly... But farewell to all that - now that we have exchanged peace for war and approach the present day beset with dangers, we recall the past with affection and greet the future with fear... In times of prosperity we behaved sensibly, but in adversity, when others are apt to come to their senses, we went mad.

#### IV

##### *The influx from abroad*

Athens’ wartime strategy was aimed at guaranteeing its indefinite survival through overwhelming sea-power, which was identified by Pericles, and with grudging admiration by the Old Oligarch, as the key to the *dêmos*’ success.<sup>50</sup> Command of the sea also meant that Athens received constant new stimuli from foreign lands. Its position as the leader of an empire had made it the centre of an unparalleled diversity of sea-borne influences and materials. For Pericles, the ability to enjoy imports from around the empire was a testimony to Athens’ greatness:

<sup>47</sup> Strauss (1993) 166-75, 113-15.

<sup>48</sup> Strauss (1993) 130-178.

<sup>49</sup> Thrasymachus fr. 1 DK.

<sup>50</sup> Thuc. 2.62.2. etc., [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 2.2-6.

ἐπεσέρχεται δὲ διὰ μέγεθος τῆς πόλεως ἐκ πάσης γῆς τὰ πάντα, καὶ  
 ξυμβαίνει ἡμῖν μηδὲν οἰκειότερα τῇ ἀπολαύσει τὰ αὐτοῦ ἀγαθὰ γιγνόμενα  
 καρποῦσθαι ἢ καὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων.<sup>51</sup>

Owing to the greatness of our city, all good things flow in to us from all over the world, so  
 that it seems no less natural for us to enjoy goods of foreign provenance as the produce of  
 our own land.

Sea-power allowed for commercial innovation and adventurousness. The freedom  
 to engage in trade and the profit to be made from it was a self-perpetuating  
 phenomenon, as the growth and reorganisation of the Piraeus testifies.<sup>52</sup> A new  
 generation of city-based Athenians and metics had become aware of the  
 possibilities of commercial enterprise, and vigorous trading extended to the  
 furthest outposts of the empire. The Old Oligarch appended this comment to his  
 discussion of Athenian naval power:

διὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς θαλάττης πρῶτον μὲν τρόπους εὐωχιῶν ἐξηῦρον  
 ἐπιμισγόμενοι ἄλλη ἄλλοις· ὅ τι ἐν Σικελίᾳ ἢ δὲ ἢ ἐν Ἰταλίᾳ ἢ ἐν Κύπρῳ ἢ  
 ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἢ ἐν Λυδίᾳ ἢ ἐν τῷ Πόντῳ ἢ ἐν Πελοποννήσῳ ἢ ἄλλοθί που,  
 ταῦτα πάντα εἰς ἓν ἠθροίσθη διὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς θαλάττης.

First, as rulers of the sea the Athenians have visited various other lands and have  
 discovered their luxuries. The delicacies of Sicily, Italy, Cyprus, Egypt, Lydia, Pontus, the  
 Peloponnese, and elsewhere are concentrated in Athens due to her maritime dominance.<sup>53</sup>

Hermippus compiled a ‘catalogue of luxuries’ as a mock-heroic parallel to the  
 Homeric Catalogue of Ships:

ἐκ μὲν Κυρήνης καυλὸν καὶ δέρμα βόειον,  
 ἐκ δ’ Ἑλλησπόντου σκόμβρους καὶ πάντα ταρίχη,  
 ἐκ δ’ αὖ Θετταλίας χόνδρον καὶ πλευρὰ βόεια...  
 ταῦτα μὲν ἐντεῦθεν· ἐκ δ’ Αἰγύπτου τὰ κρεμαστὰ

<sup>51</sup> Thuc. 2.38.

<sup>52</sup> Garland (1985) 26-8.

<sup>53</sup> [Xen.] *Ath.Pol.* 2.7.

ἰστία καὶ βίβλους, ἀπὸ δ' αὖ Συρίας λιβανωτόν...  
 Καρχηδῶν δάπιδας καὶ ποικίλα προσκεφάλαια.<sup>54</sup>  
 From Cyrene come silphium stalks and oxhides,  
 from the Hellespont mackerel and all kinds of salt-fish,  
 from Thessaly salt and ribs of beef...  
 moving on elsewhere, from Egypt comes  
 sailcloth and papyrus-reeds, from Syria frankincense...  
 from Carthage rugs and embroidered cushions.

The variety of novel commodities to be found on the Athenian market was symbolic of the advantages of hegemony. It was a far cry from the simple fare which Right in Aristophanes' *Clouds* associated with the good old days.<sup>55</sup> The *dêmos* in *Knights* might now be won over with 'wheedling cookery-words' (216, ῥηματίοις μαγειρικοῖς). New kinds of food were 'good to think with':

By parodying tragic forms, by setting up a heroic context and then infiltrating it with incongruous and anachronistic images from the modern city, comic poets gave resonance to their representation of the present, a greater consciousness of being contemporary. It is not too much to say that fish in these comedies and parodies contributes significantly to one of the earliest manifestations of the idea of the modern, the contemporary, in Western intellectual history...<sup>56</sup>

The continuing opportunity to benefit from external contacts and supplies may have inspired members of the newly urbanised *dêmos* with undue pride and optimism. Although the deprivations suffered by rural Athenians during the initial period of war had led to disaffection with Pericles, his re-election as *stratêgos* testified to the *dêmos*' endorsement of his policies as well as his evident incorruptibility.<sup>57</sup> But Athens' continuing command of the sea also afforded a genuine capacity for self-renewal. In 415 the majority of Athenians were ready and eager to launch an offensive expedition of unprecedented size against Syracuse.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Hermippus fr. 63 K-A.

<sup>55</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 981-3; cf. Ar. *Eq.* 538-9.

<sup>56</sup> Davidson (1997) 14.

<sup>57</sup> Thuc. 2.65.4. Ober (1989: 87) stresses Pericles' rhetorical skill.

<sup>58</sup> Thuc. 6. 24, with *HCT ad loc.*

Athens' seaward orientation explains why many stimuli to innovation in this period were related to the continuing influence of external contact with individuals, ideas, and material goods. Much interstate trade was in the hands of foreigners and metics, who along with commercial products brought new ideas and practices to Athenians' attention. Even new religious ideas came via commercial routes, often arriving first, as did Epidaurian Asclepius and Thracian Bendis, at the Piraeus.<sup>59</sup> The new education was largely in the hands of foreigners, who brought with them ideas rooted in Ionia and the Greek settlements of Italy and Sicily.<sup>60</sup>

Of all the Greek states, Athens could pride herself for offering a secure base for foreigners to offer their wares, whether intellectual or material. Pericles proudly asserted Athens' open-door policy in contrast to the Spartan practice:

τὴν τε γὰρ πόλιν κοινὴν παρέχομεν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτε ξενηλασίαις ἀπείργομέν τινα ἢ μαθήματος ἢ θεάματος.<sup>61</sup>

Our city remains open to all. *We* don't conduct periodic deportations to prevent outsiders discovering or spying on our activities.

The diffusion of ideas from abroad was a traditional catalyst for Hellenic innovation. The willingness on the part of some students to pay high fees to foreign Sophists like Prodicus and Protagoras was a tangible recognition of their status in Athens' intellectual life. By associating innovation with their imperial success, Athenians could value and welcome the influx of foreign ideas as a counterpart to the *euporia* and material enjoyment they derived from the variety of new and imported commodities.

## V

### ποικιλία *and play*

The fruits of empire presented the *dêmos* with an unparalleled experience of *poikilia*, the sheer enjoyment of variety through the extension of material and

<sup>59</sup> Garland (1987) 115-117, 118-22. See Ch. 7 below, Sects. 4 and 5.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Ostwald in *CAH* 5<sup>2</sup>, 351 f.

<sup>61</sup> Thuc. 2.39.1.

intellectual choice. Athenian *poikilia* provided an effective contrast to the drab simplicity and perceived narrow-mindedness of Spartan society. Pericles praised fellow-Athenians as models of versatility:

Ευνελών τε λέγω τήν τε πᾶσαν πόλιν τῆς Ἑλλάδος παιδευσιν εἶναι καὶ καθ' ἕκαστον δοκεῖν ἄν μοι τὸν αὐτὸν ἄνδρα παρ' ἡμῶν ἐπὶ πλείστ' ἄν εἶδη καὶ μετὰ χαρίτων μάλιστ' ἄν εὐτραπέλως τὸ σῶμα αὐταρκες παρέχεσθαι.<sup>62</sup>

In short, I say that our whole city is an education for Greece, and I think that each and every one of us is versatile enough to comport himself honourably and with self-discipline in a diverse range of activities.

In reminding the contestants for the favour of Demos to stay on their toes, the praise of *poikilia* by the chorus of Aristophanes' *Knights* suggests a more back-handed flattery:

ποικίλος γὰρ ἀνὴρ  
κᾶκ τῶν ἀμηχάνων πόρους εὐμήχανος πορίζειν.<sup>63</sup>

He's a multi-faceted fellow,  
and good at finding ways to get out of sticky situations.

The promotion of *poikilia* as a social desiderandum in the democratic *polis* was transferred from the quality traditionally praised in poetry.<sup>64</sup> In a socio-political context, however, it might carry ambivalent implications. When the Sausage-Seller describes how he defeated Paphlagon in the Council-meeting, the chorus exclaims:

πάντα τοι πέπραγας οἶα χρῆ τὸν εὐτυχοῦντα·  
εὔρε δ' ὁ πανούργος ἔτε-  
ρον πολὺ πανουργίαις  
μείζοσι κεκασμένον,  
καὶ δόλοισι ποικίλοις  
ρήμασιν θ' αἰμύλοις.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Thuc. 2.51.1.

<sup>63</sup> Ar. *Eq.* 758-9.

<sup>64</sup> E.g. Pi. *Ol.* 6.87, *Nem.* 4.14.

<sup>65</sup> Ar. *Eq.* 683-7. κεκασμένος may be etymologically linked to καινός; cf. above, Ch. 1, Sect. 4.

You've done everything to achieve success:  
 the rascal has come up against  
 someone who far  
 excels him in rascality,  
 full of multifarious schemes  
 and wheedling words.

The constant pull towards the city, strengthened by the intermittent relocations of country-dwellers during the Archidamian War, gave rural Athenians the opportunity to observe, if not to partake in, the kind of mental activity traditionally perceived as the preserve of foreigners and the leisured class. Aristophanes' plays testify to a degree of popular interest and desire to participate in the activities he frequently derides. In *Clouds*, Strepsiades abandons his rural dwelling and enrolls in the Phrontisterion to learn how to avoid paying his debts, even before Pheidippides arrives to be instructed in its 'postmodernist immoralities'.<sup>66</sup>

By contrast to traditional, repetitive farm-labour, intellectual experimentation offered new opportunities for variety and excitement. This resulted in some ambivalence in the perception of the contrasting life-styles, as there was equally in the perception of such qualities as σοφία and ἀστειότης. ἀργός ('idle') is regularly used by Aristophanes in association with intellectual activities. The Clouds are described as 'great goddesses for idle men' (μεγάλαι θεαὶ ἀνδράσιν ἀργοῖς) and the term is used of the Sophists, whom the Clouds must feed since they 'do nothing' (οὐδὲν δρῶντας).<sup>67</sup> By contrast, the Athenian farmers could be described as an 'industrious tribe', 'prudent and hardworking' (ἐργάτης λεώς, σώφρων κἀργάτης).<sup>68</sup> The picture is that of a hive of industry, to which the drones contribute nothing but noise.

The Athenians were aware that periods of leisure created conditions for innovation. This found symbolic expression in Herodotus' account of the Lydians' invention of games and the legend that Palamedes devised draughts as a pleasant pastime (σχολῆς ἄλυπον διατριβήν) to alleviate the boredom of the siege.<sup>69</sup> The

<sup>66</sup> The phrase is adopted from Cartledge (1990) 29.

<sup>67</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 316, 334.

<sup>68</sup> Ar. *Pax* 632, *Ach.* 611.

<sup>69</sup> Hdt. 1.94.3, Gorg. 11A30 DK.

connection with games is suggestive. In many areas of life, the desire for innovation is the expression of a natural creative impulse of the kind manifested in play. 'Play' in a broad sense is intrinsically connected to leisure and creativity, and displays features essential to the kind of experimentation which tends to produce different kinds of novelty.<sup>70</sup> The symbolic structure of games, rule-bound yet open-ended, often requiring the adoption of competitive yet interdependent roles, creates a model for inventiveness. In circumstances of intense social interaction, when the boredom threshold is lowered and novelties are sought to fill the vacuum, the impulse to explore receives added impetus.

Play fulfils a natural and important psychological function for children.<sup>71</sup> But for adults it has an ambivalent status. It risks appearing superficial and unworthy by comparison with serious pursuits, which in Greece included music and formal athletic contests. By contrast, the type of leisure activity branded as self-indulgence (τρυφή) attracted moral censure.<sup>72</sup> Many of Athens' principal social institutions could be seen as offering a forum for the adult counterpart of 'deep' play: symposia, athletics, theatre, even festivals and forensic politics.<sup>73</sup> These were the official arenas for original and creative self-expression, bounded, like *technê* (discussed below) by conventions which were sufficiently flexible to allow for continual modification and contestation.

Gorgias, who introduced the new wave of rhetorical methods in the 420s, described presentation-pieces such as his *Helen* as 'toys' (παίγνια).<sup>74</sup> The elevation of παίγνια, whether literal and metaphorical, was viewed with great suspicion by Plato, who believed that the attempt to diversify children's toys and games had dangerous social ramifications:

κινούμενα δὲ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ καινοτομούμενα μεταβολαῖς τε ἄλλαις ἀεὶ  
χρώμενα, καὶ μηδέποτε ταῦτ' ἀφίλα προσαγορευόντων τῶν νέων μήτ' ἐν

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Baudrillard (1990) 79: 'The dominant tonality of our daily activities is becoming ludic...a speculation in the varieties or technical potentialities of the object, *a game with the rules of the game* through innovation' (author's italics).

<sup>71</sup> Piaget (1951).

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Parker (1996) 162 n. 33. Aristotle distinguished different uses of σχολή in *Pol.* 8. 1337b-38a; Stocks (1936).

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Cartledge (1997) 3.

<sup>74</sup> Gorg. *Helen* 21; Cole (1991) 78-9.

σχήμασι τοῖς τῶν αὐτῶν σωμάτων μήτε ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις σκεύεσιν ὁμολογουμένως αὐτοῖς ἀεὶ κεῖσθαι τό τ' εὐσχημον καὶ ἄσχημον, ἀλλὰ τόν τι νέον ἀεὶ καινοτομοῦντα καὶ εἰσφέροντα τῶν εἰωθότων ἕτερον κατὰ τε σχήματα καὶ χρώματα καὶ πάντα ὅσα τοιαῦτα, τούτον τιμᾶσθαι διαφερόντως, τούτου πόλει λώβην οὐκ εἶναι μείζω φαίμεν ἂν ὀρθότατα λέγοντες.<sup>75</sup>

What should we think of change and innovation in toys, and variation and constant fluctuation in the tastes of the young? A situation where there is no fixed standard of what is good and what not in their bearing, dress and other accoutrements, where the innovator who introduces new patterns, colours, and so on is specially honoured - we would be right to say that nothing could be worse for a society.

The novel methods for the manipulation of words appeared to many as misleading and undesirable word-games.<sup>76</sup> Intellectual innovation was portrayed as a proliferation of words, and Aristophanes' plays document how words used in a subversive or affected fashion, often by the 'younger generation', were characterised as λαλία or στωμυλία.<sup>77</sup> The chorus in *Frogs* denounce such wordiness as a waste of time, defying common sense (σύνεσις) and simple sanity:

τό τ' ἐπὶ σεμνοῖσιν λόγοισι  
καὶ σκαριφησμοῖσι λήρων  
διατριβὴν ἀργὸν ποιεῖσθαι  
παραφρονοῦντος ἀνδρός.<sup>78</sup>

To waste time idly  
on pretentious talk  
and nit-picking rubbish  
is the business of a madman.

<sup>75</sup> Pl. *Laws* 7.797b-c; Gouldner (1965) 45-7.

<sup>76</sup> Pl. *Soph.* 234d-235a.

<sup>77</sup> E.g. Ar. *Eq.* 1375 f., *Nub.* 1003, *Ran.* 1071; O'Sullivan (1992) 130-4.

<sup>78</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 1495-8.



## VI

## τέχνη and τύχη

In seeking to claim legitimacy for an empire increasingly sustained by force, the Athenians of Pericles' generation saw themselves as uniquely qualified to use their position and capabilities for innovation to Panhellenic advantage vis-à-vis the barbarian. The glorification of the city of Athens was symbolic of its assumption of the cultural and political leadership of Greece. But the growth of the Athenian Empire also necessitated the development of new professions and practices to cater for the unprecedented number of legal, political and economic measures needed to sustain it. In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Aeschylus complains of Athens' changed nature, which he blames on the influence of Euripidean drama:

καὶ τ' ἐκ τούτων ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν  
 ὑπογραμματέων ἀνεμεστώθη  
 καὶ βωμολόχων δημοπιθήκων  
 ἐξαπατώντων τὸν δῆμον ἀεὶ.<sup>79</sup>

And then as a result our city  
 has become filled with undersecretaries  
 and populist performing monkeys  
 forever bamboozling the people.

Expertise was needed for a range of new administrative tasks, and economic matters were no longer limited to traditional forms of *oikonomia*:

Functionally, by the 450s if not earlier, the scale of monies passing through the hands of the administrators of collective bodies, from *hellenotamiai* to demarchs, had become such as to rupture any sense of continuity with household management: genuine taxes, with tax-farmers to match, had proliferated by the 420s, and publicity, audit, accountability, new and larger management groups, and fierce penalties for defalcation had become the norm.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 1083-6.

<sup>80</sup> Davies in *CAH* 5<sup>2</sup>, 304-5.

The Athenians also witnessed the growth of lucrative and unconventional intellectual specialisations. The Sophists presented their educational methods as the avenue to political and social advancement, and their clientèle were the younger members of the upper classes. Non-Athenians who made a fortune from teaching the skills required to wield political influence over the *dêmos* were likely to be a focus of popular as well as philosophical disapproval.

Part of the ambivalence felt about the Sophists' claim to teach the *technê* of politics was an unease that the fortunes of the *polis* could be reducible to *technê*. Political events, like history itself, might be thought of as more in the domain of chance, *tuchê*, than skill. Thucydides hoped that his own, more accurate, *technê* of historiography might offer an opportunity for the limited control of *tuchê*, at least insofar as the recurrence of men's behaviour might be predicted:

ὅσοι δὲ βουλήσονται τῶν τε γενομένων τὸ σαφὲς σκοπεῖν καὶ τῶν μελλόντων ποτὲ αὖθις κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον τοιούτων καὶ παραπλησίων ἔσεσθαι, ὠφέλιμα κρίνειν αὐτὰ ἄρκούντως ἔξει.<sup>81</sup>

It will be enough for me if my words are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events that happened in the past and which, human nature being what it is, will at some time or other and in much the same ways be repeated in the future.

The evolution and articulation of new *technai* was bound to give rise to consideration of the meaning and scope of *technê*. A *technê* could be thought of both as a way of preserving knowledge, oral and written, and as a basis for the creation of further knowledge. Written works like Polykleitos' *Canon*, the Hippocratic surgical treatises, and rhetorical *technai*, were both a means of defining the boundaries within which their subject operated and an opportunity for practitioners to learn and to build on the achievements of their predecessors. *Technê* was thus potentially a tool both for generating novelty and for controlling and defining the proper scope of innovation.

The contrast between *technê* and *tuchê* became a theme in rhetoric, art, and medicine.<sup>82</sup> The antithesis suggested that *technê* could provide a way of

---

<sup>81</sup> Thuc. 1.22.4.

overcoming mere contingency by formulating and practising techniques of bringing it under systematic human control through the exercise of intelligence. Democritus expressed the new sense of intellectual confidence in dismissing the terrors of *tuchê*:

ἄνθρωποι τύχης εἶδωλον ἐπλάσαντο πρόφασιν ἰδίης ἀβουλίας. βαιὰ γὰρ φρονήσει τύχη μάχεται, τὰ δὲ πλεῖστα ἐν βίῳ εὐξύνετος ὀξύδερκείη κατιθύνει.<sup>83</sup>

People have created the image of Chance as an excuse for their own poor judgement. In few things does Chance conflict with intelligence. Most things in life can be put to rights by good sense and clear-sightedness.

The poet Ion of Chios was reported to have said that, although chance was the opposite of skill, its products appeared to have much in common (πολλὰ τῆς σοφίας διαφέρουσα πλεῖστα αὐτῇ ὅμοια ποιεῖ).<sup>84</sup> The playwright Agathon epigrammatically expressed a similar sentiment:

τέχνη τύχην ἔστερξε καὶ τύχη τέχνην.<sup>85</sup>

Fortune is beloved of art and art of fortune.

The collapsing of the antithesis between *technê* and *tuchê* represents an aspect of how Athenians expressed their desire to control circumstances through human skill and their new confidence in the possibility of doing so. The broadening of social and political structures allowed for a greater degree of individual and popular initiative, and the practice of diverse new *technai* was increasingly a feature of the public sphere. Whereas the traditional practitioner might expect to keep *technê* within the family, the loosening of traditional social structures and increased opportunities for learning contributed to the possibility of wider popular access to skills and professions. The regularisation and written systematisation of *technai*

---

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Chh. 3, 4, and 6 below.

<sup>83</sup> Democr. fr. 119 DK.

<sup>84</sup> Ion Ch. fr. 3 DK.

<sup>85</sup> Arist. *EN*. 6. 1140a 17.

offered an opportunity and a yardstick for the production of genuine innovation within a range of technical spheres.

## VII

### νόμοι *and novelty*

The question of what constituted norms, whether they were man-made or rooted in nature, formed the basis of a famous and ongoing debate in the Sophistic age.<sup>86</sup> *Nomos* had a nexus of meanings and associations, covering customs, laws consensual and arbitrary, and social and political norms. All these meanings were current and not formally distinct in late fifth-century Athens. The meaning of ‘prescriptive law’ may date from the reforms of Cleisthenes in the late sixth century.<sup>87</sup> This simultaneous restriction and extension of the significance of *nomos* corresponded to a change in the perception of law itself:

When the general term for ‘social norm’ became the official term for a specific enactment, its erstwhile absolute validity became relative: what had been timeless could become time-bound, and what had been immutable became changeable.<sup>88</sup>

This sense of the mutability of *nomos* in a fast-changing and increasingly legalistic society like late fifth-century Athens has rich implications for the Athenians’ experience of innovation in many areas of life. Innovation had been presented by Herodotus as part of φύσις, the natural order of things which Herodotus celebrated in its manifold splendour. Most people were no more than spectators of unique and extraordinary feats. In Herodotus’ eyes, the danger of ὕβρις was ever-present for those who overreach their mortal nature. Particularly grandiose innovators like Polykrates and Xerxes were bound to incur divine φθόνος. While outstanding achievement and conspicuous innovation might be considered marvellous

---

<sup>86</sup> Guthrie (1969) 55-134.

<sup>87</sup> Ostwald (1969).

<sup>88</sup> Ostwald (1986) 88.

(*thaumaston*) and praiseworthy, they remained the domain of a few special individuals.

The *isonomia* asserted by the broadly-based *demos* of the 420s allowed and demanded a larger franchise for individual initiative in all spheres that could be considered political. Increasingly, individuals from non-aristocratic backgrounds could make their mark in politics.<sup>89</sup> The democratic *polis* allowed for any citizen seeking to propose a law to address a forum of his fellow-citizens. The Old Oligarch grumbled:

νῦν δὲ λέγων ὁ βουλόμενος ἀναστὰς ἄνθρωπος πονηρὸς ἐξευρίσκει τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτῷ τε καὶ τοῖς ὁμοίοις αὐτῷ. εἶποι τις ἄν, τί ἄν οὖν γνοίη ἀγαθὸν αὐτῷ ἢ τῇ δήμῳ τοιοῦτος ἄνθρωπος; οἱ δὲ γινώσκουσιν ὅτι ἡ τούτου ἀμαθία καὶ πονηρία καὶ εὐνοία μᾶλλον λυσιτελεῖ ἢ ἡ τοῦ χρηστοῦ ἀρετὴ καὶ σοφία καὶ κακόννοια.<sup>90</sup>

Nowadays any scoundrel who wants to can stand up and devise a way of getting what is in his interest and that of those like him. You might ask 'How would such a person recognise his own interest and that of the people?' But they know that his ignorance, immorality and favour are more profitable than the good citizen's virtue, intelligence and contempt.

It was thus a matter of daily public acknowledgement that specialist political status was not required to produce potentially radical innovation. Innovation in law and in the broader political sphere might become the province of any citizen with a degree of political skill and ambition. It seemed as if new laws could be indiscriminately offered up for sale like fresh produce, whether destined for Athens, colonies like Thurii, or imaginary cities like Nephelokokygia:

ΨΗΦΙΣΜΑΤΟΠΩΛΗΣ. ἔάν δ' ὁ Νεφελοκοκκυγιεὺς τὸν Ἀθηναῖον ἀδικῆ -  
ΠΕΙ. τουτὶ τί ἔστιν αὖ κακὸν τὸ βιβλίον;  
ΨΗ. ψηφισματοπώλης εἰμὶ καὶ νόμους νέους  
ἤκω παρ' ὑμᾶς δεῦρο πωλήσων.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Connor (1971) 139-98.

<sup>90</sup> [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.6-7.

<sup>91</sup> Ar. *Av.* 1035-8. Cf. *Ach.* 532, where Pericles is said to have enacted laws like *skolia* (perhaps suggesting that they appeared to be improvised).

Decree-merchant: *If the Cloundcuckooburian wrong the Athenian -*

Pei: Another bloody document! What's this latest one about?

D-M: I'm a decree-merchant, and I've come here  
to sell you some fresh laws.

Bad new laws could replace good old ones. In Aristophanes' *Clouds*, Pheidippides expresses the connection between not observing traditional laws and the immoral behaviour:

ὡς ἤδὺ καινοῖς πράγμασιν καὶ δεξιοῖς ὀμιλεῖν,  
καὶ τῶν καθεστώτων νόμων ὑπερφρονεῖν δύνασθαι.<sup>92</sup>

How nice it is to spend one's time in politics and with clever folk  
and to be able to ignore the established laws.

He is later made to argue that laws and customs, even those against father-beating, are after all merely conventional:

οὐκ οὖν ἀνὴρ ὁ τὸν νόμον θεῖς τοῦτον ἦν τὸ πρῶτον,  
ὡσπερ σὺ καὶ γὰρ, καὶ λέγων ἔπειθε τοὺς παλαιούς;  
ἦ ττόν τι δητ' ἔξεστι κάμοι καινὸν αὖ τὸ λοιπὸν  
θεῖναι νόμον τοῖς υἱέσιν, τοὺς πατέρας ἀντιτύπτειν;<sup>93</sup>

Wasn't it a man who first made this law  
a man like you and me, who persuaded the men of old by argument?  
Why should I have any less right to make for the future  
a new law that sons should beat their fathers?

By the end of the 420s continuous innovation in *nomoi* had led to confusion, and measures were sought to consolidate the legal system and to prevent the proliferation of new laws. The introduction of a new law might override the provisions of an earlier one, threatening a situation in which the law could no longer be used as a guide to action owing to internal contradictions. In 415 appears

---

<sup>92</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 1399-1400.

<sup>93</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 1421-4.

the first evidence for the *graphê paranomôn*.<sup>94</sup> This was a sign of reaction to the proliferation of democratic laws and a belated attempt to provide some kind of safeguard against the perceived dangers of unrestrained politico-legal innovation. After the restoration of 410 a board of *nomothetai* was appointed to codify the laws, and Nicomachus was entrusted with codifying the religious calendar.<sup>95</sup> The establishment of a central archive in the Metroön by about 406/5, and Archinus' decree in 403/2 proposing the reform of the Attic alphabet, also indicate ways in which in the aftermath of the political and military shocks of the preceding decade efforts were finally being made to achieve greater regularisation in public affairs, even if the continuing use of the *graphê paranomôn* until well after these measures were taken testifies to the slow development of 'document-mindedness' amongst the Athenians.<sup>96</sup>

The connection between *nomos* and justice was weakened by the perception that different classes might attempt to take over the rule-making procedures for factional benefit. While the Old Oligarch berated the *dêmos* for its blatant self-interest, the *dêmos* itself was threatened with the wholesale removal of their entitlements, including the suspension of the *graphê paranomôn*, by the oligarchic coups of 411 and 404 B.C. These experiences made it clear to the returning democrats of 403 that the political rules were not fixed in stone and could be re-invented unless measures were taken to ensure consensus.<sup>97</sup> Insofar as new laws were revealed to be artificial creations with no basis in *phusis*, innovation itself might stand condemned as the process of an arbitrary *nomos*. In Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae* the assembly's fickleness in constantly seeking innovation is lampooned in an exchange between Praxagora and Blepyrus:

ΠΡ. καὶ μὴν ὄτι μὲν χρηστὰ διδάξω πιστεύω τοὺς δὲ θεατάς,  
εἰ καινοτομεῖν ἐθελήσουσιν καὶ μὴ τοῖς ἠθάσι λίαν  
τοῖς τ' ἀρχαίοις ἐνδιατρίβειν, τοῦτ' ἐστ' ὃ μάλιστα δέδοικα.  
ΒΛ. περὶ μὲν τοίνυν τοῦ καινοτομεῖν μὴ δείσης· τοῦτο γὰρ ἡμῖν

<sup>94</sup> Andoc. 1.17, 22; Hansen (1991) 205-212.

<sup>95</sup> See Ch. 7, Sect. 6 below.

<sup>96</sup> Thomas (1989) 60 f.

<sup>97</sup> See Ch. 8, Sect. 5 below.

δρᾶν ἀντ' ἄλλης ἀρχῆς ἐστίν, τῶν δ' ἀρχαίων ἀμελήσαι.<sup>98</sup>

Prax: I believe that I have an excellent idea to instruct the audience. But what I'm most afraid of is whether they will want to receive innovations rather than remain devoted to their old-fashioned ways.

Blep: As to innovations, have no fear: they're something we prefer to any other regime - we don't give a hoot about the old days.

But this mutability was also the source of anxiety. A traditionally-minded society like Athens did not want to believe that its laws were simply arbitrary. To be valid they had to have the sanction of tradition or intellect, or be based in some kind of natural law. A demagogue like Cleon could play on his audience's sense that their changeability was not a sign of strength but of weakness:

πάντων δὲ δεινότατον εἰ βέβαιον ἡμῖν μηδὲν καθεστήξει ὧν ἂν δόξη πέρι, μηδὲ γνωσόμεθα ὅτι χείροσι νόμοις ἀκινήτοις χρωμένη πόλις κρείσσων ἐστὶν ἢ καλῶς ἔχουσιν ἀκύροις.<sup>99</sup>

The most alarming thing of all is if nothing we decide on should be settled once and for all, and that we refuse to see that a state with inferior but inviolable laws is stronger than one with good laws which do not retain their authority.

## VIII

### *Conclusions*

While innovations attributed to individuals may be easy to identify, social innovations tend to be more elusive. Unlike intellectual innovations, which may present a radical advance on previous thought, innovation in social institutions is usually analysed as a reform or reconfiguration of a pre-existing institution. The way a society experiences innovation may to some degree be gauged from the evidence of material modifications and the documentation of new behaviours which symbolise or represent it. But the indices of this kind of innovation are variously manifested and elusive, including items as diverse as 'silver and bronze coins,

---

<sup>98</sup> Ar. *Eccl.* 583-7.

<sup>99</sup> Thuc. 3.37.3; cf. Boegehold (1996).



money taxes, chattel slavery, writing, schools, written contracts, commercial loans, technical handbooks, large sailing ships, shared risk investment, absentee landlordism'.<sup>100</sup> Material and institutional innovations of these kinds were rarely identified by Athenian authors, who were more inclined to focus on specific intellectual and cultural areas. But the former, as much or more than the latter, contributed to the general consciousness of novelty in the environment of late imperial Athens.

The concentration of people and resources would have stimulated both competitive and co-operative inventiveness in intellectual, technical and commercial arenas. The social reception of innovation comprised an amalgam of diverse responses, varying between individuals of widely different character and status: young and old, male and female, metic and slave, citizen and foreigner, educated and illiterate, city-dweller and countryman. It is not surprising that some of these groups should be found to be more closely associated with questions of innovation than others. In general the promoters of social change are likely to be those who have less of a stake in preserving the *status quo*, while the 'early adopters' of technical innovations tend to be those who are confident of their economic and social position and are well placed to derive personal benefit from innovation.<sup>101</sup>

Social expectations provide incentives to innovate in some areas of life while discouraging its pursuit in others. Whether novelty is perceived as positive or negative, threatening or exciting depends on attitudes to the meaning of innovation in each particular area. Different individual reactions to novelty combined with internalised cultural norms to privilege specific avenues of innovation, such as rhetoric, music and drama. But a picture emerges of the vigorous novelty which Athenians of the 420s and 410s encountered over a wide range of areas from imported food to the conduct of war. In the competitive and close-knit environment of the *polis*, the fact that innovators were known and noted for their contributions would have led more to seek to present real or apparent innovations.

---

<sup>100</sup> K. Hopkins in Garnsey et al. (1983) p. xv.

<sup>101</sup> Rogers (1995) 264.

Athens on the threshold of the Peloponnesian War gives the impression of a city vibrant with success. The death of Pericles and the ravages of the plague mark the beginning of a shift in perception and a polarisation of attitudes regarding the new. In the following decade, the freedom to innovate and the pressure to increase the pace of innovation seemed to be out of control. The kinds of innovation that had been encouraged and extolled for the sake of a greater goal started to follow their own narrow logic, that of the *technai* that produced them, instead of being subservient to the glory of the *polis*. In many areas there was a rush to feed a growing appetite for innovation, and wealth as well as fame or notoriety were seen to be its due rewards.

In the comedies dating from the earliest part of the Peloponnesian War, Aristophanes paints a picture of an Athens both revelling in and repelled by the possibilities of innovation. By the time of *Clouds* of 423, it already seems to be a cause for alarm. The ambivalence of the portrayal of new methods of thought and behaviour reflects the experience of a society facing an rapid and increasing pace of change, in which citizens' psychological equilibrium might be better maintained by accepting and even contributing to the process, as Strepsiades and Philocleon feel compelled to do, than by trying to resist it. The effects of war made the popular attitude to innovation in general more ambivalent and distrustful. By the end of the Peloponnesian War, the scope to propose open innovation in the political domain was markedly circumscribed, and bureaucratic measures appear to overtake political rhetoric.<sup>102</sup> Athens' vocal, adventurous adolescence in time of war seems to give way to a quieter, more cautious coming-of-age with the restoration of peace and democracy. The idea of experimentation in social and religious matters was also bound to be anathema after the experience of internal revolutions associated with the generation of Alcibiades, and the final defeat by Sparta in 404 B.C.

The imagery of rites of passage is inverted in many of Aristophanes' plays, so that the old are often depicted becoming young again. The Sausage-Seller in *Knights*, Strepsiades in *Clouds*, Philocleon in *Wasps*, Trygaeus in *Peace*, and

---

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Ch. 8, n. 10 below.

Peisthetairus in *Birds*, are all presented to some extent as 'marginal' characters who undergo a kind of rejuvenation as a result of the trials they undergo.<sup>103</sup> The fates of these characters seem to reflect a deep-seated concern about the new roles and identities that Athenians were required to adopt in a period of rapid change. Practices which symbolised the natural and social orders were being disrupted. Aristophanic comedy suggests that the excesses of the wartime period confused the very procedures whereby newness in the social scene had traditionally been regulated, and ultimately gave rise to the reactive desire to reverse the trends which appeared to have led Athens into turbulence and danger.

---

<sup>103</sup> Bowie (1993) 76-7, 81, 111, 138, 164.

### 3. The language of novelty and new technologies of the word.

“When *I* use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone, it means just what I choose it to mean - nothing more nor less.”

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

Writing is precisely *the very possibility of change*, the space that can serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursory movement of a transformation of social and cultural structures.

Hélène Cixous, *La Jeune Née*

#### I

#### *New words for new times*

Athenian writings of the late fifth and early fourth century reflect an expanded spectrum of sensibility about words, manifested at one extreme by an intoxication with new possibilities of utterance and at the other by expressions of alarm at the rapidly changing scope of verbal and written communication. The range of attitudes marks a growing acknowledgement, both implied and explicit, of the power and potential of new tools of communication to articulate thought. A fragmentary phrase of Democritus seems to characterise the intellectual climate: νέα ἐφ’ ἡμέρη φρονέοντες ἄνθρωποι (‘people thinking fresh thoughts each day’).<sup>1</sup> Novel ideas were being constantly manufactured and communicated through novel permutations of language. Words were being used to evoke, represent, and even to construct new thoughts, with a potential for pleasure, curiosity, excitement or danger.

The tendency to use words as a self-conscious mark and means of innovation was a feature of verbal output in this period. Socrates might ironically deny having anything new to say, but a polymath like Hippias of Elis was conscious of the need to appear innovative:

---

<sup>1</sup> Democr. fr. 158 DK.

διὰ χρόνου γὰρ ἀφικόμενος ὁ Ἰππίας Ἀθήναζε παρεγένετο τῷ Σωκράτει λέγοντι πρὸς τινας, ὡς θαυμαστὸν εἶη τὸ εἰ μὲν τις βούλοιτο σκυτέα διδάξασθαι τινὰ ἢ τέκτονα ἢ χαλκέα ἢ ἰππέα, μὴ ἀπορεῖν ὅποι ἂν πέμψας τούτου τύχοι...καὶ ὁ μὲν Ἰππίας ἀκούσας ταῦτα ὥσπερ ἐπισκώπτων αὐτόν, Ἔτι γὰρ σύ, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, ἐκεῖνα τὰ αὐτὰ λέγεις, ἃ ἐγὼ πάλαι ποτέ σου ἤκουσα; καὶ ὁ Σωκράτης, Ὁ δέ γε τούτου δεινότερον, ἔφη, ὦ Ἰππία, οὐ μόνον ἀεὶ τὰ αὐτὰ λέγω, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν· σὺ δ' ἴσως διὰ τὸ πολυμαθῆς εἶναι περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν οὐδέποτε τὰ αὐτὰ λέγεις. Ἀμέλει, ἔφη, πειρῶμαι καινὸν τι λέγειν ἀεὶ.<sup>2</sup>

Hippias, returning to Athens after a long time, came upon Socrates saying to some listeners that if you wanted to teach someone cobbling or building or smithing or riding, there would be no problem about where to send him to learn...Hippias heard this and said in a teasing tone, 'What, Socrates - still saying the same old things I heard you saying ages ago?' Socrates replied 'Stranger than that, Hippias. Not only am I always saying the same things, but I'm always talking about the same topics. No doubt you have such a breadth of learning that you never say the same things twice on the same subjects.' 'I certainly try', he replied, 'to say something new on every occasion'.

Sophists like Protagoras and Prodicus, dramatists like Aristophanes and Euripides, and orators like Gorgias and Antiphon, were all noted for their experimentation with words.<sup>3</sup> Thucydides above all was a daring innovator in style and usage, exhibiting a far greater literary self-consciousness than his great predecessor.<sup>4</sup> In presenting his *historiai*, Herodotus had stated his purpose as follows:

ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θαυμαστά, τὰ μὲν Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται.<sup>5</sup>

so that human history is not obscured by the course of time, and to honour noteworthy and amazing achievements of both Greeks and foreigners.

<sup>2</sup> Xen. *Mem.* 14.4.5-6.

<sup>3</sup> Solmsen (1975) 83-125 etc.

<sup>4</sup> Dover (1997) 141-2.

<sup>5</sup> Hdt. 1.1.

Thucydides constructed his own history to constitute ‘a possession for all time rather than a prize-composition for the occasion’ (κτῆμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν ξύγκειται).<sup>6</sup> After Herodotus, λόγοι might represent ἔργα in their own right.

Verbal innovation was potentially a symptom of unwelcome intellectual and social change. Thucydides provides an acute instance of this view in his vivid account of the *stasis* in Corcyra in 427:

ἑστασίαζέ τε οὖν τὰ τῶν πόλεων καὶ τὰ ἐφυστερίζοντά που πύσσει τῶν προγενομένων πολὺ ἐπέφερε τὴν ὑπερβολὴν τοῦ καινοῦσθαι τὰς διανοίας τῶν τ’ ἐπιχειρήσεων περιτεχνήσει καὶ τῶν τιμωριῶν ἀτοπία. καὶ τὴν εἰωθυῖαν ἀξίωσιν τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐς τὰ ἔργα ἀντήλλαξαν τῇ δικαιοῦσει. τόλμα μὲν γὰρ ἀλόγιστος ἀνδρεία φιλέταιρος ἐνομίσθη, μέλλησις δὲ προμηθῆς δειλία εὐπρεπής, τὸ δὲ σῶφρον τοῦ ἀνάνδρου πρόσχημα, καὶ τὸ πρὸς ἅπαν ξυνετὸν ἐπὶ πᾶν ἀργόν.<sup>7</sup>

So affairs in the cities were convulsed by internal strife. Those that were affected later, knowing what had been done before, devised new schemes of more devilish ingenuity and took yet more atrocious reprisals. The usual meanings of words changed, depending on how people chose to judge the actions they described. Thoughtless daring was called ‘loyal courage’ and sensible hesitation ‘cowardly dissimulation’, moderate counsels were considered an excuse for fear, and a reasoned approach to every eventuality was seen as an incapacity for effective action on any issue.

Words and actions had traditionally been considered equally valuable elements of human endeavour. In Homer, Phoenix says that he was taught to be a ‘speaker of words and a doer of deeds’, μύθων τε ῥητῆρ’ ἔμεναι πρηκτῆρά τε ἔργων.<sup>8</sup> Now the antithesis was more often to be found, notably in Thucydides, implying disparagement of words relative to action.<sup>9</sup> Democritus expressed the sentiment in terms reminiscent of Hesiod:

<sup>6</sup> Thuc. 1.22.4. ἐς αἰεὶ might also be read as ‘for any occasion that might arise’, suggesting that Thucydides’ text ‘is a document available for consultation any time a model for words or a precedent for the course that events seem to be taking is required’: Cole (1991) 105.

<sup>7</sup> Thuc. 3.82.3-4.

<sup>8</sup> *Il.* 9.443.

<sup>9</sup> Parry (1957).

κίβδηλοι καὶ ἀγαθοφανέες οἱ λόγῳ μὲν ἅπαντα, ἔργῳ δὲ οὐδὲν ἔρδοντες.<sup>10</sup>

False and fair-seeming are those who do everything in words and nothing in action.

Cleon sought to evoke shame in his audience by sarcastically comparing their traditional model of value to their current ‘enslavement’ to novelty:

εἰώθατε θεαταὶ μὲν τῶν λόγων γίνεσθαι ἀκροαταὶ δὲ τῶν ἔργων, τὰ μὲν μέλλοντα ἔργα ἀπὸ τῶν εὖ εἰπόντων σκοποῦντες ὡς δυνατὰ γίνεσθαι, τὰ δὲ πεπραγμένα ἤδη, οὐ τὸ δρασθὲν πιστότερον ὄψει λαβόντες ἢ τὸ ἀκουσθὲν, ἀπὸ τῶν λόγῳ καλῶς ἐπιτιμησάντων· καὶ μετὰ καινότητος μὲν λόγου ἀπατᾶσθαι ἄριστοι, μετὰ δεδοκιμασμένου δὲ μὴ ξυνέπεσθαι ἐθέλεις, δοῦλοι ὄντες τῶν ἀεὶ ἀτόπων, ὑπερόπται δὲ τῶν εἰωθότων.<sup>11</sup>

You tend now to be *spectators* of words and *hearers* of deeds! You decide how you will act according to what is presented as feasible by clever speakers. Even when it comes to what has already taken place, you are swayed by persuasive speeches, and believe what you’re told rather than what you’ve seen with your own eyes. You are champions at being taken in by novelty rather than wishing to follow a path that’s tried and tested. You are slaves to anything out of the ordinary, and reject anything familiar.

The perception that novel and unorthodox thoughts could be given concrete form simply by their construction in words, whether spoken or written, was bound to present a new and for some uneasy perspective on intellectual innovation. Reification produced new moral and metaphysical structures, which seemed to replace and undermine the traditional understanding of modes of human interaction, the gods, or the nature of the universe.<sup>12</sup> For many Athenians, the unease was focused on the verbal, rhetorical and literary methods whereby innovation was sought and fostered. In Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, the debate between Right and Wrong makes reference to the fact that Sophistic verbal chicanery was perceived as a way of manufacturing novelty for dubious ends:

<sup>10</sup> Democr. fr. 82 DK (cf. fr. 145); Hes. *Op.* 382.

<sup>11</sup> Thuc. 3.38.4-5.

<sup>12</sup> The term ‘reification’ goes back to Marx (*Verdinglichung*). It has been defined as ‘the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human or possibly supra-human terms’: Berger and Luckmann (1967) 89.

ΑΔ. ἀλλά σε νικῶ, τὸν ἐμοῦ κρείττω  
φάσκοντ' εἶναι.

ΔΙ. τί σοφὸν ποιῶν;

ΑΔ. γνώμας καινὰς ἐξευρίσκων.<sup>13</sup>

Wrong: But I'll defeat you , though you claim  
to be better than me.

Right: What's your clever scheme?

Wrong: Thinking up *new* thoughts.

The emphasis on novelty suggested the loss of a moral rudder and its replacement by the lure of money:

ἐγὼ γὰρ ἦττων μὲν λόγος δι' αὐτὸ τοῦτ' ἐκλήθην  
ἐν τοῖσι φροντισταῖσιν, ὅτι πρῶτιστος ἐπενόησα  
τοῖσιν νόμοις καὶ ταῖς δίκαις τὰναντί' ἀντιλέξαι.  
καὶ τοῦτο πλεῖν ἢ μυρίων ἔστ' ἄξιον στατήρων,  
αἰρούμενον τοὺς ἦττονας λόγους ἔπειτα νικᾶν.<sup>14</sup>

I was called the Worse Argument by these intellectuals  
because I was the first to think up ways of  
contradicting the laws and subverting justice.

It's worth millions of dollars  
to argue the weaker case and still win.

## II

### *Dimensions of verbal novelty*

The public identification of a thought as being 'new' might itself modify perceptions of what was innovative. This could provide impetus to the kind of conceptual innovation to which the author of the Hippocratic *On Ancient Medicine* objected. In his opinion, the concoction of a new medical terminology should not

<sup>13</sup> Ar. Nub. 893-6.

<sup>14</sup> Ar. Nub. 1038-42.



be confused for genuine medical knowledge.<sup>15</sup> Aristophanes, himself a skillful coiner of new words and parodically technical-sounding expressions, often reflects a suspicion of the the products of verbal manipulation. While concerned to assert his poetic originality, he regularly undermines his own conceits about novelty. In the *Clouds* he consistently parodies Sophistic innovations such as linguistic experimentation, amoralistic reasoning, and antisocial behaviour. The occurrences of καινός in *Clouds* are mainly negative, associated with Socratic trickery (479), Pheidippides' seditious immorality (1397, 1399, 1423), and the dubious arguments of Wrong (896, 936, 943, 1031). But Aristophanes also draws attention to his own originality in terms which align his innovativeness with the objects of his scorn:

οὐδ' ὑμᾶς ζητῶ ἔαπατᾶν δις καὶ τρις ταῦτ' εἰσάγων  
 ἀλλ' ἀεὶ καινὰς ἰδέας εἰσφέρων σοφίζομαι,  
 οὐδὲν ἀλλήλαισιν ὁμοίας καὶ πάσας δεξιᾶς.<sup>16</sup>

I don't try to fool you by repeating the same things time and again,  
 but I always act the sophist and introduce new ideas,  
 all totally different from each other, and all brilliant!

The creation of 'new ideas', essential to the comedian's project, is here equated with sophistry. While deriding the Sophists' promotion of verbal and intellectual καινότης, Aristophanes with deliberate irony plays them at their own game. The experience of innovation in late fifth-century Athens had been broadened by new dimensions of utterance arising in consequence of such developments as the Sophists' analysis of words, the crystallisation of specialised technical vocabularies, and the introduction of formal rhetorical methods for purposes of forensic and political discourse.

The increase of private and public written documents in fifth-century Athens demonstrates how new methods and skills were increasingly utilised to preserve verbal creations of all kinds. Euripides' Palamedes identified the benefit of

<sup>15</sup> οὐκ ἠξίου ἀὐτὴν ἔγωγε καινῆς ὑποθέσιος δεῖσθαι ('I myself do not consider that medicine requires any new theoretical model'): [Hippocr.] *VM* 1.20-21 (Jones [1923-31]). See further Ch. 7, Sect 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ar. Nub.* 546-8. I take ἀεὶ to govern the adjectives, participle and finite verb equally.

his invention of γράμματα as the opportunity to send letters abroad, to make wills, and to draw up contracts:

τὰ τῆς γε λήθης φάρμακ' ὀρθώσας μόνος  
 ἄφωνα φωνήεντα συλλαβὰς τιθεὶς  
 ἐξηῦρον ἀνθρώποισι γράμματ' εἰδέναι  
 ὥστ' οὐ παρόντα ποντίας ὑπὲρ πλακὸς  
 τὰκεῖ κατ' οἴκους πάντ' ἐπίστασθαι καλῶς,  
 παισὶν τ' ἀποθνήσκοντα χρημάτων μέτρον  
 γράψαντας εἰπεῖν, τὸν λαβόντα δ' εἰδέναι·  
 ἃ δ' εἰς ἔριν πίπτουσιν ἀνθρώποις κακὰ  
 δέλτος διαιρεῖ κοῦκ ἐᾷ ψευδῆ λέγειν.<sup>17</sup>

Alone I set up writing as a remedy for forgetfulness,  
 creating vowels, consonants and syllables.

I devised the knowledge of letters for humankind  
 so that those who live afar across the sea  
 learn well what is happening at home,  
 and so that men can record in writing a dying man's estate  
 for his sons, so that the recipient can know the facts,  
 and so that when men fall into bitter disagreement,  
 a document decides the issue and prevents deceit.

Such activities contributed to a substantial change of approach to words, going beyond the pursuit of praise and pleasure in the generation of original literary products which followed the tradition of innovation in *mousikê* going back to Homer.<sup>18</sup>

Attic authors of tragedy and comedy were more than ever bound to strive for stylistic and creative originality in the skillful use of words, felicitous combinations of thought and expression, and distinctive styles of presentation. They were equally concerned to introduce original dramatic conceptions, devices and plots. In the absence of the greater part of texts from the period, some of the

<sup>17</sup> Eur. fr. 578 Nauck.

<sup>18</sup> See Ch. 5, Sect. 1 below.

manifold forms of such originality can be provisionally identified.<sup>19</sup> For instance, Kratinos introduced himself as a character in his *Pytine* of 423, the play which won first prize against the first version of the *Clouds*.<sup>20</sup> The device does not recur in comedy, and may have been a comic experiment that was too distinctive to bear repetition. Novel metatheatrical elements and other deliberate innovations are also identifiable in tragedy.<sup>21</sup> In the placing of a *deus ex machina* in the middle of *Heracles*, Euripides was wilfully subverting tragic conventions. His introduction of comic features into his *Helen* of 412 B.C. broke the rules of the genre, inspiring Aristophanes to mete out condign punishment the following year in *Thesmophoriazusae*.<sup>22</sup>

These novelties were experienced by audiences in the theatre rather than through textual study.<sup>23</sup> The ability to engage with written texts is attested mainly in comic parody, as in *Frogs* when Dionysus claims to have been overcome with desire for a good poet:

καὶ δῆτ' ἐπὶ τῆς νεῶς ἀναγιγνώσκοντί μοι  
τὴν Ἀνδρομέδαν πρὸς ἑμαυτὸν ἐξαίφνης πόθος  
τὴν καρδίαν ἐπάταξε πῶς οἶει σφόδρα.<sup>24</sup>  
And then when I was on board ship, reading  
*Andromeda* to myself, out of the blue a yearning  
seized my heart, so strongly you wouldn't believe it!

'Literary' appreciation was a less common manifestation of Athenians' encounter with verbal novelties than the impact of words spoken and performed.<sup>25</sup> The verbal and conceptual virtuosity of existing texts encouraged novelties in spectacle and

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Solmsen (1975) 78 on utopianism, of which there is a great deal in the comic fragments: Ruffell (1996).

<sup>20</sup> *Krat.* 219 KA.

<sup>21</sup> Burian (1997) 193-208.

<sup>22</sup> *Ar. Thes.* 1010-1035; Bowie (1993) 217-225.

<sup>23</sup> On *Ar. Ran.* 1114, βίβλιόν τ' ἔχων ἕκαστος μανθάνει τὰ δέξια, see below Ch. 8, Sect.5, n. 88.

<sup>24</sup> *Ar. Ran.* 52-3.

<sup>25</sup> Svenbro (1993).

presentation.<sup>26</sup> Choruses of animals and *mystai*, rowers and donkeys moving through the *orchêstra*, and the appearance of giant scales for weighing words, may have contributed more to Aristophanes' *Frogs* winning first prize at the Lenaia of 405 than the coruscating literary-critical ἀγών between Aeschylus and Euripides.<sup>27</sup>

Reliance on an audience's aural memory made the use of paratragedy a sharp weapon in the comedian's armoury. As a result, one kind of verbal innovation might consist of the repetition of familiar lines in a new context. In *Frogs*, Dionysos counters Euripides with a series of quotations from his own plays, and equates the tragedian's sententious *gnômai* with facetious word-play:

ΔΙ. ἢ γλῶττ' ὀμόμοκ', Αἰσχύλον δ' αἰρήσομαι.

ΕΥ. τί δέδρακας, ὦ μιαρῶτατ' ἀνθρώπων;

ΔΙ. ἐγώ;

ἔκρινα νικᾶν Αἰσχύλον. τίη γὰρ οὐ;

ΕΥ. αἴσχιστον ἔργον προσβλέπεις μ' εἰργασμένος;

ΔΙ. τί δ' αἰσχρόν, ἢ μὴ τοῖς θεωμένοις δοκῆ;

ΕΥ. ὦ σχέτλιε, περιόψει με δὴ τεθνηκοτα;

ΔΙ. τίς δ' οἶδεν εἰ τὸ ζῆν μὲν ἔστι κατθανεῖν,

τὸ πνεῖν δὲ δειπνεῖν, τὸ δὲ καθεύδειν κώδιον;<sup>28</sup>

Di. 'Twas but my tongue that swore... I'll choose Aeschylus.

Eu. What have you done, you horrid fellow?

Di. Who, me?

I've judged Aeschylus the winner. Why shouldn't I?

Eu. You look me in the eye, after doing so utterly foul a deed?

Di. But what is foul, if it seems not to be so to the audience?

Eu. You rogue, will you just stand by and see me dead?

Di. Who knows if living really is to die? -

or if to be dead is to be fed, or if the peace of sleep is just a heap of fleece?

<sup>26</sup> E.g. in Ch. 8 Sect. 2 below, I suggest that Callistratus had the Ionic alphabet inscribed on the chorus of Aristophanes' *Babylonians*. The impact this created may have given rise to the notion that Callistratus 'first introduced' the Ionic alphabet to Athens.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Dover (1993) 28: that 'the many virtues of *Frogs* do not include originality of concept'. However, *pace* Dover (1993: 73) I think it unlikely that the parabasis was as important to the play's popularity as the author of *Hyp.1* suggests.

<sup>28</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 1471-7, with quotations from Eur. *Hipp.* 612, fr. 19 (*Aeolus*), fr. 638 (*Polyidus*).

Verbal novelty could be identified by contrast to what was genuinely or comically branded as ἀρχαῖον, a word often used by Aristophanes to reflect the dismissive tone of modern youth.<sup>29</sup> In *Wealth*, Chremylus suggests that he can bring a new style of informality to a public address:

χαίρειν μὲν ὑμᾶς ἐστίν, ὦνδρες δημόται,  
ἀρχαῖον ἤδη, προσαγορεύειν καὶ σαπρόν·  
ἀσπάζομαι δ', ὅτι ἡ προθύμως ἤκετε.<sup>30</sup>  
*Greetings* to you, fellow demesmen -  
now that's an boring, old-fashioned form of address.  
*So hello and welcome* for coming so enthusiastically.

The multidimensional social impact of verbal novelty is graphically depicted by the way everyday things seem to take on new meanings and forms of expression in *Clouds*. In the upside-down world of the Phrontisterion, *mêchanai* are not siege-weapons but verbal devices, *metra* are not measures of corn but metres of poetry, and Strepsiades must learn to rename familiar animals and objects with regard to their 'correct' gender.<sup>31</sup> The name of the Phrontisterion itself, reminiscent of *ergastêrion* as well as *dikastêrion*, seems to reflect the commodification of words in Athens' intellectual life. The commercial metaphor becomes concrete when words are weighed in *Frogs*:

ΑΙ. τὸ γὰρ βάρος νῶ βασανιεῖ τῶν ῥημάτων.  
ΔΙ. ἴτε δεῦρό νυν, εἶπερ γε δεῖ καὶ τοῦτό με,  
ἀνδρῶν ποιητῶν τυροπωλῆσαι τέχνην.  
ΧΟ. ἐπίπονοί γ' οἱ δεξιοί.  
τόδε γὰρ ἕτερον αὖ τέρας  
νεοχμόν, ἀτοπίας πλέων,  
ὃ τίς ἄν ἐπενόησεν ἄλλος;  
μὰ τὸν, ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδ' ἄν εἶ τις

<sup>29</sup> Dover (1968a: 200) on *Nub.* 821.

<sup>30</sup> *Ar. Pl.* 322-4. The scholiast *ad loc.* states that Cleon was criticized for using χαίρειν in an official letter to the *dêmos* in 424; Edwards (1996) 150.

<sup>31</sup> *Ar. Nub.* 476-80, 637-46, 658-91; Bowie (1993) 107.

ἔλεγέ μοι τῶν ἐπιτυχόντων  
ἐπιθόμην, ἀλλ' ῥόμην ἄν  
αὐτὸν αὐτὰ ληρεῖν.<sup>32</sup>

AESCH. The weight of our words will put us to the test.

DION. Come here then, seeing as I've got to  
weigh out poetic skill like weighing cheese.

CHO. These geniuses are tireless!  
Here's another stunner,  
novel and totally weird -  
who else could have thought of it?  
Why, even if I'd been  
told of it by a bystander  
I'd not have believed it, but would have thought  
he's raving mad.

The introduction of a self-consciously novel stage device is equated with the novelty of intellectual jargon (ληρεῖν), something of which Sophists and other practitioners of new specialisations might stand regularly accused.<sup>33</sup> In the subsequent scene of *Frogs* (1378-1412), Aeschylean *sophia* proves superior to Euripides' lightweight verse, albeit that the latter puts *peithô* into the scales (1391-6). A traditional element of literature and eloquence, the use of persuasion in the context of the new rhetoric, linked to entertainment (ψυχαγωγία) and the relativisation of truth and falsehood, might be suspected of lacking *gravitas*.<sup>34</sup>

Once the repository of *aretê*, words seemed to be cheapened by Sophistic manipulation and by their readiness to teach anyone the art of success in speaking. Plato traced the beginning of fee-charging rhetorical instruction to Protagoras.<sup>35</sup> The latter's relativistic perspective would not have inclined him to suppose like Cratylus that words have an intrinsic relation to the world.<sup>36</sup> But in a 'city of words' it was uncomfortable to be reminded that, while words need not represent truth or reality, they might also be bandied about for lucre.<sup>37</sup> The intellectual basis

<sup>32</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 1367-77.

<sup>33</sup> E.g. physicians in [Hippoc.] *VM* 15.1; cf. Ch. 6, Sect. 6.

<sup>34</sup> Pl. *Gorg.* 453a, 454d-55a; Cole (1991) 148-51.

<sup>35</sup> Pl. *Prot.* 349a.

<sup>36</sup> Pl. *Crat.* 383a.

<sup>37</sup> 'City of words': Goldhill (1986) Ch. 3.

for Sophistic rhetoric, which could be acquired at huge cost (e.g. on Prodicus' 50-drachma course),<sup>38</sup> could also be accused of bringing about a reduction in the real value of words. Words were being cheapened through over-production.

The ancient world could not avail itself of the modern economic metaphor of 'inflation'. In Aristophanic literary criticism, inflated words were characteristic of old-fashioned Aeschylean grandeur, while the style of the Euripidean modernists exhibited a kind of fission into the over-subtle excesses of *ἰσχνότης*, *λεπτότης* and *λαλία*.<sup>39</sup> Aristophanes counted on popular suspicion that the new techniques of verbiage were as tenuous as the new 'realities' they purported to depict. Cratinus, however, perceptively recognised in his rival characteristics of the very novelties he professed to deride:

Τίς δὲ σύ, κομψός τις; ἔροιτο θεατής.  
 Ὑπολεπτολόγος, γνωμιδιώκτης, Εὐριπιδαριστοφανίζων;<sup>40</sup>  
 'And who are you, some fancy-pants?', a spectator might ask -  
 'Some ever-so-subtle Euripid-Aristophanising thought-splitter?'

### III

#### *Books and writing*

The growth of a new terminology of literary criticism, for which Aristophanes' *Frogs* is prime evidence, indicates the common perception in late fifth-century Athens that words were becoming the province of virtuosity as well as virtue. Aristophanes could expect to amuse his audience by parodying the new vocabulary of literary disputation.<sup>41</sup> The *technê* of words, which created new 'objects' of its own, was presented as modelled on familiar banausic *technai* like carpentry and

---

<sup>38</sup> Pl. *Crat.* 384b.

<sup>39</sup> O'Sullivan (1992) 109-15, 130-150.

<sup>40</sup> *Krat.* 342 KA (with my punctuation).

<sup>41</sup> Denniston (1927) 113: 'Every living science, especially in its early stages, is compelled to devise fresh terms, either by coining new words or by giving new meanings to old ones. Unless and until these fresh terms become absorbed in the vocabulary of everyday speech, their unfamiliarity makes them a target for the shafts of the humourist.'

woodwork. At the beginning of *Thesmophoriazusae*, the playwright Agathon's slave describes his master's technique in terms that may have reminded the Athenian audience of the new temples on the Acropolis whose construction was still in progress:<sup>42</sup>

μέλλει γὰρ ὁ καλλιεπὴς Ἀγάθων...  
 δρυόχους τιθέναι δράματος ἀρχάς.  
 κάμπτει δὲ νέας ἀψίδας ἐπῶν  
 τὰ δὲ τορνεύει, τὰ δὲ κολλομελεῖ,  
 καὶ γνωμοτυπεῖ κἀντονομάζει  
 καὶ κηροχυτεῖ καὶ γογγύλλει  
 καὶ χοανεύει.<sup>43</sup>

Agathon the word-artist is just now  
 laying the scaffolds for building a play.  
 He's twisting the new beams of words,  
 chiselling here, glueing a song there,  
 moulding a thought and shaping a metaphor,  
 waxing it over and rounding it off  
 and chasing flutings in it.

The passage from *Wasps* which initiates the debate between Philokleon and Bdelykleon shows that 'new ideas' were a requisite for ἀγῶνες λόγων, whether waged between sophistic schools or between representatives of the younger and older generation:

ΧΟ. νῦν δὴ τὸν ἐκ θήμετέρου  
 γυμνασίου λέγειν τι δεῖ καινόν, ὅπως φανήσει -  
 ΒΔ. ἐνεγκάτω μοι δεῦρο τὴν κίστην τις ὡς τάχιστα.  
 ἀτὰρ φανεῖ ποῖός τις ὢν, ἦν ταῦτα παρακελεύη;  
 ΧΟ. - μὴ κατὰ τὸν νεανίαν  
 τόνδε λέγειν.<sup>44</sup>

Cho. Now the product of our

<sup>42</sup> See Ch. 4, Sect. 1 below.

<sup>43</sup> Ar. *Thes.* 52-7; cf. *Ran.* 797-802, 819, 902, 956.

<sup>44</sup> Ar. *Eq.* 526-533.



- school must say something new to create an impression...
- Bd. (*aside*) Someone bring me my writing-box, quick!
- So, what impression do you recommend he creates?
- Ch. ...of speaking quite differently from  
*this* young man.

This passage suggests that the desire to record novelties of expression, if only for the purpose of surpassing them in rhetorical combat, might act as a spur to writing them down. The changing terms of the ἀγών were connected both to the increasing desire to produce novelty and to the use and availability of the written word.

The gradual and persistent change from reliance on predominantly oral methods to the use of written media for the purpose of preserving and perpetuating knowledge of all kinds is of crucial significance for the experience of novelty and innovation. Oral and written media co-existed in ancient Athens, as they do in modern societies. But the late fifth century was an epochal age in Athens for the increase in and acceptance of written texts.<sup>45</sup> The physical durability of writing offered the possibility of giving a permanence and solidity to memory and thought, accentuating by contrast the transience and fluidity of oral methods. The use of writing allowed more clearly for the recognition and articulation of novelty, in inscribing the past, the old, what *has* been said or conceived. It served to forestall doubt and forgetfulness, distinguishing innovation from repetition.

This new perspective on the use of words appears to have percolated through all levels of Athenian society. Although the more abstruse intellectual pursuits were confined to a small circle, the range of linguistic issues represented in Aristophanes' plays - in particular the *Clouds* and *Frogs* - shows that most Athenians might be expected to have an awareness of the debates on the nature and value of words. Not only the Sophistic education of élite youth, but mystery cults such as Orphism, whose adherents might come from all walks of life, were associated both with bookishness.<sup>46</sup> Such cultic activity also had a connection with the search for the underlying meanings of words, so-called ὑπόνοιαι, which has led scholars to seek to identify the authorship of the Derveni papyrus with figures such

---

<sup>45</sup> Thomas (1992) 148-50.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Ch. 7, Sect. 1 below.

as Stesimbrotus of Thasos, Prodicus of Ceos, Metrodorus of Lampsacus, and others in whose works the etymological and allegorical hermeneusis of ancient texts were features.<sup>47</sup>

By 405 B.C. Aristophanes could humorously characterise his audience as experienced verbal campaigners:

ἔστρατευμένοι γάρ εἰσι,  
βιβλίον τ' ἔχων ἕκαστος μανθάνει τὰ δεξιὰ·  
αἱ φύσεις τ' ἄλλως κράτισται,  
νῦν δὲ καὶ παρηκόνηνται.<sup>48</sup>

They're veterans

and each one of them, book in hand, learns verbal cut-and-thrust;

their natural mettle is already of the toughest material,

but now it's been honed to a fine point.

The campaign, however, takes place in the field of argument rather than battle or *palaestra*. *λόγοι* rather than young men might be described by Protagoras in terms of wrestling (*καταβάλλοντες*), though the Sophist may also have subjected sporting activities to intellectual discourse.<sup>49</sup> The shift of battleground was felt to have worrying moral and social implications. Although the description of the spectators as all being book-owners is comic exaggeration, the idea that nowadays everyone is 'sophisticated' points to an underlying unease about the new *mores*, prefigured two decades earlier in *Clouds*, where Right exhorts the youth to emulate their fathers:

ἀλλ' οὖν λιπαρός γε καὶ εὐανθῆς ἐν γυμνασίοις διατρίψεις,  
οὐ στωμύλλων καὶ τὴν ἀγορὰν τριβολεκτράπελ', οἴάπερ οἱ νῦν,  
οὐδ' ἑλκόμενος περὶ πραγματίου γλισχραντιλογέξεπιτρίπτου.<sup>50</sup>

So you'll spend your time in the gymnasium, glowing and blooming,

<sup>47</sup> Janko (1997) 70-79.

<sup>48</sup> *Ar. Ran.* 1113-16.

<sup>49</sup> Protagoras fr. 1 DK. Pl. *Soph.* 232de suggests the existence of Protagorean works *περὶ τε πάλης καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τεχνῶν*, curiously providing at least one post-structuralist essay with an intellectual pedigree: 'In wrestling, nothing exists except in the absolute, there is no symbol, no allusion, everything is presented exhaustively' (Barthes [1957] 24-25).

<sup>50</sup> *Ar. Nub.* 1002-4.

not prattling like the idling wastrels you find nowadays in the agora  
or dragged into court for the sake of some damned slippery disputation.

The shared social values embodied in traditional social and athletic activities were being overshadowed by new individualistic values, characterised by terms like *dexiotês*, *kompsotês*, *lalia*, and *apragmosunê*.<sup>51</sup> These were seen to be encouraged by the new technologies of discourse, whether sophistic and rhetorical instruction, the invention of specialist vocabularies, or the production of technical treatises in areas hitherto considered the domain of action.

By the late fifth century, the instruction of practical as well as intellectual matters had notoriously become the subject of written *technai*. In the 420s Antiphon may have been the first to publish the products of his activities as a *logographos*, no doubt as a way of attracting further clients.<sup>52</sup> As well as the rhetorical model-speeches and the Hippocratic medical treatises, there were the famous *Canon* of Polykleitos of Argos, a treatise on horsemanship by Simon ‘Hippikos’, a manual for town-planners by Hippodamus of Miletus, and a book on architecture co-authored by Iktinos.<sup>53</sup> However, the idea that techniques of argumentation might be learned from a book was still sufficiently novel to be found comic. Aristophanes equates the ‘corrupting’ influence of books with that of their putative Sophistic authors:

τοῦτον τὸν ἄνδρ' ἢ βιβλίον διέφθορεν  
ἢ Πρόδικος ἢ τῶν ἀδολεσχῶν εἰς γέ τις.<sup>54</sup>  
This fellow's been corrupted by a book  
or by Prodicus, anyway by one of those empty blatherers.

The changing perspective on *logos* was manifested by the growing use of all forms of written media in the latter part of the fifth century. The notable increase, from the 450s on, of publicly inscribed laws and decrees, reflects the belief that at least

---

<sup>51</sup> Carter (1986) 121-3.

<sup>52</sup> Cartledge (1990b) 50.

<sup>53</sup> Ch. 4, Sects. 2 and 3 below.

<sup>54</sup> Ar. fr. 506 KA.

this form of writing symbolised the safeguarding of justice and *isonomia* in democratic Athens. With the distinction between written and unwritten arose the question of wherein lay the validity and security of traditional norms.<sup>55</sup> In Aeschylus' *Supplikes* the Argive king contrasts the deceitful potential of written words with the openness of speech:

ταῦτ' οὐ πίναξιν ἔστιν ἐγγεγραμμένα  
οὐδ' ἐν πτυχαῖς βίβλων κατεσφραγισμένα,  
σαφή δ' ἀκούεις ἐξ ἐλευθεροστόμου  
γλώσσης.<sup>56</sup>

This is not inscribed on tablets  
nor sealed within the layers of papyrus-rolls:  
you hear the truth from a tongue that speaks freely.

But by contrast, in Euripides' *Supplikes* Theseus stresses the stability of the written word:

γεγραμμένων δὲ τῶν νόμων ὃ τ' ἀσθενῆς  
ὁ πλούσιός τε τὴν δίκην ἴσην ἔχει...  
νικᾷ δ' ὁ μείων τὸν μέγαν δίκαι' ἔχων.<sup>57</sup>

When laws are written, then the weak  
and wealthy have equal justice...

With justice on his side, the lesser overcomes the great.

The phenomenon of writing, and questions about the function and extent of literacy in ancient Athens, are difficult and controversial matters. Although alphabetic writing had been available for centuries, the capability to write at more than a basic level was still not widespread and the technology of writing, whether on stone inscriptions or with papyrus, pen and ink, was limited and expensive.<sup>58</sup> But it is clear that the latter part of the fifth century was a period of rapid transition

---

<sup>55</sup> Hedrick (1994) 167-8.

<sup>56</sup> Aesch. *Suppl.* 946-8.

<sup>57</sup> Eur. *Suppl.* 433-4, 437. Thomas (1996) discusses the question of why and when laws were written.

<sup>58</sup> Hedrick (1994) 164.

value that is accorded to the original utterance, the more faithful the repetition must aim to be. Repetition is familiar and comforting, allowing for a limited form of newness through modes of formulaic improvisation and through gradual or piecemeal divergences from the repeated text. It has a social place and function, whether cult, symposium, or formal contest.

Since oral tradition necessarily privileges repetition, there is a danger that in the course of time the original utterance will become antiquated and obsolete in form or content. The increasing familiarity with the use of writing as a medium of recording detailed information offered Athenians new angles on the question of the reliability of their oral traditions. It compelled thinkers to subject the objects of both oral and written record to scrutiny and modification. Hecataeus had already indicated that writing might be a stabilising factor in reducing the mass of conflicting accounts in Greek genealogical traditions:

Ἑκαταῖος Μιλήσιος ὧδε μυθεῖται· τάδε γράφω, ὡς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι, ὡς ἔμοι φαίνονται, εἰσίν.<sup>62</sup>

Hecataeus of Miletus here presents his account. I am writing this, according to what appears to me to be true, because the stories of the Greeks are numerous and, in my opinion, absurd.

What oral tradition retains is a fraction of what it loses. Even those memories that survive in oral form that appear to be accurately transmitted over generations are prone to uncertainty, error and modification. Writing not only provided a more permanent and reliable record of the contents of thought and speech, but permitted a continuous accumulation and accretion of recorded utterance that was felt rapidly to outstrip the powers of the most capacious memory.<sup>63</sup>

In a period when oral traditions subsisted side by side with growing literacy, the use of writing had various consequences for the identification of novelty. One direct effect was on the social acknowledgement of historical innovations. The identification in oral record of a thought or event as being ‘new’

---

<sup>62</sup> Hecat. fr. 1.

<sup>63</sup> Small (1997).

is likely to seem less rigorous than the evidence of written sources. In the necessary and desirable repetition of the traditionally held propositions and formulations which constitute a society's fund of oral knowledge lies one source of the potential unreliability of its identification of the new. A statement of the form 'event  $e$  is new', if accurate when asserted at time  $t_1$ , will accordingly be inaccurate when repeated at  $t_2$ ,  $t_3$ , etc. Since memory is prone to error and variation, even a temporally well-defined identification of novelty (' $e$  was new at time  $t_1$ ') is open to contestation. The resulting tendency may often have been to push actual innovations further and further back into the mists of antiquity in the search for unassailable 'first discoverers'.<sup>64</sup>

When Socrates asked Hippias of Elis what his Spartan audience most liked to hear, he replied:

περὶ τῶν γενῶν, ᾧ Σώκρατες, τῶν τε ἡρώων καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, καὶ τῶν κατοικήσεων, ὡς τὸ ἀρχαῖον ἐκτίσθησαν αἱ πόλεις, καὶ συλλήβδην πάσης τῆς ἀρχαιολογίας ἥδιστα ἀκροῶνται, ὥστ' ἔγωγε δι' αὐτοὺς ἠνάγκασμαι ἐκμεμαθηκέναι τε καὶ ἐκμεμελετηκέναι πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα.<sup>65</sup>

Well, Socrates, they most of all enjoy hearing about heroic and human genealogies and about how cities were founded in ancient times, and basically about antiquity in general. I've been obliged for their sake to make a thorough study of all those sorts of things and to know them all backwards.

The interest in *archaiologia* which Hippias claimed to satisfy will have required him to derive ancient traditions from both written and speculative oral sources. He acknowledged that the novelty and variety for which he strove in his own speeches arose from a creative recombination of earlier thoughts and utterances:

τούτων ἴσως εἴρηται τὰ μὲν Ὀρφεῖ, τὰ δὲ Μουσαίῳ κατὰ βραχὺ ἄλλῳ ἀλλαχοῦ, τὰ δὲ Ἡσιόδῳ τὰ δὲ Ὀμήρῳ, τὰ δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις τῶν ποιητῶν, τὰ δὲ ἐν συγγραφαῖς τὰ μὲν Ἑλλησι τὰ δὲ βαρβάροις· ἐγὼ δὲ ἐκ πάντων τούτων

<sup>64</sup> I have argued that a process of this kind was operating in the attribution of the *kuklios choros* to Arion rather than to Lasos: D'Angour (1997).

<sup>65</sup> [Pl.] *Hipp. ma.* 285de.

τὰ μέγιστα καὶ ὁμόφυλα συνθεῖς τοῦτον καινὸν καὶ πολυεῖδη τὸν λόγον ποιήσομαι.<sup>66</sup>

Some of these things may have been said by Orpheus and Musaeus in a brief and unsystematic way, others by Hesiod, Homer, and other poets, and others in works written by both Greeks and foreigners. By bringing together the most important and consistent of these sources, I shall make this exposition novel and variegated.

Critias indicates an interest in the idea of innovation for ‘useful’ purposes, including the advantages of writing itself. His attribution of origins to everyday products and institutions may have derived from purely anecdotal oral traditions. But a written poem may have suggested a way of presenting vague attributions to national groups in a more authoritative manner:

Φοίνικες δ' εὖρον γράμματ' ἀλεξίλογα·  
 Θήβη δ' ἄρματόεντα δίφρον συνεπήξατο πρώτη,  
 φορτηγούς δ' ἀκάτους Κᾶρες ἄλως ταμίαι.  
 τὸν δὲ τροχὸν γαίας τε καμίνου τ' ἔκγονον εὖρεν  
 κλεινότατον κέραμον, χρήσιμον οἰκονόμον,  
 ἢ τὸ καλὸν Μαραθῶνι καταστήσασα τρόπαιον.<sup>67</sup>  
 The Phoenicians invented letters to keep words safe;  
 Thebes first joined together the cart ledge  
 and Carians, superintendents of the sea, created cargo vessels.  
 But the potter's wheel, and the product of earth and kiln,  
 much-admired pottery useful for household purposes,  
 were invented by the city who set up the victory-trophy at Marathon.

What was identified as new in oral tradition could simply reflect ignorance or loss of earlier knowledge. Ironically, neither Critias nor Herodotus would have known that Greek linear scripts long predated the introduction of *phoinikêia grammata* into Greece:

<sup>66</sup> Hipp. fr. 6 DK.

<sup>67</sup> Krit. fr. 2.10-15 DK.

οἱ δὲ Φοίνικες οὗτοι οἱ σὺν Κάδμῳ ἀπικόμενοι, τῶν ἦσαν οἱ Γεφυραῖοι, ἄλλα τε πολλὰ οἰκήσαντες ταύτην τὴν χώραν ἐσήγαγον διδασκάλια ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας καὶ δὴ καὶ γράμματα, οὐκ ἔόντα πρὶν Ἕλλησι ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκέειν.<sup>68</sup>

The Phoenicians who came with Cadmus, amongst whom were the Gephyraei, introduced into Greece after settling in the country a number of accomplishments, of which the most important was writing, something that formerly, I believe, had not existed for the Greeks.

In an essentially oral environment, there was likely to be a precariousness about any assignment of radical innovation within historical memory, and greater comfort with the idea of incremental newness and with novelty that stemmed from the old and the familiar. By contrast to an oral fuzziness about innovation, the existence of a written record allowed for the contestation of definite assertions about what might be new and when. New scope for the generation of novelty arose through engagement with and contestation of written texts. They opened up new possibilities for deliberate originality, since in principle the reader was in a better position to make a more valid assessment of what was said to be new and old.

Thucydides knew that the material remains of ancient cities told a lie.<sup>69</sup> Writing was different, because it was capable of recording *to saphes*. The unfolding of a historical narrative provided the record of a continuous stream of new episodes, a series which could be extrapolated forward into the future. With the advent of time-bound historical consciousness, new possibilities for the understanding of novelty arose. With the tool of writing Thucydides could record the past in a manner which, by clearly articulating the chronological distance of the new from the old, offered the possibility of recognising both novelty and the inevitable recurrence in human history of events and circumstances akin to those that had happened at a previous period.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Hdt. 5.58.1

<sup>69</sup> Thuc. 1.10.1-3.

<sup>70</sup> Thuc. 1.22.4.



## V

*The rhetoric of innovation*

The rhetorical capacity of words was implicit in the Greeks' earliest literature.<sup>71</sup> Hesiod taught that words could be the vehicle of lies as well as truth, and Homer knew that words might mask thoughts as well as express them. Public utterance, including utterance in the service of the Muses, was the province of Persuasion.<sup>72</sup> Words were therefore not simply heard as recording the truth. They could be used to create a persuasive and deceitful portrayal of reality.<sup>73</sup>

In the Sophistic age, when questions about power and persuasion, chance and skill, truth and seeming, and nature and convention, came to the forefront of thought and argument, a sense of the delight and the danger of words seems more than ever apparent. Gorgias was said to have introduced rhetorical methods to Athens when he led an embassy from Leontini in 427:

οὗτος οὖν καταντήσας εἰς τὰς Ἀθήνας καὶ παραχθὲς εἰς τὸν δῆμον διελέχθη τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις περὶ τῆς συμμαχίας καὶ τῷ ξενίζοντι τῆς λέξεως ἐξέπληξε τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ὄντας εὐφρεῖς καὶ φιλολόγους. πρῶτος γὰρ ἐχρήσατο τοῖς λέξεως σχηματισμοῖς περιττοτέροις καὶ τῇ φιλοτεχνίᾳ διαφέρουσιν, ἀντιθέτοις καὶ ἰσοκώλοις καὶ παρίσοις καὶ ὁμοιοτελεύτοις καὶ τισὶν ἑτέροις τοιούτοις, ἃ τότε μὲν διὰ τὸ ξένον τῆς κατασκευῆς ἀποδοχῆς ἤξιοντο, νῦν δὲ περιεργίαν ἔχειν δοκεῖ καὶ φαίνεται καταγέλαστα πλεονάκις καὶ κατακόρως τιθέμενα.<sup>74</sup>

Gorgias visited Athens and was presented to the people. He made a speech about the alliance, causing astonishment to the intelligent, word-loving Athenians with his alien-sounding rhetoric. He was the first to use a style full of excessive devices and techniques, opposing and balancing clauses, words of equal length, rhyming terminations, and other such things. Because of the strangeness of their composition, at the time these evoked approbation, but now they seem over-elaborate and often ludicrously over the top.

---

<sup>71</sup> Cole (1991) 33-46.

<sup>72</sup> Buxton (1982).

<sup>73</sup> On illusion and deceit in artistic representation cf. Ch. 4, Sect. 8 below.

<sup>74</sup> Diod. 12.53.2-3.

The tradition testifies to the impact of Gorgias' style of oratory.<sup>75</sup> His strangely artificial Greek had the effect of barbarian speech on the Athenians:

βάρβαροι δ' εἰσὶν γένος  
 Γοργίαι τε καὶ Φίλιπποι,  
 κάπλι τῶν ἐγγλωττογαστό-  
 ρων ἐκείνων τῶν Φιλίππων  
 πανταχοῦ τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἢ  
 γλῶττα χωρὶς τέμνεται.<sup>76</sup>  
 It's a tribe of barbarians,  
 Gorgiases and Philips,  
 and from those Tongue-bellied  
 Philips it's the custom everywhere in Attica  
 to cut the tongue away.

Along with the renovation of Greek rhetoric by Gorgias, the 'rhetoric of innovation' was born. The perception of innovation as a useful and serviceable virtue may be thought of as the counterpart to the 'rhetoric of reaction' which condemns novelty as perverse, futile and dangerous.<sup>77</sup> The latter rhetoric was to dominate the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War and the oratory and philosophy of the fourth century. But for a time in the 420s the rhetoric of progress, which extols the new over the old and speaks of 'sweeping away the cobwebs of the past' and bringing in new and better ideas, products, and techniques, could be discerned. Value was accorded to novelty that divorced the new from its basis in the old, positively denying the value traditionally accorded to *ta archaia* and *ta palaia*. This was a powerful and influential rhetoric, which provoked reaction and anger as well as admiration and enthusiasm.

The paradox of such a rhetoric is that it may, by its own logic, blur the boundaries between what is genuinely innovative and what may be presented as

<sup>75</sup> O'Sullivan (1992) 21; Kennedy (1963) 61-68.

<sup>76</sup> Ar. Av. 1700-5, cf. Vesp. 420-1. γλῶττα was used as a disparaging reference to 'intellectuals' (Denniston 1927: 113) and came to mean obscure words and epithets (Arist. Poet. 1458a22, Rhet. 1404b36, 1406a15). Cf. O'Sullivan (1992) 126-9.

<sup>77</sup> Hirschmann (1991).

such. In so doing, it reveals the possibility that novelty is hollow, and that the exponents of innovation are charlatans. It risks being aligned to the deceitful rhetoric, portrayed *par excellence* in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, which aims to show that good is bad and vice versa. The rhetoric of innovation arose shortly after a period in which grand and original social and intellectual constructions showed a relatively cohesive *polis* that rewards were available to the innovator. In the age of Pericles novelty, promoted in terms of *aretê* rather than the naked pursuit of the new, was prized and valued. Great playwrights, architects, military men and politicians vied with one another in innovative venturesomeness. The vibrancy of Athens struck fear into the conservative Spartans, who could not read Athenians' intentions as anything other than imperialist ambition. Athens' monopolisation and appropriation of the cultural interests of the Greeks could only be read as a potential threat to its rivals' political and economic interests.

## VI

### *New words and old*

The constructivist turn in recent social theory holds that words are not simply neutral tools which may be used to symbolise an external reality. By adopting and articulating largely unquestioned social assumptions and viewpoints, words are part of a discourse which constructs different, ideologically charged, versions of the world.<sup>78</sup> Nothing is good or bad - or new or old - but thinking (or speaking) makes it so. The beginnings of a radical understanding of discourse along these lines is detectable in the relativism of the early Sophists, whose work influenced tragedy and comedy, Thucydidean historiography, rhetorical theory and medical treatises. Within their different contexts, these writings all hint that new ways of understanding and manipulating words may themselves be the means to constructing innovation, genuine or otherwise.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Burr (1995) 33-45.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Hall (1975) 323-4: 'in the 16th century, there is a very genuine belief that novelty, innovation, is both possible and desirable; and this has not really very much to do with whether they were genuinely novel'.

Rhetorical *technê* went further by formalising the existence of rules and techniques for creating novelty:

Τισίαν δὲ Γοργίαν τε ἐάσομεν εὐδαιμονοῦν, οἳ πρὸ τῶν ἀληθῶν τὰ εἰκότα εἶδον ὡς τιμητέα μᾶλλον, τὰ τε αὖ σμικρὰ μεγάλα καὶ τὰ μεγάλα σμικρὰ φαίνεσθαι ποιούσιν διὰ ῥώμην λόγου, καινὰ τε ἀρχαίως τὰ τ' ἐναντία καινῶς.<sup>80</sup>

Tisias and Gorgias we shall leave undisturbed: they believed that probability deserves more respect than truth, that one could make trifles important and important things trifling through the power of words, and that the old could be made to seem new and the new old.

Insofar as verbalisations seemed, in the 420s, to bring about new circumstances, perspectives, and social or moral 'facts', they constituted more than purely literary innovation. Words might be combined to create new versions of myth and history in the composition of tragedy and historiography, new and arguably artificial *hypotheses* about human beings' physical nature for the purpose of medical knowledge and investigation, and 'new ideas' with which to dazzle and entertain the spectators of comedy while drawing their attention to matters of social importance. In Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazousae*, the awareness that men and women are distinguishable by their mode of discourse underlies part of the comic inversion of political roles, and becomes a key part of the women's 'disguise'.<sup>81</sup>

The creative power of words was variously viewed as positive, exciting, dangerous and frightening. On the one hand, the subservience of words to human manipulation and choice seemed liberatory. It lessened the inherent power of discourse by empowering individuals to re-invent norms of speech and by subjecting it to systematic control of the kind that could be elaborated and mastered through *rhêtorikê technê*. On the other hand, the fact that the thoughts expressed by words were thus shown to be potentially variable and manipulable could be seen as subversively open-ended, an obstacle to the traditional pursuit of *aretê* and to the practical political aim of establishing stable and consistent bases

<sup>80</sup> Pl. *Phaedr.* 267ab.

<sup>81</sup> Saïd (1996) 295.

for moral and social interaction. Novelty in thought and word pursued as an end in itself might triumph at the expense of truth, good sense, and traditional ethical norms.

In the fourth century, Gorgias' pupil Isocrates was aware of the pejorative associations of rhetoric and sought to combat it by insisting on its intrinsic moral dimension. Rhetorical instruction had given a special impetus to the creation of novelty, but a tamer version of the *thauma* and *ekplêxis* aroused by the novelty of the ξενίζων λόγος was advocated by Isocrates. In his *Against the Sophists*, composed in about 390 B.C, τὸ καινόν is no longer the means to ψυχαγωγία or to deceptive reversals of reality, but has been reduced to a tool of rhetorical technique. It is one of the tasks of the orator to innovate in presentation and diction:

τοὺς μὲν γὰρ λόγους οὐχ οἷόν τε καλῶς ἔχειν, ἢν μὴ τῶν καιρῶν καὶ τοῦ πρεπόντως καὶ τοῦ καινῶς ἔχειν μετάσχωσιν.<sup>82</sup>

Oratory is only good if it has the qualities of fitness for the occasion, propriety of style and innovative treatment.

In a later passage cataloguing the technical requirements for rhetoric, the terminology of τὸ καινόν as a means of creating *poikilia* might itself be replaced by the new, less radical, technical terminology of ἐνθυμήματα:

τὸ δὲ τούτων ἐφ' ἑκάστῳ τῶν πραγμάτων ὡς δεῖ προελέσθαι καὶ μῖξαι πρὸς ἀλλήλας καὶ τάξαι κατὰ τρόπον, ἔτι δὲ τῶν καιρῶν μὴ διαμαρτεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἐνθυμήμασι πρεπόντως ὅλον τὸν λόγον καταποικίλαι καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασιν εὐρύθμως καὶ μουσικῶς εἰπεῖν, ταῦτα δὲ πολλῆς ἐπιμελείας δεῖσθαι καὶ ψυχῆς ἀνδρικῆς καὶ δοξαστικῆς ἔργον εἶναι.<sup>83</sup>

Knowing how to choose the right things to say on each subject, joining them together and arranging them properly, speaking as the occasion demands while adorning the speech appropriately with clever ideas and clothing it in melodious and flowing phrase - these require much study, and are the task of a vigorous and imaginative mind.

<sup>82</sup> Isoc. *Soph.* 13.

<sup>83</sup> Isoc. *Soph.* 16.

The developed *technê* of rhetoric now had its own logic and purpose. Innovation might be sought by its advocates within a circumscribed area. Isocrates, no friend of novelty, could thus commend his own innovations and look forward to the technical innovators of the future:

ἠγοῦμαι δ' οὕτως ἂν μεγίστην ἐπίδοσιν λαμβάνειν καὶ τὰς ἄλλας τέχνας καὶ τὴν περὶ τοὺς λόγους φιλοσοφίαν, εἴ τις θαυμάζοι καὶ τιμῶν μὴ τοὺς πρῶτους τῶν ἔργων ἀρχομένους, ἀλλὰ τοὺς ἄρισθ' ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἐξεργαζομένους.<sup>84</sup>

I believe that all the arts, rhetoric included, will make the greatest progress if one admires and extols not the people who initiated the different kinds of endeavour but those who seek to perfect every detail of them.

The formulation of rhetoric in terms of *τέχνη* was a way of controlling the power of the spoken word. In the *Phaedrus* Plato argued that writing, a *τέχνη* with a different function, posed a potentially greater danger to truthful communication. This increasingly widespread technology allowed words to take on a life of their own, divorced from the intentions of their producers:

δεινὸν γάρ που, ὦ Φαῖδρε, τοῦτ' ἔχει γραφή, καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς ὁμοιον ζωγραφία. καὶ γὰρ τὰ ἐκείνης ἔκγονα ἔστηκε μὲν ὡς ζῶντα, ἐὰν δ' ἀνέρη τι, σεμνῶς πάνυ σιγῶ. ταῦτόν δὲ καὶ οἱ λόγοι· δόξαις μὲν ἂν ὡς τι φρονούντας αὐτοὺς λέγειν, ἐὰν δέ τι ἔρη τῶν λεγομένων βουλόμενος μαθεῖν, ἔν τι σημαίνει μόνον ταῦτόν ἀεὶ. ὅταν δὲ ἅπαξ γραφῆ, κυλινδεῖται μὲν πανταχοῦ πᾶς λόγος, ὁμοίως παρὰ τοῖς ἐπαΐουσιν, ὡς δ' αὐτως παρ' οἷς οὐδὲν προσήκει, καὶ οὐκ ἐπίσταται λέγειν οἷς δεῖ γε καὶ μή.<sup>85</sup>

Writing is strange like this, Phaedrus, and much like painting. The creatures of painting appear like living beings, but if you ask them something they remain solemnly silent. The same thing with written words: you might think the words spoke as if they had a mind of their own, but if you question them and want to know what they are saying, they just keep on repeating the same thing. And when you write something down one way, it is bandied around equally among those who have insight and those for whom it has no relevance, and it cannot choose to whom it should speak and to whom not.

<sup>84</sup> Isoc. *Paneg.* 10.

<sup>85</sup> Pl. *Phaedr.* 275de.

The argument is reminiscent of the fourth-century Sophist Alcidamas' *On the Use of Written Words* or *On the Sophists*, an *epideixis* composed with a different concern in mind, the importance of oral over written skills in the teaching of rhetoric.<sup>86</sup> The latter work reads like the last and futile gasp of reaction to the use of writing. By the date of its composition in the 390s, writing was as much a feature of rhetorical as of other forms of education. Alcidamas laments the decline of old-fashioned skills of improvisation and *καιρός*, and the turn towards nit-picking precision (*akribeia*) encouraged by the written word. Although writing is acknowledged to be useful, improvised speech is more so. The use of writing is rhetorically presented as something which shuts down the prospect of creative novelty:

ὅστις οὖν ἐπιθυμεῖ ῥήτωρ γενέσθαι δεινὸς ἀλλὰ μὴ ποιητῆς λόγων ἱκανός, καὶ βούλεται μᾶλλον τοῖς καιροῖς χρῆσθαι καλῶς ἢ τοῖς ὀνόμασι λέγειν ἀκριβῶς, καὶ τὴν εὐνοίαν τῶν ἀκροωμένων ἐπίκουρον ἔχειν σπουδάζει μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν φθόνον ἀνταγωνιστῆν, ἔτι δὲ καὶ τὴν μνήμην εὐπορον καὶ τὴν λήθην ἄδηλον καθεστάναι βούλεται, καὶ τῇ χρείᾳ τοῦ βίου σύμμετρον τὴν δύναμιν τῶν λόγων κεκτήσθαι πρόθυμός ἐστιν, οὐκ εἰκότως ἂν τοῦ μὲν αὐτοσχεδιάζειν ἀεὶ τε καὶ διὰ παντὸς ἐνεργὸν τὴν μελέτην ποιοῖτο, τοῦ δὲ γράφειν ἐν παιδιᾷ καὶ παρέργῳ ἐπιμελόμενος εὖ φρονεῖν κριθείη παρὰ τοῖς εὖ φρονοῦσιν;<sup>87</sup>

So if someone wants to become a good orator rather than a mediocre wordsmith, prefers to be able to take advantage of the *moment psychologique* than to create a precise text, is keen to evoke favour in his audience rather than resentment, wishes to present his excellent powers of memory and conceal his forgetfulness, and is eager to possess an oratorical ability equal to life's vicissitudes, would it not be reasonable for him to dedicate himself actively, at all times and in all circumstances, to improvised speech, and would he not be judged a man of sense by sensible men if he only used writing for fun and as a side-line?

The use of the new technology to convey serious as well as playful communication was unavoidable. Preserved in writing, the innovative efforts of fifth- and fourth-

<sup>86</sup> Alcid. fr. 1 Avezzù.

<sup>87</sup> Alcid. 1. 34 Avezzù.

century authors were destined to become classics, read, admired, studied and re-fashioned by posterity. The newness of their words, which had in their time both augmented and displaced the efforts of earlier authors, presented a constant source of new inspiration for future generations. In the third century B.C., the comic poet Straton testified to the notion that the words of ancient authors might afford an amusing opportunity for the ascription of novelty. The cook in his *Phoinikides* speaks in an archaic idiolect drawn from Homer:

Σφίγγ' ἄρρεν', οὐ μάγειρον, εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν  
 εἶληφ'. ἀπλῶς γὰρ οὐδὲ ἔν μα τοὺς θεοὺς  
 ὦν ἄν λέγη συνίημι. καινὰ ῥήματα  
 πεπορισμένος πάρεστιν· ὡς εἰσήλθε γάρ,  
 εὐθύς μ' ἐπηρώτησε προσβλέψας μέγα,  
 πόσους κέκληκας μέροπας ἐπὶ δεῖπνον; λέγε.  
 ἐγὼ κέκληκα μέροπας ἐπὶ δεῖπνον; χολᾶς...  
 καί μοι δοκεῖ ῥαψωδοτιοιούτου τινὸς  
 δοῦλος γεγονῶς ἐκ παιδὸς ἀλειτήριος  
 ἔπειτα πεπλήσθαι τῶν Ὀμήρου ῥημάτων.<sup>88</sup>

It's a male Sphinx, not a cook, that  
 I've brought home. Heavens, I simply don't  
 understand a word he says. He's come equipped  
 with a load of brand new words. When he came in,  
 he looked at me haughtily and asked 'Tell me,  
 how many wights have you invited to dinner?'  
 'Me, invited *wights* to dinner?' I said. 'You're crazy.' ...  
 I reckon that the wretch had been the slave  
 from childhood of one of those rhapsode fellows,  
 and got stuffed full of Homeric words.

---

<sup>88</sup> Straton 1.1-7, 48-50 KA.



#### 4. Athenian art: innovation in theory and practice

How had the burden of precedent increased! It was all around me - that smoothly built world of old classical taste, and accomplished fact with an overwhelming authority on every point of the conduct of one's own work... There might seem to be no place left for novelty and originality.

Walter Pater, *Marius the Epicurean*

### I

#### *The visual legacy*

φιλοκαλοῦμέν τε γὰρ μετ' εὐτελείας καὶ φιλοσοφοῦμεν ἄνευ μαλακίας· πλούτῳ τε ἔργου μᾶλλον καιρῷ ἢ λόγου κόμπῳ χρώμεθα.<sup>1</sup>

We pursue beauty without extravagance and we cultivate our minds without being soft: wealth we employ rather as an opportunity for action rather than a subject for boasting.

The sole allusion to κάλλος in Pericles' Funeral Speech is a succinct reminder that the legacy of the Periclean age was, amongst other things, a visual one.<sup>2</sup> Athenians and visitors to Athens would have been surrounded by visible evidence of artistic activity, worthy of more than modest pride: the city's physical appearance far exceeded its true power.<sup>3</sup> The Classical age brought new refinements and a formal perfection to the portrayal of the human figure, a development which has been related to the changed political circumstances and the self-confident spirit of the times.<sup>4</sup>

The taut Thucydidean sentence manages to express pride in the Athenians' energetic pursuit of its essentially home-grown cultural excellence, while disdaining the idea of luxury or the extravagant self-glorification associated with tyranny or barbarian grandiosity. But its brevity belies the fact that in conception, grandeur, and execution, Pericles' grand vision impinged on Athenians' consciousness as

---

<sup>1</sup> Thuc. 2.40.1.

<sup>2</sup> On the interpretation of this vexed passage see *HCT ad loc.* Hornblower (1991) *ad loc.* assumes a moral rather than artistic implication for κάλλος.

<sup>3</sup> Thuc. 1.10.2.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. Pollitt (1972) 64.

having had no equal in previous ages. The Periclean building programme required a huge outlay of money and materials, and employed an army of artisans:

ὅπου γὰρ ὕλη μὲν ἦν λίθος, χαλκός, ἐλέφας, χρυσός, ἔβενος, κυπάρισσος, αἱ δὲ ταύτην ἐκπονοῦσαι καὶ κατεργαζόμεναι τέχνη τέκτονες, πλάσται, χαλκοτύποι, λιθουργοί, βαφεῖς χρυσοῦ, μαλακτῆρες ἐλέφαντος, ζωγράφοι, ποικιλταί, τορευταί...<sup>5</sup>

The materials used were stone, bronze, ivory, ebony, and cypress-wood; the artists who laboured on them to produce works of art were builders, sculptors, bronze-workers, stone-cutters, goldsmiths, ivory-cutters, painters, embroiderers, and engravers...

Along with the economic benefit to individuals and community, the sheer scale of involvement will have boosted public acknowledgment and appreciation of artistic accomplishment. Pheidias' colossal statue of Athena, commissioned for the Parthenon, was symbolic of the attempt to extend the bounds of art and craftsmanship: its commissioning gave rise to a political furore, partly due to public resentment at the high value of the project entrusted to a single artist.<sup>6</sup> But its execution and erection called for exceptional vision and technical skill: *primusque artem toreuticen aperuisse atque demonstrasse merito iudicatur*, Pliny records, 'Pheidias is rightly judged to have revealed the possibilities of sculpture and to have demonstrated its methods'.<sup>7</sup>

Athenians of the 420s were thus already familiar with architectural works of unprecedented magnificence which stood at the heart of their city. New constructions, such as the graceful Ionic temple Athena Nike (c. 420-410) and the unusual Erechtheion with its Caryatid porch (421-406 B.C.), were still in progress on the Acropolis.<sup>8</sup> Athens was also filled with familiar *objets d'art* of more modest scale, such as the mass of statuary, in both public and private ownership, which foreshadowed St. Paul's description of Athens in the first century A.D. as

---

<sup>5</sup> Plut. *Per.* 12. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Plut. *Per.* 31.4. It was claimed that the figures on Athena's shield were actually portraits of Pericles and Pheidias, but this has been doubted: refs. in Pollitt (1990) 249.

<sup>7</sup> Pliny, *NH* 34.54. Jex-Blake and Sellers (1896) note *ad loc.* that the judgement is one of a series derived from the third-century B.C. art historian Xenokrates.

<sup>8</sup> Pedley (1992) 254-257. On new cults in Athens see Ch. 7, Sect. 4.

κατείδωλος - a 'forest of idols'.<sup>9</sup> Most evident amongst these would have been the ubiquitous marble Herms introduced to Athens perhaps a century earlier, which adorned doorsteps, streets, and agora.<sup>10</sup> The fact that their disfigurement by the conspirators in 415 B.C. was treated primarily a religious outrage with political implications, rather than an act of cultural vandalism, is indicative that on the whole the artistic status of such objects remained subordinate to their religious function and significance. *Technai* such as stoneworking and sculpture were still relatively commonplace 'banausic' occupations, even if their products were commonly objects of dedication and cult.<sup>11</sup>

The classical perfection of the architecture and sculpture of the Periclean age is often treated as the highpoint of Athens' artistic development, but the true 'revolutions' in Greek art are commonly considered to have taken place in earlier part of the fifth century B.C.<sup>12</sup> For sculpture, the crucial innovations appear to have taken place in the generation following the Persian Wars, a period ushered in by the production of masterpieces of sympathetic realism such as the 'Kritios boy' and the bronze Zeus of Artemision.<sup>13</sup> This was also the period in which Polygnotos of Thasos became renowned for his paintings in the *Leschê* (club-house) of the Cnidians at Delphi.<sup>14</sup> Polygnotos had made notable innovations in the exploration of two-dimensional space (his methods may be reflected in the work of a contemporary vase-painter, the 'Niobid painter') and he was renowned as the illustrator, together with Mikon, of a famous landmark, the *Stoa Poikilê* at Athens.<sup>15</sup> The murals, which may have exploited new coloristic techniques, created an impression on Athenians for generations.<sup>16</sup> In 411, the chorus of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* could lewdly suggest that the figures painted on the stoa provided a visual precedent for the militant women of Athens represented in the play:

---

<sup>9</sup> Acts 17.16.

<sup>10</sup> Parker (1996) 80-83.

<sup>11</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 495e, 522b; Hdt. 2.167.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. Robertson (1981), Spivey (1995).

<sup>13</sup> Robertson (1981) 49, 56.

<sup>14</sup> Paus. 10.25.1.

<sup>15</sup> Pliny *NH* 35.58-9, Plut. *Kimón* 4.5, Paus. 10.28.1.

<sup>16</sup> Pliny records that new pigments, such as black from burnt grape-lees and yellow from Attic ochre, were introduced in the time of Polygnotos and Mikon: *NH* 35.42, 33.160.

ἵππικώτατον γάρ ἐστι χρῆμα κάποχον γυνή,  
 κούκ ἂν ἀπολίσθοι τρέχοντος· τὰς δ' Ἀμαζόνας σκόπει,  
 ὡς Μίκων ἔγραψ' ἐφ' ἵππων μαχομένας τοῖς ἀνδράσιν.<sup>17</sup>  
 Riding is very much a woman's thing, she's safe on horseback  
 and wouldn't slip off even at a gallop - just look at the Amazons  
 whom Mikon painted fighting on horses with the men.

The mural may also have provided inspiration for the fourth-century painter Euphranor's portrayal of the cavalry battle at Mantinea in 362 B.C., at the commission of Athens:

πάρεστιν ὄρᾶν ἐν εἰκόνι τῆς μάχης τὸ σύρρηγμα καὶ τὴν ἀντέρεισιν ἀλκῆς  
 καὶ θυμοῦ καὶ πνεύματος γέμουσαν.<sup>18</sup>

One may see in the picture of the battle the clash of conflict and the stout resistance, full of muscle and spirit and exertion.

Here the mythical scene on the stoa has been transposed to the imagined scene of a real-life battle: it may be significant that the intervening century had seen the composition of the first manual (*technê*) on horsemanship.<sup>19</sup>

## II

### *Artistic novelty*

From an artistic point of view, the age of Pericles was simply the culmination of half a century which had seen the conspicuous application of human and financial resources in pursuit of artistic excellence and the beautification of Athens. The extraordinary developments in Greek art in the earlier part of the fifth century suggests that, in the the period chosen for our investigation, the prospects for innovation (in terms of formal or technical originality) may have been felt as more

<sup>17</sup> Ar. *Lys.* 678-9.

<sup>18</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 346e.

<sup>19</sup> The *Περὶ ἵππικῆς* of Simon inspired an equestrian statue by Demetrios (Pliny *NH* 34.76): both were known to Xenophon (*De eq.* 1.3). I pursue the theme of *logoi* influencing art in Sect. 7 below.

restricted than hitherto.<sup>20</sup> The plastic and visual arts had already attained such high levels of accomplishment that it would be hard to envisage ways in which they might be taken dramatically further.<sup>21</sup> Thus a more promising angle for exploring the pursuit of innovation might be to identify signs of reaction to the styles and subject-matter of 'high classical' art. One clear example of such a reaction was the tendency to deliberate archaism, such as has been detected in the work of Pheidias' pupil Alkamenes.<sup>22</sup>

The long shadow cast by the earlier achievements of the fifth century makes the task of identifying the artistic innovations of later decades, and of eliciting from the sources an understanding of the contemporary response to them, more difficult and elusive than in the investigation of, say, rhetoric and medicine. The latter areas had been opened up for popular and professional enquiry relatively recently and were ripe for continued innovation. Intellectual venturesomeness might be more readily recognised, rewarded, and recorded for posterity. Certainly, the abrupt discontinuity which has characterised for some the introduction of modern art - the 'shock of the new' - has no real parallel (unlike the furore about innovations in music) in reactions to art in this period.<sup>23</sup> But in an age when novelty was strenuously pursued in most areas of Athenian society, visual artists too seem bound to have been challenged to find new forms of expression. As well as conscious archaising, these may have taken the form of experimentation into ways of surpassing the earlier styles and techniques, as well as an unconscious 'postmodern' reaction to classical ideals and certainties.

The achievement of the earlier generation was a hard act to follow, and the wartime pressures of the late fifth century cannot have made it easier for artists to emulate their predecessors' innovative energy. Art historians are prone to detect in

---

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Choerilus of Samos, fr. 1 K: νῦν δ' ὅτε πάντα δέδασται, ἔχουσι δὲ πείρατα τέχνηαι.

<sup>21</sup> This is no doubt true for every generation, especially after a period of conspicuous innovation. In the late fifth-century, Parrhasios (see Sect. 8 below) boasted of having revealed the limits of his art: φημὶ γὰρ ἤδη / τέχνης εὐρήσθαι τέρματα τῆσδε σαφῆ / χειρὸς ὑφ' ἡμετέρης (Athen. 12.543e).

<sup>22</sup> Robertson (1981) 119-20.

<sup>23</sup> *The Shock of the New* is associated with modern art (Hughes [1980]) but the phrase encapsulates a common reaction for which parallels may be found in most ages. To Boccaccio (1315-75), for example, Giotto's paintings 'came with a shock of incredible lifelikeness': Gombrich (1977) 53; and in 1877, Ruskin was so shocked by Whistler's now uncontroversial impressionism that he famously denounced him for 'flinging a pot of paint in the public's face'.

the refined and fussy style of the sculpture produced towards the end of the century, exemplified by the wind-blown drapery on the reliefs on the temple of Athena Nike on the Acropolis, a retreat from the loftier artistic ideals of the High Classical era; the pursuit of formal detail, masking the absence of a confident artistic statement, has been compared to the rhetorical gestures of Gorgianic prose.<sup>24</sup> But some of these developments are likely to have been asserted by the sculptors themselves as technical and stylistic innovations. In the precociously competitive atmosphere of the *polis* it would be surprising if artists too were not impelled to present their ideas in a positive light and to promote the originality of their individual accomplishment.

Evidence of practical and functional artistic innovation in the period is conspicuous in the archaeological record. An example is the startlingly original Corinthian capital, which first occurs in the temple of Apollo Epikourios at Bassae: its invention was attributed to the sculptor Kallimachos.<sup>25</sup> The temple itself is notable for its novelty of design and other unusual features (such as its north-south orientation).<sup>26</sup> Pausanias believed that it was designed by the Athenian Iktinos, the architect of the Parthenon, as a thanks-offering to Apollo for turning away the plague.<sup>27</sup> But the essentially Doric structure lacks such refinements as the Parthenon's subtle horizontal curvature, while other features, such as the ornamental interior columns and the theatrical poses of figures on the frieze, seem to anticipate the styles of the fourth century.<sup>28</sup> Iktinos wrote a work (now lost) about the design of the Parthenon:<sup>29</sup> as in other spheres, preserving the memory of such technical innovations in writing might have encouraged new developments in

---

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Pollitt (1972) 123-5, a view contested by e.g. Hallett (1986).

<sup>25</sup> Vit. 4. 1. 9-10.

<sup>26</sup> Cooper (1968).

<sup>27</sup> Paus. 8.41.7-9. Suggestive epithets like *Epikourios* were enough to link such works with the plague in popular tradition: cf. the *Herakles Alexikakos* (Sch. Ar. *Ran.* 504) of Ageladas (fl. c. 500 B.C., Pliny *NH* 34.49) and the *Apollo Alexikakos* of Kalamis (Paus. 1.3.4). But in this case the attribution may preserve the memory of an Athenian architect working, perhaps during the Peace of Nikias in 421-415 B.C., to complete an earlier foundation: Pollitt (1972) 129.

<sup>28</sup> Pedley (1993) 278-280.

<sup>29</sup> Vit. 7 *praef.* 12. Iktinos' co-author is given as Karpion. It seems unlikely that this should be an error for Kallikrates, the co-architect of the Parthenon (Pollitt in *CAH* 5<sup>2</sup>, 183).

practice. The novel features of the Bassae temple may perhaps be connected with a new, theoretically informed critique of prevailing architectural and artistic canons.<sup>30</sup>

While the ἔργα of the artists of post-Periclean Athens may have been in danger of appearing to be eclipsed by the brilliance of the preceding generations, they nonetheless demonstrate a continued vitality and search for originality. But direct evidence for the contemporary response is frustratingly thin and uncertain. The dearth of contemporary discussions and commentary on art may partly be, as with the loss of Iktinos' treatise, an accident of survival. It may also reflect the fact that artistic *technai* were not generally accorded the intellectual status of other *technai* and did not lend themselves as easily to popular or sophistic exposition as rhetoric and medicine.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, technicians like Iktinos and the sculptor Polykleitos of Argos might direct their artistic theories and claims to originality more at patrons and fellow-practitioners than to the wider public, which might have found technical and quasi-mathematical doctrines obscure and hard to follow. Aristophanes draws a mocking picture of the 'boffin' Meton, who arrives on the scene of the new foundation of Cloudcuckooland to demonstrate his apparently nonsensical methods of 'air-surveying':

ΜΕ. ὀρθῶ μετρήσω κανόνι προστιθείς, ἵνα  
ὁ κύκλος γένηται σοι τετράγωνος, κὰν μέσῳ  
ἀγορά, φέρουσαι δ' ὦσιν εἰς αὐτὴν ὁδοὶ  
ὀρθαὶ πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ μέσον, ὥσπερ δ' ἀστέρος  
αὐτοῦ κυκλοτεροῦς ὄντος, ὀρθαὶ πανταχῆ  
ἀκτῖνες ἀπολάμπωσιν.

ΠΕΙ. ἄνθρωπος Θαλής.<sup>32</sup>

Meton: I'll use a ruler for measurement, in order to  
square the circle, you see, and in the centre put  
a market place, so that avenues may bear  
in straight lines to the centre-point - just like a star,  
which is a circular object from which straight beams

<sup>30</sup> For the development in this period of written technical canons, cf. Rossi (1971).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Pl. *Gorg.* 450d-e.

<sup>32</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 1004-9.

radiate in all directions.

Peisthetairos: The man's an Einstein!

The subject-matter of the passage indicates that the spiritual predecessor for Meton's obfuscatory terminology was the flamboyant town-planner Hippodamos of Miletus. In penning their treatises, artists and architects will have been aware of the precedent set by Hippodamos, a self-conscious innovator who designed the layout of the Peiraeus (and probably also of Thurii), and appears to have written a theoretical work on town-planning.<sup>33</sup> He was particularly associated with the square grid-layout of town plans (though archaeology shows that such layouts long predate him): Aristophanes' radiating circle seems to be a deliberate comical counter-suggestion.<sup>34</sup>

### III

#### *New canons of form*

The Aristophanic gobbledygook masks the undoubtedly serious efforts, as exemplified by practical developments in town-design and sculpture, which were being made by artists of different kinds to evolve a theoretical basis for their aesthetic and technical innovations. Their systems recall the *hypotheses* adopted by contemporary medical theorists in their search for a theoretical basis for *anthrôpinê phusis*, a practice that was roundly condemned as arbitrary and unscientific by Hippocratic medical writers.<sup>35</sup> The most famous instance of a technical manual dealing with artistic matters was the *Canon* of Polykleitos, composed in around the 440s. Galen compared Polykleitos' theories with the medical doctrine that health consists of the right combination of elements in the body:

<sup>33</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 2.1268b. Hippodamos proposed a law to reward inventiveness *περὶ τῶν εὐρισκόντων τι τῇ πόλει συμφέρον*.

<sup>34</sup> Strabo (14.2.9) implies that Hippodamos planned the city of Rhodes, but its foundation date of 408 B.C. seems impossibly late. The attribution may have been due to its familiar grid plan: Wycherley (1962)17. Recent studies are inclined to give more credence to the attribution: see Wycherley with refs. in *CAH* 5<sup>2</sup>, 204 n. 23.

<sup>35</sup> See Ch. 6.



τὴν μὲν ὑγίειαν τοῦ σώματος ἐν θερμοῖς καὶ ψυχροῖς καὶ ξηροῖς καὶ ὑγροῖς συμμετρίαν εἶναι φησιν, ἅπερ δὴ στοιχεῖα δηλονότι τῶν σωμάτων ἐστίν, τὸ δὲ κάλλος οὐκ ἐν τῇ τῶν στοιχείων, ἀλλὰ ἐν τῇ τῶν μορίων συμμετρίᾳ συνίστασθαι νομίζει, δακτύλου πρὸς δάκτυλον δηλονότι καὶ συμπάντων αὐτῶν πρὸς τε μετακάρπιον καὶ καρπὸν καὶ τούτων πρὸς πῆχυν καὶ πήχεως πρὸς βραχίονα καὶ πάντων πρὸς πάντα, καθάπερ ἐν τῷ Πολυκλείτου Κανόνι γέγραπται. πάσας γὰρ ἐκδιδάξας ἡμᾶς ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ συγγράμματι τὰς συμμετρίας τοῦ σώματος ὁ Πολύκλειτος, ἔργῳ τὸν λόγον ἐβεβαίωσε δημιουργήσας ἀνδριάντα κατὰ τὰ τοῦ λόγου προστάγματα καὶ καλέσας δὴ καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν ἀνδριάντα καθάπερ καὶ τὸ συγγραμμά Κανόνα. τὸ μὲν δὲ κάλλος τοῦ σώματος ἐν τῇ τῶν μορίων συμμετρίᾳ κατὰ πάντας ἰατρούς τε καὶ φιλοσόφους ἐστίν.<sup>36</sup>

He [Chrysippos] says that bodily health is the due proportion of hot, cold, dry and moist, which are clearly elements relating to bodies. But beauty, he believes, consists not in the proportion of the elements, but of the parts i.e. of finger to finger evidently, and of the fingers as a group to the palm above the knuckles, of the latter to the forearm, the forearm to the upper arm, and each to all, as we read in the *Canon* of Polykleitos. In that book, Polykleitos expounded his theory of bodily proportions; and he demonstrated it in practice by sculpting a statue according to the rules he had described, giving it the title *Canon*, like the book. It is true that beauty is a function of bodily proportion: this is accepted by all physicians and philosophers.

Polykleitos' statue entitled the *Canon* or *Doruphoros* (only copies survive) is dated by its style to around 440 B.C. and exemplifies in some manner the principles of *summetria*.<sup>37</sup> Polykleitos himself was active as late as 420, when he undertook to create a chryselephantine statue of Hera for her new temple at Argos. In an age of burgeoning literary endeavour, the writing of his book may have been inspired partly by a desire to promote the novelty of his techniques to educated patrons, who will have included victorious Olympic athletes eager to commission commemorative statues.<sup>38</sup> While such patrons might be impressed by words, the

<sup>36</sup> Galen, *De plac.* 5. 448 Kühn.

<sup>37</sup> Pollitt (1972) 105-110.

<sup>38</sup> Pindar had sought to impress a similar clientèle: *Nem.* 5.1-3 and *Isthm.* 2.45-6 imply an ἀγών between poet and sculptor for patrons' attention.

sculpted version of the *Canon* would also have allowed fellow-professionals and viewers to appreciate the sculptor's artistry in practice; *solusque hominum artem ipsam fecisse artis opere iudicatur*, quotes Pliny ('he is the only man who is held to have embodied the principles of his art in a work of art').<sup>39</sup>

The *Canon* is the first attested professional treatise on sculpture. Its immediate and widespread fame may have stemmed partly from the novel application of mathematics and geometry to determine the principles of *summetria* that were said to promote *to kallos*.<sup>40</sup> Its publication and influence suggest that the principles expounded were thought to constitute a radical advance on the previous technical understanding of the human figure.<sup>41</sup> It also showed that artistic production of a high level might be viewed as a complex practical *technê*, no less worthy of respectful consideration and intellectual analysis than medicine or rhetoric. Beauty, Polykleitos believed, arises 'in minute details through complex mathematical calculations' (τὸ γὰρ εἶ παρὰ μικρὸν διὰ πολλῶν ἀριθμῶν ἔφη γίνεσθαι).<sup>42</sup> The crystallisation of artistic techniques in such terms as *συμμετρία*, *ἁρμονία* and *καιρός* seems deliberately to reflect fashionable intellectual pursuits of the day like mathematics, medicine, natural philosophy, music and rhetoric. By evoking such associations, the *Canon* was probably intended to elevate the social and intellectual status of the manual arts, and it appears to have succeeded in this aim. The erection in the 420s of the Hephaisteion suggests a new-found self-respect in the community of artisans, confirmed by the splendid re-organisation of the festival of the Hephaestia.<sup>43</sup> The temple, built on the hill to the west of the agora near the metalworking district, was dedicated jointly to Hephaestus and Athena as their divine patrons.<sup>44</sup>

In a period when medical writers were reacting against redundant theorisation in favour of empirical investigation, the conjunction of theory and

---

<sup>39</sup> Pliny *NH* 34.55, quoting Varro whose source was Xenokrates (cf. Jex-Blake and Sellers on *NH* 34.56.9): the play on the meanings of τέχνη ('art' and 'manual') and the λόγος/ἔργον antithesis are unmistakably Greek.

<sup>40</sup> Raven (1951).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Stewart (1978).

<sup>42</sup> Philo *Mech.* 4.1.49, cf. Plut. *Mor.* 45c.

<sup>43</sup> *IG* 1<sup>3</sup>.82; Parker (1996) 154.

<sup>44</sup> Wycherley (1978) 68-9.

practice exemplified by the *Canon* was a novel and ingenious device. A comment in the Hippocratic text *On Ancient Medicine* suggests acquaintance with a pictorial version of Polykleitean doctrine. The author, intent on extolling the empirical nature of medical science, seeks to draw an unfavourable parallel between the painter's art and the production of novel *hypotheses* about human nature:

ἐγὼ δὲ τοῦτο μὲν, ὅσα τινὲ εἴρηται ἢ σοφιστῆ ἢ ἰητρῷ ἢ γέγραπται περὶ φύσιος, ἧσσον νομίζω τῆ ἰητρικῆ τέχνῃ προσήκειν ἢ τῆ γραφικῆ.<sup>45</sup>

In my opinion, whatever some expert or physician says or writes about 'nature' is less suited to medicine than to painting.

This comparison seems to imply an awareness of artistic theorisation as well as a somewhat dismissive view of artistic activity. In its context, the remark seeks to suggest that painting, unlike medicine, is based purely on artificial foundations. While painters may base their practice on unprovable or arbitrary *hypotheses*, physicians should recognise that medical skill is a practical pursuit with its own empirical logic of discovery. There may also be a suggestion that the painter's art, which involved the combining (κρᾶσις) of pigments, was comparable to the sophistic physicians' procedure in positing an arbitrary combination of humours:

οἱ ζωγράφοι βουλόμενοι ἀφομοιοῦν ἐνίοτε μὲν ὄστρεον μόνον ἐπήνεγκαν, ἐνίοτε δὲ ὅτιοῦν ἄλλο τῶν φαρμάκων, ἔστι δ' ὅτε πολλὰ συγκεράσαντες, οἷον ὅταν ἀνδρείκελον σκευάζωσιν ἢ ἄλλο τι τῶν τοιούτων, ὡς ἂν, οἶμαι, δοκῆ ἑκάστη ἢ εἰκῶν δεῖσθαι ἑκάστου φαρμάκου.<sup>46</sup>

Painters who want to depict something sometimes use purple only or some other pigment, and sometimes mix up several pigments, such as when they have to paint flesh colour or the like, according to the particular colour the figure seems to require.

While this procedure might create an elegant image and illusion of reality, the artifice of pictorial τέχνη must not be confused for real thing. In matters of health and medicine, the τέχνη that really counted was practical experience, not theory.

<sup>45</sup> [Hippocr.] VM 20.8-11 (Loeb).

<sup>46</sup> Pl. *Crat.* 424de.

An echo of Polykleitos' doctrine indicates that, in the context of his own *technê*, the sculptor himself might have concurred with the the medical writer's opinion:

καὶ γὰρ αἱ τέχναι πρῶτον ἀτυπώτατα καὶ ἄμορφα πλάττουσιν, εἰθ' ὕστερον ἕκαστα τοῖς εἶδεσι διαρθροῦσιν· ἢ Πολύκλειτος ὁ πλάστης εἶπεν χαλεπώτατον εἶναι τὸ ἔργον, ὅταν ἐν ὄνυχι ὁ πηλὸς γένηται.<sup>47</sup>

The objects of art are initially quite formless and shapeless, and eventually each part of the figure is articulated in precise detail. This is what Polykleitos the sculptor meant by 'the work is hardest when the clay arrives at the nail'.

The dictum sums up the need for careful attention to detail in the practice of sculpture; novel intellectual doctrines were no substitute for sculptural artistry. The test of an artists' quality was deeds, not words.<sup>48</sup> The visual evidence itself, and perhaps the apparent decline in theoretical treatises on sculpture, may lead us to conclude that sculptors of the late fifth century were less given to theorisation and more inclined to engross themselves in the fine details of their craft. Painters equally might want to take infinite pains to perfect their images.<sup>49</sup>

#### IV

##### *Art and society*

The composition of manuals like the *Canon* offers an insight into the nature and purpose of artistic theory in the period, but the wholesale absence of contemporary art criticism leaves us dependent on much later written sources to understand how the artistic novelties of the period were actually seen and experienced by the majority of their viewers. While there existed in ancient Greece a tradition of

---

<sup>47</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 636bc. The dictum refers to 'the difficulty of applying clay piece-molds around the fully modeled statue, or working the clay into the crannies of the fingernail so that the finished bronze would come out absolutely clear-cut and sharp' (Stewart [1990] 161). I have argued (1998) that the Polykleitan phrase, or more probably its variant ἔστι χαλεπώτατον αὐτῶν τὸ ἔργον οἷς ἂν εἰς ὄνυχα ὁ πηλὸς ἀφίκεται (Plut. *Mor.* 86a), underlies Horace's use of *ad unguem* meaning 'to a nicety' (*Ars Poet.* 294, *Sat.* 1.5. 32).

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Xen. *Mem.* 2.6.6.

<sup>49</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 769b. Cf. Kallimachos Κατατηξίτεχνος ('Pernickety') discussed below.

'professional' art criticism perhaps traceable to the sixth century B.C., few vestiges survive before the fourth century, and the surviving literary evidence seems to confirm that no sophisticated popular discourse of visual appreciation was ever developed in the ancient world.<sup>50</sup>

The fullest extant sources which deal with matters of artistic history and criticism are of much later composition: Pliny's *Natural History* (especially Books 34-36) and Pausanias' *Description of Greece*. The authors acted to some extent as compilers of artistic traditions, a genre of writing that may be traced back to at least the fourth century. Pliny, for instance, cites Douris of Samos (c. 340-260 B.C.) as a source, as well as third-century authorities such as Xenokrates of Sikyon and Antigonos of Karystos. The judgments he expresses are thus likely to reflect the views of these earlier commentators, which may in turn may have derived from contemporary and near-contemporary attempts at artistic evaluation and criticism. Elements of the fifth-century response to innovation in art may also be inferred from miscellaneous allusions in contemporary literary sources; and a fuller picture emerges from passages in later writers such as Diodorus, Plutarch, and Lucian, who occasionally offer explicit accounts about aspects of ancient art which were considered to be conspicuously innovative in the eyes of contemporary viewers.

The attempt to evaluate the nature of fifth-century artistic experience through the filter of later perceptions is also inevitably affected by our knowledge of surviving artworks. But while the latter may provide insight into stylistic features of ancient art, they cannot tell us how contemporaries themselves viewed the innovative features which we are inclined to ascribe to them. Without written testimonies, for instance, it would be hard to imagine that Praxiteles' *Aphrodite of Knidos* (c. 340 B.C., known from a Roman copy) was to become the focus of unprecedented admiration and enthusiasm in its time.<sup>51</sup> In a society long familiar with lifelike portrayals of men, but not women, its sensual portrayal of a nude female body in the guise of Aphrodite may have been genuinely novel and exciting;

---

<sup>50</sup> Pollitt (1964).

<sup>51</sup> Pliny *NH* 36.20-21.

but it seems to have created a lasting psychological impact on ancient viewers, about the reasons for which we can only speculate.<sup>52</sup>

Behind both the meagre evaluations provided in literary sources and the direct interpretation of surviving works of art lies the wider question of the place and nature of visual experience in Athenian society. To understand what might have appeared as artistically novel in the eyes of Aristophanes' audience requires some consideration of the ways in which artistic activity impinged on their social consciousness. 'Banausic' occupations were not pursued as liberal pastimes. The requirement for painstaking manual labour put them on a considerably lower rung of the social scale than the cultivation of words, music, and athletic activities, while the need for particular skill in their execution made them unsuitable as amateur pursuits.<sup>53</sup> Upper-class Athenians might even take pride in their ignorance of the details of such practices, as the following exchange shows:

ΚΛ....ἐντριβής γε οὐδαμῶς γέγονα τῇ τοιαύτῃ τέχνῃ.

ΑΘ. Καὶ οὐδέν γε ἐβλάβης.<sup>54</sup>

Clinias: I have never been familiar with this kind of art (i.e. painting).

Athenian: And no loss either!

Nor were sculpture and painting thought of as divinely inspired or directed, although the practitioners of different types of artistic *technê* adopted various gods as patrons, including Hephaestus, Athena and Hermes.<sup>55</sup> As such, they rarely seem to have held the status accorded to Apollo and the Muses as patrons of μουσική. Although artists invariably offered their ἔργα to the gods, their skills were not considered sufficiently important to warrant inclusion amongst the divinely imparted *technai* of Sophocles' *Antigone* or the Aeschylean *Prometheus Vincetus*.

---

<sup>52</sup> The response to Praxiteles' Aphrodite suggests an ancient approximation to the 'shock of the new'. Spivey's [1995: 178] chapter section is entitled 'The shock of the nude'; cf. Havelock (1995).

<sup>53</sup> Xen. *Mem.* 3.1.2-3 implies that incompetent sculptors might even be penalised by law.

<sup>54</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 769b.

<sup>55</sup> Hermes' function in this respect is attested by Ar. *Pax* 389 f., 429 (δημιουργικῶς); the god may have attracted this function owing to the ceaseless requirement for Athenian artisans to produce his images.

Women were the silent artists of the spindle and the loom. They too were beholden to divine favour, though their special gift of vital handicraft went largely unacknowledged and unremarked.<sup>56</sup> Of the deities associated with the arts, Athena, the purveyor of *sophia* in general, oversaw women's handiwork in particular.<sup>57</sup> It was for Athena that the women of Athens wove the *peplos* on the occasion of the Great Panathenaia.<sup>58</sup> In some traditions, she was the goddess of all manual kinds of *technê*: the Orphic verse χειρῶν ὀλλυμένων ἔρρει πολύμητις Ἀθήνη ('when hands perish, resourceful Athena absents herself') was well-known to followers of Anaxagoras (the friend of Pericles and Pheidias) who interpreted it allegorically as equating the goddess with *technê*.<sup>59</sup> But it was the lame god Hephaestus, an artisan first and foremost rather than a representative of creative inspiration, who in psychological terms provided the most appropriate divine projection of the lowly artist's *persona*, a tradition dating back to Homer.<sup>60</sup> With such a patron, the profession of the artist was likely to be held in ambiguous esteem.

Lucian recalled a dream he once had at a time when he was contemplating a career as a sculptor. *Paideia*, personified, warned him:

εἰ δὲ καὶ Φειδίας ἢ Πολύκλειτος γένοιο καὶ πολλὰ θαυμαστὰ ἐξεργάσαιο, τὴν μὲν τέχνην ἅπαντες ἐπαινέσονται, οὐκ ἔστι δὲ ὅστις τῶν ἰδόντων, εἰ νοῦν ἔχοι, εὐξαίτ' ἄν σοὶ ὅμοιος γενέσθαι· οἶος γὰρ ἄν ᾦς, βάνουσος καὶ χειρῶναξ καὶ ἀποχειροβίωτος νομισθήσῃ.

Were you to become even a Pheidias or Polykleitos and produce many marvellous works, everyone would praise your craftsmanship but none of those who saw it, if they were sane, would pray to be like you. For whatever you were, you would be considered a *banausos*, a manual worker who lives by his hands.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Barber (1994) 239-44. According to Xenophon (*Lac.Pol.* 1.3) it was the universal practice of Greek freeborn women except in Sparta, where they used female slaves. Plato's extended discussion of weaving in *Pol.* 279b-283c ignores women's particular claim to the art.

<sup>57</sup> *Pl. Pol.* 274d, *Leg.* 920e.

<sup>58</sup> *Pl. Euthyph.* 6c.

<sup>59</sup> Syncellus *Chron.* 1 140 C 1 p. 282.19-21 Dindorf. Orion *Etym.* 163.23 (= *Orph. Frag.* F347 Kern) gives the text as ἔρρεν πολύεργος Ἀθήνη.

<sup>60</sup> *Od.* 6.232.

<sup>61</sup> Lucian, *Somn.* 9.

Even if individual artists' conspicuous fame and skill might elevate them in public estimation, ambitious men were not advised to try to emulate their achievements:

οὐδείς εὐφυῆς νέος ἢ τὸν ἐν Πίσῃ θεασάμενος Δία γένεσθαι Φειδίας ἐπεθύμησεν, ἢ τὴν Ἥραν τὴν ἐν Ἄργει Πολύκλειτος...οὐ γὰρ ἀναγκαῖον, εἰ τέρπει τὸ ἔργον ὡς χαρίεν, ἄξιον σπουδῆς εἶναι τὸν εἰργασμένον.

No gifted youngster, on seeing the Zeus at Olympia or the Hera at Argos, ever wanted to be Pheidias or Polykleitos...if a work pleases us for its beauty, it does not follow that the man who made it is worthy of our serious regard.<sup>62</sup>

The repeated reference to 'Pheidias and Polykleitos' point to the exceptional nature of their achievement. If part of the reason in the eyes of their contemporaries was political notoriety and intellectual renown, later generations knew them by their works, and counted them as exemplars in their respective fields.<sup>63</sup> But the traditionally low esteem in which artists were held in his time may have provided part of the rationale for Polykleitos to seek to offer an intellectual justification for his art by composing the treatise which came to constitute such a notable event in art history.

## VI

### *Artistic developments*

The question of innovation in fifth-century art thus requires that the less elevated social perspective of the artist be constantly borne in mind. The pursuit of competitive innovation was an upper-class tradition, largely reserved for the traditional spheres of intellectual rather than manual endeavour, but it clearly percolated down to lower levels of society where it is inevitably less well-attested. The indirect nature of the evidence also forces us to ask what we can know, in principle and in practice, about how and when changes in visual culture take place and how they are perceived.

---

<sup>62</sup> Plut. *Per.* 2.1.

<sup>63</sup> Already in the 350s Pheidias, Zeuxis, and Parrhasios could be cited as exemplars: Isoc. *Antid.* 2, cf. Pl. *Meno* 91d.



Art has a complex relation to society, and visual sensibility differs greatly between societies and individuals. The perspective of two-and-a-half millenia may also suggest a misleadingly coherent view of five centuries of Greek art, commonly systematised in a number of more or less distinct genres: sculpture in wood, stone and metal; architecture; panel, scene and mural-painting; pottery and vase-painting; and small-scale decorative art. These potentially misleading categories, shaped by intervening centuries of visual experience and theory, are exemplified by the surviving material evidence in varying degrees. But while there are tangible remains of architecture, sculpture and pottery, large-scale painting, a genre of major importance in fifth-century Athens, is almost wholly lost. Some of its methods and qualities may reasonably be inferred from vase-painting, but pottery was by comparison a minor art with different aesthetic criteria.<sup>64</sup> Such a procedure cannot avoid begging the question of the relationship between two art forms potentially as distinct in scale and significance as the singing of a *skolion* and the performance of a tragedy.

This glaring deficiency in our material evidence highlights the fact that what we see preserved of ancient art may itself look quite different from what the ancients actually saw. Even the surviving statues and buildings may have been painted in ways which would make their original appearance seem relatively alien and unfamiliar to modern eyes.<sup>65</sup> The different expectations and criteria for appreciation effectively amounts to a different way of seeing for ancient eyes, and a different construction of the field of visual experience. Aristophanes' audience might have been less excited by temple sculpture than by novel visual effects on stage, of which the rowing-scene in the *Frogs* was an example, following a precedent set by Kratinos' *Odyssês*, where the device was described as 'bringing on stage a new toy' (νεοχμὸν ἄθυρμα).<sup>66</sup> For if it was from tragedy that people knew how the gods spoke, it was from contemporary sculpture that they knew what they looked like and how they dressed:

---

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Pollitt (1974) 242.

<sup>65</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 4. 420c, Pliny *NH* 35.133: *circumlitio* is the painting of hair, eyes etc. to add life and depth.

<sup>66</sup> Krat. fr. 152 KA.

κάλλῳς εἰκὸς τοὺς ἡμιθέους τοῖς ῥήμασι μείζοσι χρῆσθαι·  
καὶ γὰρ τοῖς ἱματίοις ἡμῶν χρῶνται πολὺ σεμνοτέροισιν.<sup>67</sup>

And anyway it's natural that the demigods should use bigger words than us;  
after all, they wear much more splendid clothes than we do.

The recognition of artistic innovation, while an undeniable aspect of experience in a society as visually rich as that of ancient Athens, will thus have depended to some degree on what the different genres of art signified to its contemporary viewers. This significance may itself have been shifting, just as intellectual innovations in the increasingly secular atmosphere of the late fifth century were changing (or threatening to change) the meaning of concepts like 'nature', 'soul', and 'god'. The aesthetic appeal of art was clearly far from its sole, or even primary, function: as the words τέχνη and ἔργον imply, art was primarily something that required skill and labour, the product of which was tangible, utilitarian, and partook of the sacral dimension accorded to all significant activities.<sup>68</sup>

From a psychological viewpoint, therefore, the notion of development and innovation in Athenian art, as far as its ancient viewers (if not practitioners) are concerned, can hardly be thought about in isolation from Athenian religious sentiment and practice. The place of art in ancient Greece was intimately associated with religion, and most formal Greek sculpture and architecture arose out of religious dedications and the ubiquitous local cults. This fact may offer a further clue to the nature of innovation in Greek art. If it shared with Greek religious thinking a basic conservatism, at least in subject matter, this was combined with an openness to innovate, experiment, and take up external influences.<sup>69</sup> Such a parallel offers a way of identifying possible innovations in the art of the period by observing how they reflect innovations in the non-visual representation of the familiar subjects of the Greek imagination. The artistic media inevitably reflected, and influenced, the changing faces of gods and heroes, men and women, and sundry creatures of myth, as portrayed in fifth-century comedy

<sup>67</sup> *Ar. Ran.* 1060-61; cf. *Av.* 514-6, *Eccl.* 779-83.

<sup>68</sup> It was not until the eighteenth century that 'art' acquired its modern meaning (distinct from skill) as applied to painting and to the arts in general: Williams (1961) 60.

<sup>69</sup> See Ch. 7.

and tragedy: this subtle interplay between the visual and the non-visual is clearly a matter of crucial and complex significance for our understanding of Greek art.<sup>70</sup>

An example is the personification of abstract concepts such as *Nike*, *Tyche*, and *Nemesis*, the portrayal of which was to become increasingly common in the fourth century, with the work of sculptors like Skopas (*Pothos*) and Kephisodotos (*Eirene and Ploutos*).<sup>71</sup> But already in the later fifth century there appears the statuesque *Nemesis* (perhaps of the 430s, by Pheidias' pupil Agorakritos) and the *Nike* of Paionios of Mende with its clinging drapery (c. 420).<sup>72</sup> Aristophanes' introduction of a colossal statue of *Eirene* in his play of that name may have been inspired by the creation of just such a personification in fact.<sup>73</sup> Parrhasios' depiction of *Demos* attracted praise for its perceptive portrayal of character: the painting was felt to capture the mercurial nature of the Athenian *dêmos*, showing it as *varium, iracundum, iniustum, inconstantem, eundum exorabilem, clementem, misericordem, gloriosum, excelsum, humilem, ferocem fugacemque et omnia pariter* ('fickle, irascible, unjust, at the same time merciful, gentle and compassionate, boastful and proud yet humble, bold yet timid, and all equally').<sup>74</sup> Despite its daunting multiplicity, Parrhasios' *Demos* may have inspired the creation of a later version by Euphranor;<sup>75</sup> but the latter was proudly conscious of a stylistic advance on his predecessor, famously remarking that Parrhasios' Theseus was fed on roses, his on beef.<sup>76</sup> In thus alluding to his use of *chiaroscuro* (the use of highlights and shading to indicate depth) in comparison with Parrhasios' more linear style, Euphranor had found a way of surpassing the *τέρματα τέχνης* which his predecessor claimed to have revealed through his art.

<sup>70</sup> See, for example, Webster (1939).

<sup>71</sup> Pedley (1992) 172. There may be a parallel with the increasing use of allegory in the late fifth century in the work of followers of Anaxagoras such as Diogenes of Apollonia and in particular Metrodorus of Lampsacus. Allegorical techniques are also much in evidence in the Derveni papyrus: Janko (1997).

<sup>72</sup> *Nemesis, Nike*: Pedley (1992) 105, 126.

<sup>73</sup> Personified abstractions are also found in ship-names like *Eunoia*: Hornblower (1996) 284-5.

<sup>74</sup> Pliny *NH* 35.69.

<sup>75</sup> Paus. 1.3.3.

<sup>76</sup> Pliny *NH* 35. 129, Plut. *Mor.* 346a. Parrhasios' Theseus may have been included in the same composition (in the Stoa Eleutherios) as his *Demos*: Robertson (1981)152.

## VII

*Technique and ἀκρίβεια*

The changing vision of a culture is bound to involve mutual influence between different forms of expression, whether literary or philosophical, religious or political. Stylistic innovations in visual culture are therefore likely to reflect, follow or give rise to innovations in other media.<sup>77</sup> But the dominant forms of cultural expression are dictated by the wider political, social and economic context: in Athenian society they were *logos* and *mousikê*, and these influenced the visual media both directly and indirectly. As modes and speeds of communication change, the relationship between these different kinds of expression are bound to vary. Thus the increasing literacy of the latter fifth century meant that artistic ideas and techniques were able to be more widely disseminated in written manuals, as well as by graphic example and demonstration, providing new opportunities for self-conscious experimentation and innovation. It is hard not to see parallels between visual and other forms of artistic expression (although this may beg the question about what counts as a parallel expression of the same message in different media), even if, on the whole, they seem to have followed their own evolutionary logic. While visual artists were rarely literary or musical figures (and *vice versa*), comparisons between different *technai* (as in the Hippocratic comment quoted above) were traditional.<sup>78</sup>

There is little evidence to suggest that the Greeks ever considered art to have the uniquely aesthetic appeal that makes the visual connotations of the word central to its modern meaning. The idea of functional or utilitarian art as separate from decorative or fine art is a modern distinction, and a modern view of artistic ‘levels’ may be inappropriate in the ancient world. Both mural-painting and vase-painting, for instance, were subsumed under the heading of τέχνη. The scope of

---

<sup>77</sup> The use of terms like *Zeitgeist* demands particular caution: see Hallett (1986) 72-5.

<sup>78</sup> E.g. Pindar’s use of architectural imagery in the context of the construction of his odes, *Ol.* 6.1-4. Plutarch records (*Mor.* 346f) that ὁ Σιμωνίδης τὴν μὲν ζωγραφίαν πόησιν σιωπῶσαν προσαγορεύει, τὴν δὲ ποίησιν ζωγραφίαν λαλοῦσαν (‘Simonides calls painting silent poetry, and poetry articulate painting’) and goes on to compare the vividness (ἐνάργεια) of Thucydides’ composition and characterisation with that of painting (347a-c). Cf. Pl. *Phaedr.* 275d.

τέχνη covered the whole range of art and artisanry, and by the end of the fifth century, the word also embraced the literary articulation or presentation of technical applications and methods (as in rhetorical *technai*). The advent of more widespread literacy and increased communications throughout the Greek world will have had an incalculable effect on the understanding of artistic accomplishment and on self-conscious attempts to innovate.

An equally influential intellectual development was the rationalistic investigation of physical phenomena. While the work of artists and architects demonstrates that the illusory nature of optical experience had long been understood in practice, the increasing articulation of the νόμος/φύσις distinction in the latter part of the fifth century might have inspired artists to experiment with new formal theories of proportion and perspective whereby, for instance, they might better seek to capture the *phusis* of a sculpted object or painted scene through the application of artistic *nomoi*.

Philosophers whose physical theories led them to examine the nature of perception were, significantly, associated with contributions to graphic techniques. Anaxagoras and Democritus were said to have been influenced by a commentary written by the ‘scene-painter’ Agatharchos of Samos on his use of perspective.<sup>79</sup> But it seems more likely that influence went both ways.<sup>80</sup> A connection may perhaps be inferred from the discussion, attested in this period, of Heraclitus’ dictum that the sun was the breadth of a human foot.<sup>81</sup> Anaxagoras, who seems to have formed a view of the composition of heavenly bodies from the meteorite which fell on Aegospotami in 467 B.C., calculated (in opposition to Heraclitus) that the sun must be a fiery stone whose size was larger than the Peloponnese.<sup>82</sup> The perception of its size as a foot across was thus to be explained as a visual νόμος which belied the sun’s true φύσις: but by applying rules of perspective, it

---

<sup>79</sup> Vitruvius, *7 praef.* 11. On the different meanings of σκηνογραφία, see below, Sect. 9.

<sup>80</sup> Agatharchos’ late date (discussed below) suggests that he was influenced by Anaxagoras rather than *vice versa*.

<sup>81</sup> Heraclitus, fr. 3 DK; it is quoted by the author of Derveni papyrus, probably in the context of its refutation.

<sup>82</sup> Hippolytus, *Ref.* 1.8.3-10=DK 59 A 42. Cf. Gorgias, fr. 31 DK (‘the sun is a molten mass’).

might be shown that the further away an object was from its viewer, the smaller it would appear.<sup>83</sup>

The fragments of Democritus also indicate an interest in technical, as well as aesthetic, questions. He held that ‘one should choose not every pleasure, but only that concerned with the beautiful (τὸ καλόν)’, and he cautioned (distantly echoing Polykleitos) that ‘beautiful objects are wrought by study through effort, but ugly things are reaped automatically without toil’.<sup>84</sup> As a physical atomist, he was bound to believe that the true nature of an object was distinct from the way it was seen; thus he stated that ‘colour exists by convention’;<sup>85</sup> and in a treatise on knowledge entitled *The Canon* he affirmed that sight, along with the other elements of perception, was not a genuine *epistêmê* but belonged to the sort of knowledge he characterised as σκοτία, ‘suspect’.<sup>86</sup> Surviving titles of works written by him indicate the range of his interests in this area: they include *On Colours*, *On Disproportionate Lines and Solids*, and *On Painting*.<sup>87</sup>

If vision was an illusion, then art was *a fortiori* illusory, and innovation in art might be theorised as progress in the creation of just such an illusion. Later ancient commentators suggest an awareness that the early development of art could be characterised in this way. Although explicit attributions of stylistic newness are sparse in our sources, some ancient judgements on what was thought to distinguish older styles of art from newer styles accord with modern views about the development of the Greek artistic vision. The Hellenistic literary critic Demetrius, in seeking to contrast the simple style of early orators with the greater complexity of their successors, drew a parallel with the contrast that archaic statuary presented to the works of Pheidias and his successors:

διὸ καὶ περιεξεσμένον ἔχει τι ἢ ἐρμηνεία ἢ πρὶν καὶ εὐσταλές, ὡσπερ καὶ τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἀγάλματα, ὧν τέχνη ἐδόκει ἢ συστολή καὶ ἰσχνότης, ἢ δὲ

<sup>83</sup> Cf. the interesting speculations of Erich Frank, reported by Guthrie (1965) 270: ‘With Anaxagoras the world practically gains a new dimension in the Greek consciousness.’

<sup>84</sup> Democr. fr. 207, 182 DK.

<sup>85</sup> Fr. 9 DK.

<sup>86</sup> Fr. 10b (*On Logic or The Canon*), 11 DK.

<sup>87</sup> Fr. 5h, 11p, 28a DK.

τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα ἐρμηνεῖα τοῖς Φειδίου ἔργοις ἤδη ἔοικεν, ἔχουσά τι καὶ μεγαλεῖον καὶ ἀκριβὲς ἅμα.<sup>88</sup>

The earlier rhetorical style is well-polished and neat, rather like ancient statues whose art seemed to lie in their compactness and economy. Their successors' style is like the sculpture of Pheidias, in having a quality of grandeur combined with precision in detail.

Demetrius here offers Pheidias as a chronological marker separating ἀρχαῖα ἀγάλματα from modern works; but the attribution of qualities such as grandeur and precision shows that distinction of old from new could be a matter of style as much as chronology. The particular focus of novelty, 'precision in detail', recalls Polykleitos' remark about the 'clay under the nail'. Pausanias used ἀρχαῖος with similar stylistic connotations to describe the properties characteristic of art of the Archaic period (i.e. before 480 B.C.). He describes an ἀγαλμα in the temple of Artemis at Ephesus as ἀρχαιότερον καὶ ἀγρότερον τὴν τέχνην, and the statue of an athlete, Arrhachion, as τά τε ἄλλα ἀρχαῖος καὶ οὐχ ἥκιστα ἐπὶ τῷ σχήματι.<sup>89</sup> Works of this kind might be identifiable as ἀρχαῖος both by their composition (σχῆμα) and by the comparative simplicity of their workmanship.

We can readily concur with judgements of this kind in comparing, say, the static, impassive *kouroi* of the early Archaic period with the more lively and fluid creations of the High Classical and Hellenistic periods. But the desire to achieve ἀκρίβεια carried the obvious danger of over-elaboration, a concern that did not escape the notice of practitioners. Kallimachos, the reputed author of the Corinthian column, was, according to Pliny, both tireless in the execution of his art and his own harshest critic in this regard (*semper calumniator sui, nec finem habentis diligentiae*): 'from this he received the nickname Κατατηξίτεχνος (Pernickety), a noteworthy warning that even diligence has its limits. His *Spartan Girls Dancing* is a work of consummate technique which has lost all charm (*gratia*) through fussiness'.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Demetr. *Eloc.* 14.

<sup>89</sup> Paus. 10.38.7 and 8. 40. 1. An archaic statue found at the site was identified by Pausanias' commentator, Sir James Frazer, as being that of Arrhachion.

<sup>90</sup> Pliny *NH* 34.92. Pausanias (1.26.7) and Vitruvius (4.1.10) are inclined to a more favourable view of the artist's merits. The significance of Κατατηξίτεχνος is well and aptly supported by the

## VIII

*Limits of illusion*

No contemporary document survives from the late fifth-century which expresses a judgement on art as sophisticated as this notion that over-elaboration might be detrimental to a work's aesthetic impact. A fragment of Democritus, which speaks of 'images conspicuous for their dress and ornament, empty of heart' may hint at such a distinction.<sup>91</sup> But the popular reaction to such works was more likely to be a naive pleasure. Describing the snakes on the shield of Heracles, Hesiod had said τὰ δ' ἔδαίετο θαύματα ἔργα.<sup>92</sup> θαῦμα, which covers a wide range of connotations from 'astonishment' to 'admiration', remained an appropriate and characteristic sentiment to express in the face of works of art which exhibited notable skill and inventiveness.<sup>93</sup> While this may often have overlapped with the religious and quasi-magical associations with art's objects, which might seem to partake of the divine or mysterious qualities of their subject, the derivation of the word ἄγαλμα also points to the aesthetic 'delight' that such a work was presumed to give to its dedicatee and might thus impart to its viewer.

For the Greeks, statuary seemed to have come alive with the mythical Daedalus, the subject of comedies staged in this period by Plato Comicus and by Aristophanes himself.<sup>94</sup> The latter's reference to Daedalus' statues testified to the popular understanding of their power to 'move'.<sup>95</sup> His use of the term Δαιδάλεια is glossed as τὸν ὑπὸ Δαιδάλου κατασκευασθέντα ἀνδριάντα, ὡς διὰ τὸ ἀποδιδράσκειν δεδεμένον.<sup>96</sup> A late commentator expands:

---

use of κατατήκειν in Dion. Hal. *Dem.* 51: πλάσται μὲν καὶ γραφεῖς...τοσοῦτους εἰσφέρονται πόνους ὥστε καὶ φλέβια καὶ πτίλα καὶ χνοῦς καὶ τὰ τούτοις ὅμοια εἰς ἄκρον ἐξεργάζεσθαι καὶ κατατήκειν εἰς ταῦτα τὰς τέχνας: 'sculptors and painters take such great pains to elaborate veins, feathers, hair and so on, and to give painstaking attention to their art in these matters'. Demosthenes himself, the object of the comparison, is described (*ibid. loc.*) as πάντα βασανίζων, a 'universal scrutinizer', who 'wrote nothing casually' (οὐδὲν ἐκ τοῦ ἐπιτυχόντος ἔγραφεν).

<sup>91</sup> Democr. fr. 195 DK.

<sup>92</sup> Hes. *Scut.* 165.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Pollitt (1974) 189f., s.v. θαυμαστός, θαῦμα.

<sup>94</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 6.26.5.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. Morris (1991) 215-37.

<sup>96</sup> 'Statuary created by Daedalus, fettered so as not to run away': Ar. fr. \*202 KA = Hesych. δ 48. Cf. Pl. *Meno* 97d with sch. *ad loc.*, Krat. fr. 75 KA.



τῶν παλαιῶν δημιουργῶν πλαττόντων τὰ ζῶια τυφλά, ὁ Δαίδαλος καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῖς ἀνεπέτασεν καὶ τοὺς πόδας διέστησεν, ὡς καὶ δόξαν κατασχεῖν ὅτι καὶ ἔμψυχά ἐστι καὶ κινοῦνται καὶ φθέγγονται.<sup>97</sup>

Sculptors of old produced blind creatures, but Daedalus both opened their eyes and parted their feet so as to give the impression that they were alive and moving and speaking.

By the fifth century, 'Daedalic' statuary such as that described here had been superseded in artistic terms.<sup>98</sup> But traditional wooden statues in shrines and temples, even if they lacked the χάρις that brought *kolossoi* to life, could still attract reverence.<sup>99</sup> A late anecdote seems to preserve the sort of views on which such sentiments were based:

τὸν γοῦν Αἰσχύλον φασί, τῶν Δελφῶν ἀξιούντων εἰς τὸν θεὸν γράψαι παιᾶνα, εἰπεῖν ὅτι βέλτιστα Τυννίχῳ πεποιήται· παραβαλλόμενον δὲ τὸν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὸν ἐκείνου ταῦτὸν πείσεσθαι τοῖς ἀγάλμασι τοῖς καινοῖς πρὸς τὰ ἀρχαῖα· ταῦτα γὰρ καίπερ ἀπλῶς πεποιημένα θεῖα νομίζεσθαι, τὰ δὲ καινὰ περιέργως εἰργασμένα θαυμάζεσθαι μὲν, θεοῦ δὲ δόξαν ἦττον ἔχειν.<sup>100</sup>

They say that Aeschylus, when asked by the Delphians to write a paeon for the god, replied that the best paeon had been written by Tynnichos; and that if his own composition were to be compared to the latter's, it would be like comparing new statues with old. The old, though simply made, are held to be divine, while the new may excite admiration for their elaborate workmanship, but give less of an impression of holiness.

The attempt to distinguish the religious and emotional impact of a cult statue from its artistic meaning was not likely to be made to a significant degree until a more secular age acquired the habit of differentiating the formal properties of a work of

<sup>97</sup> Zenob. 1.14.

<sup>98</sup> [Pl.] *Hipp. ma.* 282a.

<sup>99</sup> *Charis* and illusion: Frontisi-Ducroux (1975) 72. If Athena was equated with hands/*technê* in the Orphic verse cited above, Aphrodite might be similarly associated with eyes/*charis*, on the basis of the verbal echo in Aeschylus' lines about the *kolossoi* in *Ag.* 416-19: ὀμμάτων δ' ἐν ἀχηνίαις ἔρρει πᾶσ' Ἀφροδίτα. Such equations anticipated the curious allegorical doctrines of Metrodorus of Lampsacus (Phld. *On Poems* 2=P. *Herc.* 1081b fr. 12.1 f.).

<sup>100</sup> Porph. *De abst.* 2.18. Cf. the παλαιὸν βρέτας of Athena in Aesch. *Eum.* 80; also Paus. 1.27.1, 2.4.5 etc.

art from its function and effect. The main criterion, therefore, at least in the popular, non-technical evaluation on works of art in ancient Greece, was one of naive naturalism, that is, how accurately or realistically an artefact might seem to represent its subject or model.

The illusionistic goal of art is a theme which runs throughout ancient literary appreciations of representational art. An echo may even survive of the notion that *nomos* could contribute to artistic innovation in respect of the portrayal of *phusis*. According to Pliny, the Athenian painter Apollodoros, active in the ninety-third Olympiad (408-405 B.C.), ‘was the first to represent realistic figures and was the first to confer glory on the paintbrush by law’ (*hic primus species exprimere instituit primusque gloriam penicillo iure contulit*).<sup>101</sup> For Plutarch, Apollodoros symbolised Athens’ claim to artistic glory, as the inventor of techniques of pictorial illusion which, the artist claimed, made his works inimitable:

πολλῶν μὲν δὴ καὶ ἄλλων ἢ πόλις ἦδε μήτηρ καὶ τροφὸς εὐμενῆς τεχνῶν γέγονε, τὰς μὲν εὐραμένη καὶ ἀναφήνασα πρώτη, ταῖς δὲ δύναμιν προσθεῖσα καὶ τιμὴν καὶ αὐξήσιν· οὐχ ἦκιστα δ’ ὑπ’ αὐτῆς ζωγραφία προῆκται καὶ κεκόσμηται. καὶ γὰρ Ἀπολλόδορος ὁ ζωγράφος, ἀνθρώπων πρῶτος ἐξευρῶν φθορὰν καὶ ἀπόχρωσιν σκιᾶς, Ἀθηναῖος ἦν· οὗ τοῖς ἔργοις ἐπιγέγραπται «μωμήσεταιί τις μᾶλλον ἢ μιμήσεται».<sup>102</sup>

This city has been the mother and kind nurse of many other arts, some of which she was the first to discover and bring to light, while to others she added strength and honour and advancement. Not least, the art of painting was by her enhanced and embellished. Apollodoros the painter, the first man to discover the art of creating depth with light and shade, was an Athenian. Regarding his works the following epigram was composed: *Easy to deprecate, harder to emulate.*

In Euripides’ *Ion* of c.410 B.C., the chorus of Creusa’s handmaidens enter with chants of admiration at the sight of relief-sculptures lining the walls of Apollo’s

<sup>101</sup> Pliny *NH* 35.60. Jex-Blake and Sellers *ad loc.* note that the judgement goes back to Xenokrates and point out that *species* is ‘evidently the vague translation of some Greek technical term’. *Iure* suggests that the Pliny’s Greek source may have contained the word νόμος in some form.

<sup>102</sup> Plut. *Glor. Ath.* 2 (= *Mor.* 346a): Pliny ascribes the verse to Zeuxis (*NH* 35.62), perhaps a more reliable tradition since Plutarch avoids ascribing it explicitly to Apollodoros.

temple at Delphi.<sup>103</sup> Their remarks express solely their excitement at recognising the familiar characters and tales there depicted.<sup>104</sup> As an anonymous writer pithily remarked:

ἐν γὰρ τραγωδοποιΐα καὶ ζωγραφίᾳ ὅστις πλεῖστα ἐξαπατῆ ὅμοια τοῖς ἀληθινοῖς ποιέων, οὗτος ἄριστος.<sup>105</sup>

In tragedy and in painting, whoever is most deceptive in making things like the truth is the best.

It was commonplace that sculptors of *kolossoi* used illusionistic techniques which involved some understanding of perspective effects.<sup>106</sup> The criteria for judging a painting in respect of its ability to present a realistic depiction could be quite demanding.<sup>107</sup>

Success in this aim was the subject of well-known anecdotes about the ability of artists to persuade viewers that they were in the presence of the ‘real thing’. Earlier in the fifth century, Myron’s sculpture of a heifer was so extensively praised for its realism that no fewer than thirty epigrams about it are preserved in the *Greek Anthology*.<sup>108</sup> Pliny recounted an anecdote about the late fifth-century painters Parrhasios of Ephesos and Zeuxis of Herakleia, which exemplifies the popular contemporary attitude to artistic value-judgements:

Parrhasios is said to have embarked on a contest with Zeuxis, who produced a picture grapes so successfully that birds flew up to the stage buildings. Parrhasios then painted a curtain with consummate realism. Zeuxis, full of pride at the birds’ testimony to his skill, eventually requested that the curtain be drawn and his picture shown. When he realised his error, he conceded defeat with a modesty that did him honour, saying that

<sup>103</sup> Eur. *Ion* 184-218.

<sup>104</sup> ‘It’s just like Athens!’ they exclaim (184-5). Their open-mouthed naiveté suggests ‘the perfect picture of the awe-struck tourist’ (Kitto [1966] 319) - that is, of the kind of viewer who is apt to respond to novelty by reducing it to a familiar experience back home.

<sup>105</sup> *Dissoi Logoi* 3.10 (anon. *apud* DK 2. 339. 27).

<sup>106</sup> Pl. *Soph.* 236a.

<sup>107</sup> Pl. *Crit.* 107d.

<sup>108</sup> *Anth. Gr.* 9.713-42; two epigrams are attributed to Socrates’ contemporary, Euenos of Paros.

while he himself had only deceived the birds, Parrhasios had succeeded in deceiving him, though he was himself an artist.<sup>109</sup>

The capacity to be deceived need not have been a cause for shame, but might even have merited pride on the part of the viewer as demonstrating his aesthetic sensibility. Such, at any rate, was Plutarch's explanation of Gorgias' dictum on the deceptive goal of rhetoric:<sup>110</sup>

«ὁ τ' ἀπατήσας δικαιότερος τοῦ μὴ ἀπατήσαντος, καὶ ὁ ἀπατηθεὶς σοφώτερος τοῦ μὴ ἀπατηθέντος». ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἀπατήσας δικαιότερος, ὅτι τοῦθ' ὑποσχόμενος πεποίηκεν· ὁ δ' ἀπατηθεὶς σοφώτερος· εὐάλωτον γὰρ ὑφ' ἡδονῆς λόγων τὸ μὴ ἀναίσθητον.<sup>111</sup>

'The one who deceives is more honest than the one who doesn't, and the one who is taken in is cleverer than the one who is not'. The deceiver is more honest because he achieved what he undertook to do, and the one who is taken in is cleverer because susceptibility to the pleasure of words shows aesthetic sensitivity.

The limits of art, a question which exercised Choerilus of Samos and Parrhasios himself, are shown in this anecdote as elusive and subjective. Illusion can surpass illusion: the artist himself is the supreme viewer and the ultimate judge.<sup>112</sup>

The story of Parrhasios and Zeuxis highlights themes that are characteristic in Greek, and particularly Athenian, culture in this period: competitiveness (ἀγῶνες), deceitfulness (ἀπατή), and the receding limits of art. An explicit indication of the former is apparent in the comment written on an early fifth-century Greek vase, which seems to point to the remarkable use of foreshortening in the artist's depiction of the symposiasts: its creator Euthymides boasted ἔγραψεν ὁ Πολίου ὡς οὐδέποτε Εὐφρόνιος.<sup>113</sup> This overt expression of rivalry has parallels

<sup>109</sup> Pliny *NH.* 35.64-5. Another story records Parrhasios being worsted in a competition at Samos with Timanthes of Kythnos (*NH* 35.72).

<sup>110</sup> Gorg. fr. 23 DK (with reference to tragedy).

<sup>111</sup> Plut. *Glor. Ath.* 2 (= *Mor.* 348c).

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Morales (1996). She cites (312 n.14) Plutarch's fragmentary *On Love*: 'One seer's sight and one hearer's hearing is more developed by nature (*physis*) and more trained by art (*techne*) to recognise beauty than another's, the hearing of the musician, where melodies are concerned, and the vision of the painter where it is a matter of shapes and forms.'

<sup>113</sup> Robertson (1981) 64-5. 'Painted by the son of Polios, as never Euphronios did'. Engemann (1987) argues that the last three words are put into the mouth of one of the symposiasts depicted;

in late fifth-century Athens in the defiant verses of Apollodoros (or Zeuxis) and Parrhasios cited earlier. Competitiveness was the motor of innovation in this period, and artists as well as rhetoricians, musicians and physicians, might seek to outdo their fellows in technical and imaginative inventiveness.<sup>114</sup>

The idea of painting's power to deceive was also traditional, and Empedocles had cautioned against the deception presented by temple-paintings.<sup>115</sup> But in a more secular spirit Gorgias' *Encomium on Helen* stressed the delight of artistic *poikilia*:

οἱ γραφεῖς ὅταν ἐκ πολλῶν χρωμάτων καὶ σωμάτων ἐν σῶμα καὶ σχῆμα τελείως ἀπεργάζωνται, τέρπουσι τὴν ὄψιν· ἡ δὲ τῶν ἀδριάντων ποίησις καὶ ἡ τῶν ἀγαλμάτων ἐργασία θέαν ἠδεῖαν παρέσχετο τοῖς ὄμμασιν. οὕτω τὰ μὲν λυπεῖν τὰ δὲ ποθεῖν πέφυκε τὴν ὄψιν. πολλὰ δὲ πολλοῖς πολλῶν ἔρωτα καὶ πόθον ἐνεργάζεται πραγμάτων καὶ σωμάτων.<sup>116</sup>

When painters create a single figure and image out of many colours and forms, they give delight to the sight; and the creation of sculptures and the fashioning of statues affords a divine pleasure to vision. In this way it can make eyes grieve or make them yearn. A profusion of images engenders in many people a love of diverse actions and figures.

If 'pleasure' were the purpose of art, it was of the same kind that rhetoric afforded, that of artifice and illusion. Since reality itself was unknowable and uncommunicable, appearance and reality might be conflated for the purpose of art and entertainment (*ψυχαγωγία*).<sup>117</sup> But therein lay an unresolvable tension, arising from the recognition that while the artist might seek to discover better and surer ways in which truth might be represented, artistic progress and the pleasure of the viewers depended largely on his skill in extending the bounds, not of truth, but of falsehood.

---

but the use of the name Euphronios, renowned as Euthymides' artistic rival, rules against this interpretation .

<sup>114</sup> However, the idea that painting contests took place at the Isthmian and Pythian festivals (Pliny *NH* 35.58) may be an invention of Douris (Jex-Blake and Sellers [1896] p. lxiv).

<sup>115</sup> Emped. fr. 23 DK.

<sup>116</sup> Gorg. *Helen* 18.

<sup>117</sup> Gorg. frs. 3, 26 DK; cf. *Helen* 10-11.

## IX

*Realism and aesthetics*

The moral aspect of the question was bound to exercise Plato, who censured illusionistic painting as a *mimesis* at a remove yet further from 'reality' than the object itself.<sup>118</sup> The more accurate a representation might appear, the more deceitful it was bound to be in fact. By contrast, he praised Egyptian art for its unchanging use, over a period of thousands of years, of a limited range of καλὰ σχήματα.<sup>119</sup> But the possibility of greater naturalism, aided by new and gradually improved techniques which had emerged earlier in the fifth century such as hollow-casting for bronze and a larger palette of colours, had long been a prime criterion for the Greeks' evaluation of artistic achievement. It will have been a prime ingredient in the pursuit and recognition of innovation.

Plato's alarm at the use of the illusionistic techniques of *skiagraphia* and *skênographia*, which were being developed at Athens while he was a young man, confirms that these were seen as notable technical innovations in painterly skill. *Skiagraphia*, the blending of light and dark shades, could be used to produce a more realistic representation of body mass. For Plato it was not far removed from the conjuring tricks which aim to deceive by taking advantage of some weakness in human nature:

ὧ δὴ ἡμῶν τῷ παθήματι τῆς φύσεως ἡ σκιαγραφία ἐπιθεμένη γοητεία οὐδὲν ἀπολείπει, καὶ ἡ θαυματοποιία.<sup>120</sup>

*Skiagraphia* in its exploitation of this weakness in our nature falls nothing short of witchcraft and magic.

The invention of the technique of *skênographia* was attributed to Agatharchus, who wrote a manual (*technê*) about it.<sup>121</sup> The word's technical connotation, the optical technique of foreshortening, should be distinguished from its literal meaning

---

<sup>118</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 10.596e-597e.

<sup>119</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 656de.

<sup>120</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 10. 602cd.

<sup>121</sup> Vitruvius, *7 praef.* 11.

‘scene-painting’, the invention of which was attributed to Sophocles and in which it may have originated.<sup>122</sup> The questions of Agatharchus’ date and contribution are difficult. While he may have discovered certain principles bearing on the representation of spatial perspective, Vitruvius’ detailed account of his apparent discovery of the optical vanishing-point after painting a stage-set for Aeschylus is problematic. Evidence that Agatharchus was active in Aeschylus’ time seems to conflict with two anecdotes recorded by Plutarch which make him a contemporary of Zeuxis and Alcibiades.<sup>123</sup> However, the set may have been made for the production of a play by Aeschylus staged after his death.<sup>124</sup> It seems more satisfactory to assign Agatharchus to the 420s, and this accords with evidence for the earliest noteworthy signs of perspective in vase-painting, in the works of the contemporary Eretria Painter and the Meidias Painter.<sup>125</sup>

This dating also accords with the first appearance of the notion that painted objects can give the illusion of occupying space, as well as themselves appearing ‘in the round’. This relatively sophisticated distinction is mentioned by Pliny in connection with Parrhasios’ line-drawings:

Artists are rarely successful in finding an outline which expresses the contours of the figure (*extrema corporum*); for the contour should appear to fold back and enclose the figure so as to give an indication of what lies beyond, that it may clearly suggest what it conceals (*ostendatque quae occultat*).<sup>126</sup>

The techniques of *skênographia* could be applied with considerable effect, as by the painter Timanthes of Kythnos, on whose work Pliny added an interesting aesthetic judgement.<sup>127</sup>

Wanting to emphasise, within the small frame of a picture, the size of a sleeping *Cyclops*, he painted some satyrs nearby, using a ruler to make them the same size as the *Cyclops*’

---

<sup>122</sup> Arist. *Poet.* 1449a18; Padel (1990) 347 f.

<sup>123</sup> Plut. *Per.* 13, *Alcib.* 16.

<sup>124</sup> Robertson (1981) 150.

<sup>125</sup> Pollitt (1974) 240-247.

<sup>126</sup> Pliny *NH* 35.68.

<sup>127</sup> Quint. *Inst.Or.* 2.13.13. Pliny makes Timanthes a contemporary of Parrhasios.

thumb. He is the only artist whose works always suggest more than is in the picture, and while his technique is consummate, his imagination (*ingenium*) surpasses it.<sup>128</sup>

Attention is rarely drawn explicitly to the precise effects of such artistic innovations, evidently because they were taken for granted as improvements over earlier attempts at illusion. As in other τέχναι, the professional training of artists would have involved the painstaking acquisition of traditional techniques, and the practice of the arts tended to be restricted to families of artisans and professional guilds. It was not considered suitable to be taught as a school subject, although in the fourth century its increased prestige (perhaps not unconnected with the levels of financial remuneration available to successful painters) led to the introduction of drawing-lessons in schools, first at Sikyon and then elsewhere throughout Greece.<sup>129</sup>

While there might be inspired advances in technique, the choice of subject matter - mythical and religious subjects, deities with familiar attributes, and victory statues of athletes - still largely depended on convention and on the demands of patrons. The latter, however, also enjoyed decorative and unusual items, like perhaps the unorthodox paintings of Pauson, or murals such as the one commissioned by Alcibiades for his house from Agatharchus - the earliest record of such painting in a private dwelling, though it may have started a trend.<sup>130</sup> Pornographic images may also have had a vogue for private patronage: Pliny records that Parrhasios 'also painted some small obscene pictures, distracting himself by this kind of lewd fun' (*pinxit et minoribus tabellis libidines, eo genere petulantis ioci se reficiens*).<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> Pliny *NH* 35.74: the juxtaposition of Cyclops and satyrs may have been inspired by Euripides' satyr-play *Cyclops*, which has been dated to around 408 B.C. by Seaford (1982).

<sup>129</sup> Pliny adds 'and so painting was received into the front rank of the liberal arts' (*NH* 35.77), a somewhat exaggerated judgement.

<sup>130</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 16, *Per.* 13. Zeuxis had decorated Archelaus' palace at Pella (Aelian, *Var.Hist.* 14.17). Spartan-minded Xenophon disdained the taste for household ornament: γραφαὶ δὲ καὶ ποικιλίαι πλείονας εὐφροσύνας ἀποστεροῦσιν ἢ παρέχουσι, 'Paintings and decorations rob one of more delights than they offer' (*Xen. Mem.* 3.8.10).

<sup>131</sup> Pliny *NH* 35.72; the emperor Tiberius was greatly attached to Parrhasius' picture of Atalanta *Meleagrum fellantis* (Suet. *Tib.* 44). The γραφή that taught chaste Hippolytus what he knew of women was clearly of a different character (Eur. *Hipp.* 1005).



There is evidence for some tension between this kind of realism and a more high-flown idealism. Quintilian records that the sculptor Demetrios, active around the turn of the century, was criticised for being ‘more fond of verisimilitude than beauty’.<sup>132</sup> Pauson’s paintings were censured by Aristotle as unsuitable viewing for children.<sup>133</sup> His representations of ‘inferior characters’ (discussed below), rather than being incompetent, were perhaps too realistic for comfort. Thus the application of technical innovation might have its drawbacks: the urge to innovate threatened to undermine the portrayal of *êthos*.

This term is perhaps the closest the ancients came to a more subtle evaluation of the qualities of a work of art. Ideas of *êthos*, and the associated implication that formal techniques might endanger moral content, are found more explicitly in treatments of musical novelty.<sup>134</sup> But the importance of *êthos* for art-lovers is clear from Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, in which, during an imaginary conversation between Socrates and Parrhasios, Socrates asks:

τὸ πιθανώτατόν τε καὶ ἥδιστον καὶ φιλικώτατον καὶ ποθεινότατον καὶ ἐρασμιώτατον ἀπομιμῆσθε τῆς ψυχῆς ἦθος;... Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ τὸ μεγαλοπρεπές τε καὶ ἐλευθέριον καὶ τὸ ταπεινόν τε καὶ φρόνιμον καὶ τὸ ὕβριστικόν τε καὶ ἀπειρόκαλον καὶ διὰ τοῦ προσώπου καὶ διὰ τῶν σχημάτων καὶ ἐστῶτων καὶ κινουμένων ἀνθρώπων διαφαίνει.<sup>135</sup>

Do you represent the character of the soul, that character which is in the highest degree captivating, delightful, congenial, desirable and worthy of love?... Moreover, qualities of nobility and dignity, humility and servility, wisdom and understanding, insolence and vulgarity, are reflected in the face and in the attitudes of the body, whether they are still or in motion.

Aristotle seems to have pursued these criteria, reversing the general critical trend in seeing higher qualities in the work of Polygnotos over that of his famous successor Zeuxis:

---

<sup>132</sup> Quint. *Inst.Or.* 12.10.10. Xenophon mentions his equestrian statue of Simon, author of *Περὶ ἵππικῆς*. His *Lysimache* (Pliny *NH* 34.76) may have been the inspiration for the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes’ play (produced in 411 B.C.): Lewis (1955).

<sup>133</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 1340a33.

<sup>134</sup> See Ch. 5, Sect. 4.

<sup>135</sup> Xen. *Mem.* 3.10.3-5.

ὁ μὲν γὰρ Πολύγνωτος ἀγαθὸς ἠθογράφος, ἡ δὲ Ζεύξιδος γραφή οὐδὲν ἔχει ἠθος.<sup>136</sup>

Polygnotos was good at depicting *ethos*, but the paintings of Zeuxis have no *ethos*.

The judgment implies that visual illusions which allowed for the portrayal of optical depth might threaten to undermine the portrayal of psychological depth. But increased realism in the rendering of detail, accomplished earlier and far more successfully in sculpture than in pictorial representations, is the visible result of the Greeks' artistic development (insofar as this can be chronologically ascertained without circularity).<sup>137</sup> It is therefore hard not to assume that this was by and large the aim, as well as a fact, of artistic progress and innovation, even if the means of achieving it were not properly understood or appreciated by laymen.

## X

### *Sensationalism and artifice*

Aristophanes suggests that the layman's response was markedly indiscriminating. The few irreverent mentions of artists and artistic matters in his plays show a cheerfully unsophisticated approach to contemporary art and its practitioners. Pheidias is mentioned solely as Pericles' corrupt henchman, the cause of the latter's enactment of the Megara decree which sparked the Peloponnesian War.<sup>138</sup> The dragging onto the stage of a colossal statue of Peace incorporates a hint at the pretensions of 'modern art': the commissioning of large-scale sculpture resulted in the familiar groans of hauliers.<sup>139</sup> The statue surely ranks as one of the 'novel images' of which Aristophanes boasts to his audience in the *Clouds*.<sup>140</sup> However, the visual parody may hint at the fact that the appearance of Pheidias' Athena (and

<sup>136</sup> Arist. *Poet.* 1450a24.

<sup>137</sup> Pollitt (1974) 5: 'The formation of a chronology naturally demands some criterion by which one can judge whether a particular work is later or earlier than another, and the criterion most often adopted in our time has been naturalistic representation'.

<sup>138</sup> Ar. *Pax* 605 f. There may also be an obscure allusion to Iktinos in *Birds* 499-503.

<sup>139</sup> Ar. *Pax* 459 f., 512 f.

<sup>140</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 547: ἀλλ' αἰεὶ καινὰς ιδέας εἰσφέρων σοφίζομαι. Cf. Ch. 3, Sect. 1.

its successors, such as the Zeus at Olympia) may have seemed artistically as well as politically controversial: it was said that the figures on Athena's shield were actually portraits of Pericles and Pheidias.<sup>141</sup>

In several plays extending over the whole period of his *oeuvre* Aristophanes also makes passing jibes at Pauson.<sup>142</sup> Pauson's alleged indigence seems to be related to Aristotle's view that Pauson portrayed 'inferior' types (χείρους).<sup>143</sup> As often, it is hard to fathom the comedian's true intent, but it may be over-literal to infer that Pauson was despised and unsuccessful owing to the ill repute attached to bizarre novelties like his 'rolling horse'.<sup>144</sup> Socrates and his circle were also portrayed as paupers in the *Clouds*; and Euripides was repeatedly scorned for bringing a beggar on stage (in his *Telephus*).<sup>145</sup> The point may be that idealising portraits, commissioned by wealthy patrons, were the norm. The painter Aglaophon, Polygnotos' nephew, was said to have portrayed Alcibiades after his Olympian victory as more beautiful than the nymphs Olympias and Pythias who were depicted crowning him.<sup>146</sup> Conversely, Pauson may have sought to paint common people (χείρους) warts and all, as well as deliberate caricatures as such.<sup>147</sup> The desire to have a portrait painted was a likely enough affectation to be emulated by the *petits bourgeois*.<sup>148</sup> The social realism demanded by Pauson's choice of subjects might have made him a sufficiently familiar and unconventional figure to Aristophanes' audience to be an appropriate butt of comic derision.<sup>149</sup>

As suggested earlier, innovations in one area of cultural expression might naturally be linked to innovations in a related sphere. Where the main competence of artistic commentators was literary rather than technical, new ways of thinking

<sup>141</sup> Plut. *Per.* 31.2-5, sch. *Ar. Pax* 605; see Pollitt (1990) 249.

<sup>142</sup> *Ar. Ach.* 854, *Thes.* 949, *Plut.* 602.

<sup>143</sup> *Arist. Poet.* 1448a6.

<sup>144</sup> The painting of a horse at the gallop, when turned upside down, depicted the creature rolling in the dust: Lucian *Demosth. Enc.* 24.

<sup>145</sup> *Ar. Ach.* 415 f., 429 f., etc., *Nub.* 921 f., *Pax* 528, *Ran.* 842, 855, 86, *Lys.* 706 f., *Thes.* 694 f.

<sup>146</sup> *Satyros ap. Athen.* 12. 534, *Pliny NH* 35.60.

<sup>147</sup> The ascription of 'caricaturist' has been questioned (Ehrenberg [1951] 244 n. 1). But a fragment of Philodemus relating to Aristotle's lost *On Poets* (*P. Herc.* 207 col. iv [*Cr.ERC.* 1991]= Janko [1987] fr. \*3.6) alludes to Pauson's γέλοια μιμήματα, and Pauson's work is paralleled with that of the parodists Hegemon and Nicochares (*Arist. Poet.* 1448a13).

<sup>148</sup> For the use of this term, see Ehrenberg (1951) 38 n.3.

<sup>149</sup> An approximation to what Pauson painted may be the lively and notably ugly figures on 'Phlyax' vases portraying comic scenes, best known from Magna Graecia: Trendall (1991).

about art might emerge by analogy with the disciplines with which they were familiar. Implicit in the publication of Polykleitos' *Canon* as a formal *technê* is a connection with the rhetorical *technai* that were in vogue. Expositions of this kind, familiar enough in other areas, offered Athenians a new way of understanding art's status. It is therefore unsurprising that a major body of information on artistic thought comes from 'literary analogists'.<sup>150</sup> The use of analogy was itself deeply rooted in Greek thought and culture. The painting of 'word-pictures' goes back to the very beginnings of Greek literary expression, with the vivid analogical imagery of the Homeric similes.<sup>151</sup> Even the mirror, which faithfully reflected a visual reality, might not be more accurate than the mirror of words, which reflected a yet richer truth. The sophist Alcidamas was fond of this particular analogy, describing the *Odyssey* as καλὸν ἀνθρωπίνου βίου κάτοπτρον and noting:

κατιδόντας ὡσπερ ἐν κατόπτρῳ θεωρῆσαι τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπιδόσεις ῥαδιόν ἐστιν.

In examining an author's writings it is easy to observe, as in a mirror, the developments of his *psuchê*.<sup>152</sup>

The portrayal of *psuchê* was similarly the criterion sought by Socrates, as noted earlier; mere verisimilitude was not sufficient. A tradition regarding Pheidias showed the intimate connection that was seen to exist between poetic and artistic expression, one which ordinary Greeks might readily appreciate and which inspired the later traditions of rhetorical *ekphrasis*:<sup>153</sup>

ἀπομνημονεύουσι δὲ τοῦ Φειδίου διότι πρὸς τὸν Πάναινον εἶπε πυνθανόμενον, πρὸς τὸ παράδειγμα μέλλοι ποιῆσειν τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ Διός, ὅτι πρὸς τὴν Ὀμήρου δι' ἐπῶν ἐκτεθεῖσαν τούτων·

Ἡ καὶ κυανέησιν ἐπ' ὄφρῦσι νεύσε Κρονίων·  
ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώσαντο ἀνακτος

<sup>150</sup> Pollitt (1974) 10.

<sup>151</sup> Lloyd (1966) 192 f.

<sup>152</sup> Arist. *Rhet.* 3. 1406b12; Alcid. *De soph.* 32.

<sup>153</sup> See *OCD*<sup>3</sup> s.v.

κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὀλυμπον.<sup>154</sup>

They tell the story of Pheidias' response to Panainos' inquiry. When the latter asked him what model he proposed to use in making the statue of Zeus, he said it was the one expressed by Homer in these verses:

Thus spake the son of Kronos and nodded his dark brow  
and ambrosial locks flowed down from the lord's  
immortal head; and it caused great Olympus to shudder.

Rhetoric was specifically concerned with *καινότης* and the pursuit of novel effects, and thus might provide a paradigm for the pursuit of novelty in other *technai*. It is not surprising, therefore, that one of the few passages in the Greek sources on art which explicitly talks of the pursuit of innovation is from a piece by Lucian in which rhetoric and painting are discussed in parallel, in connection with late fifth-century developments:

ὁ Ζεῦξις ἐκεῖνος ἄριστος γραφέων γενόμενος τὰ δημώδη καὶ τὰ κοινὰ ταῦτα οὐκ ἔγραφεν, ἢ ὅσα πάνυ ὀλίγα, ἥρωας ἢ θεοὺς ἢ πολέμους, ἀεὶ δὲ καινοποιεῖν ἐπειρᾶτο καὶ τι ἀλλόκοτον ἂν καὶ ξένον ἐπινοήσας ἐπ' ἐκείνῳ τὴν ἀκρίβειαν τῆς τέχνης ἐπεδείκνυτο.<sup>155</sup>

Zeuxis, the prince of painters, avoided painting popular and hackneyed subjects as far as he could (i.e. heroes, gods or wars); he was always trying to be novel, and whenever he thought up something unusual and strange he demonstrated his precise artistry in its depiction.

The attribution to Zeuxis of the conscious attempt to be novel and original is in keeping with the competitive spirit of the age. But the passage shows that the impression of novelty-seeking may have been more in the minds of the viewers than in that of the artist, whose aim may have been primarily to achieve greater *ἀκρίβεια*. Zeuxis himself is said to have repudiated popular applause as insufficiently discriminating:<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>154</sup> Strabo 8.3.30.

<sup>155</sup> Lucian *Zeuxis* 3.

<sup>156</sup> The pursuit of novel subject-matter again recalls Choerilus fr. 1, νεοζυγὲς ἄρμα πελάσσαι: and both that and the rejection of the *profanum vulgus* foreshadow the themes of Callimachus' *Aetia* fr. 1.

ὁ Ζεῦξις συνεῖς ὅτι αὐτοὺς ἀσχολεῖ ἢ ὑπόθεσις καινὴ οὖσα καὶ ἀπάγει τῆς τέχνης, ὡς ἐν παρέργῳ τίθεσθαι τὴν ἀκρίβειαν τῶν πραγμάτων, Ἔγε δὲ, ἔφη...οὗτοι γὰρ ἡμῶν τὸν πηλὸν τῆς τέχνης ἐπαίνουσι· τῶν δὲ αὖ φώτων εἰ καλῶς ἔχει καὶ κατὰ τὴν τέχνην, οὐ πολὺν ποιοῦνται λόγον, ἀλλὰ παρευδοκιμεῖ τὴν ἀκρίβειαν τῶν ἔργων ἢ τῆς ὑποθέσεως καινοτομία.<sup>157</sup>

When Zeuxis saw that the novelty of the subject was the focus of their attention and distracted them from the technique of the work so that its accuracy of detail was a side-issue, 'Come, now', he said... 'these people are praising the mere clay of my craft. They're not interested whether it is finely and skilfully executed in terms of light and shade: the novelty of the subject counts for more than precision of workmanship.'

Lucian also indicates a long-standing distinction between the popular and the professional response in admitting that he speaks as an artistic amateur, not cognisant with the technical qualities which go into the production of a painting:

τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄλλα τῆς γραφῆς, ἐφ' ὅσα τοῖς ἰδιώταις ἡμῖν οὐ πάντη ἐμφανῆ ὄντα τὴν ὅλην ὁμῶς ἔχει δύναμιν τῆς τέχνης, οἷον τὸ ἀποτεῖναι τὰς γραμμάς ἐς τὸ εὐθύτατον καὶ τῶν χρωμάτων ἀκριβῆ τὴν κρᾶσιν καὶ εὐκαιρον τὴν ἐπιβολὴν ποιήσασθαι καὶ σκιάσαι ἐς δέον καὶ τοῦ μεγέθους τὸν λόγον καὶ τὴν τῶν μερῶν πρὸς τὸ ὅλον ἰσότητα καὶ ἀρμονίαν γραφέων παῖδες ἐπαινοῦντων, οἷς ἔργον εἰδέναι τὰ τοιαῦτα.<sup>158</sup>

As for the other aspects of painting which are never wholly evident to us laymen, but are the key to artistic skill, like drawing straight lines, the correct mixing of colours and their appropriate application, the use of shading as needed, the theory of perspective, proportion, and harmony of composition - let painters' apprentices praise them, since it's their job to know about such things.

For the amateur, the subject-matter of the painting in question by Zeuxis - that of a female(!) centaur nursing twin centaur children - might be characterised as a

<sup>157</sup> Lucian *Zeuxis* 7. In the repetition of ὑπόθεσις καινὴ there is a verbal reminder of the Hippocratic author's comment (*VM* 1.1.3) οὐκ ἤξιουν αὐτὴν [sc. τὴν ἰατρικὴν] ἔγωγε καινῆς ὑποθέσιος δεῖσθαι - 'in my opinion medicine requires no new *hypothesis*', while the words πῆλος and ἀκρίβεια τῶν ἔργων clearly recalls Polykleitos' famous dictum.

<sup>158</sup> Lucian *Zeuxis* 5.

τόλμημα.<sup>159</sup> The term recalls the audacious inventiveness of Aristophanes' comic inversion of noble Pegasus into the dung-beetle on which Trygaeus, τόλμημα νέον παλαμησάμενος, flies to Heaven in Aristophanes' *Peace*.<sup>160</sup> Like the 'succussion-ladder' (a ladder used for shaking patients as a treatment for physical deformities) scorned by the Hippocratic author, it could attract the crowd's applause for its sheer novelty.<sup>161</sup> Such sensationalism of subject-matter might also be one way in which Zeuxis could assert the artistic παρανομία that allowed him to compete with the pre-eminence of his rival Parrhasios. The connection with artistic *nomos* recurs in Quintilian's indication that Parrhasios was viewed as an artistic νομοθέτης:

Parrhasius was so fine a draughtsman that he has been styled the lawgiver (*legum latorem*) of his art, on the grounds that all other artists take his representations of gods and heroes as models, as though no other course were possible.<sup>162</sup>

## XI

### *Conclusions*

This survey raises various considerations in identifying the nature and impact of innovation on Athenians in the field of ancient art in the late fifth and early fourth centuries. First, the visual and plastic arts were an area in which, more than in many other τέχναι, specialisation was the rule, so that the attitudes of practitioners towards their innovations were likely to differ from those of their public. Unlike music or rhetoric, for example, with which most Athenians were familiar and in which the educated classes were expected to have some practical expertise, the approach to art hovered uneasily between acknowledging it as a source of liberal pleasure and delight, and treating it as a 'banausic' occupation. Innovations on the technical level were thus a matter for professional rather than lay appreciation, and laymen might be more easily inclined to admire the novel and the bizarre. But the

<sup>159</sup> Lucian *Zeuxis* 3: ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις τολμήμασι.

<sup>160</sup> Ar. *Pax* 94. The scene has rightly been considered 'to be among Aristophanes' most brilliant conceptions': Newiger (1996) 150.

<sup>161</sup> [Hippocr.] *Art.* 4.182. 15-20.

<sup>162</sup> Quint. *Inst.Or.* 12.10.5-6.

scope for innovation in subject-matter was ultimately constrained by the traditional function and perception of the place of artistic products in Athenian society, and by the demands and expectations of patrons, whether individuals or communities.

Secondly, the profusion of visual experience with which Greeks were presented in their daily lives was not matched by a high level of critical sophistication. The art of classical Athens seems not to have inspired in its time any written appreciation that approaches its depth and subtlety, and surviving qualitative judgements are disappointingly sparse. While the existence of a refined aesthetic sensibility is not proven by the widespread occurrence of works of art to which we attribute aesthetic value, neither is it negated by the notable absence of aesthetically informed commentary. The high quality of workmanship and artistic imagination that created the 'classical ideal' in sculpture and architecture points to the existence of a more profound and subtle visual sensibility than the literary sources would suggest. This discrepancy reflects both the persistent uncertainty about the status of the visual arts, and the continuing distinction between self-conscious (and largely non-literary) purveyors of artistic innovation and the artistic naiveté of those who sought to comment on their works.

Thirdly, while the importance of *ethos* becomes an explicit criterion in the fourth century, the predominant criterion for judging works of art seems to have remained a naive representationalism. Innovation in this respect was clearly sought out by artists and recognised by their public. But even as practitioners expended energy and talent on discovering and refining much-admired illusionistic effects, in particular the use of perspective, and of light and shading to suggest depth, the undoubted progress of artistic skill in this area could become the subject of philosophical alarm. The danger of over-elaboration might be felt as a particular concern for the practitioner, but beyond that lay the question of the nature of the reality that the artist sought to represent. The challenge posed by the faithful representation of visual reality presented the alarming prospect of an infinite regress in techniques of deceit, each step of which threatened to distance the artist further into the realm of illusion and away from their presumed goal of greater truthfulness. This tension, so characteristic of Athenian culture, between realism



and idealism, formalism and naturalism, and nature and convention, was never likely to be finally resolved to the exclusion of one or the other.

Finally, there is a perceptible shift from the fluent creativity of the early part of the fifth century to the more self-conscious innovativeness of the latter part, extending into the early fourth century. The pursuit of novelty became an explicit goal in many areas of cultural life where formerly it seems to have arisen with less conscious effort. In art, the directions this took included a tendency to ornateness and intricacy, self-conscious archaizing, and the pursuit of bizarre subjects and effects. After the introduction of written *technai* on art, the idea that the visual representation of an object or figure might be more 'natural' than a verbal representation could no longer be credited.<sup>163</sup> Athenian artists seem to have been implementing the discovery that one might innovate νόμος, as it were, as well as φύσει. The possibility of theorising about art, exemplified by Polykleitos' *Canon*, may have given artistic disciplines a new impetus to innovate in this way, as well as a new kind of intellectual respectability.

Once articulated, the recognition of the desirability and possibility of originality put pressure on artists to seek new techniques, images and effects to impress their viewers and peers, potentially at the cost of the deeper integrity of their art. But delight in virtuosity was a feature of many areas of late fifth-century culture, and after periods of experimentation, more sober criteria of aesthetic value tended to prevail. The best elements in the new techniques of art and sculpture, synthesised into the mainstream of artistic endeavour, were eventually to lead to the notable innovations of fourth-century artists that reached their acme in the achievement of painters such as Apelles and Protogenes and the sculptural masterpieces of Lysippos and Praxiteles.

---

<sup>163</sup> The notion of 'organic' artistic and literary creation has been reasserted in modern times, resurfacing notably in the Romantic age. The 18th-century playwright Edward Young, in his *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759), thought it a defining aspect of true originality: 'An Original may be said to be of a *vegetable* nature; it rises spontaneously from the vital root of genius; it *grows*, it is not *made*' (cited in Williams [1961] 54).

## 5. The New Music: a tradition of innovation.

Great innovators are the only true classics, and they form an almost continuous succession. Imitators of the classics, at their best, impart only the pleasure of erudition and taste, which is of no great value.

Marcel Proust, *Classicism and Romanticism*

### I

#### *Novelty in μουσική*

Μουσική was an area of Greek culture in which a positive attitude to innovation was expressed from early times. The ‘newest song’ appeared to have obtained the approval and recommendation of Homer himself:

τὴν γὰρ ἀοιδὴν μᾶλλον ἐπικλείουσ’ ἄνθρωποι

ἢ τις ἀκούοντεςσι νεωτάτη ἀμφιπέληται.<sup>1</sup>

The song that people most acclaim

is the one which sounds the newest to their ears.

However, Plato insisted that the correct interpretation for the Homeric verses did not sanction any fundamental innovation in music. The guardians of his ideal city must be wary:

ὅταν τις λέγῃ ὡς τὴν ἀοιδὴν μᾶλλον ἐπιφρονέουσιν ἄνθρωποι «ἤτις ἀειδόντεςσι νεωτάτη ἀμφιπέληται» μὴ πολλάκις τὸν ποιητὴν τις οἴηται λέγειν οὐκ ἄσματὰ νέα, ἀλλὰ τρόπον ᾠδῆς νέον, καὶ τοῦτο ἐπαινῆ.<sup>2</sup>

whenever it is said that the music people most approve of is ‘what is newest for singers to sing’, the poet should not be taken to mean a new kind of singing, but only to be recommending ‘new songs’.

The Homeric verses set the tone for the regular and explicit assertion by subsequent poets of the novelty of their endeavours. The composition of a new

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* 1.351-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Pl. Rep.* 424bc.

song might equally be considered *de rigueur* in the context of entertainment and religion:<sup>3</sup>

ἐν Δήλῳ τότε πρῶτον ἐγὼ καὶ Ὅμηρος ἀοῖδοι  
μέλπομεν, ἐν νεαροῖς ὕμνοις ῥάψαντες ἀοιδήν,  
Φοῖβον Ἀπόλλωνα χρυσάορον, ὃν τέκε Λητώ.<sup>4</sup>  
In Delos then did I and Homer, singers both, first  
raise our songs, weaving them in fresh strains,  
to Phoebus Apollo of the golden sword, child of Leto.

The demands of originality and *poikilia* in music received emphasis in popular chants such as that of the Sicyonian *phallophoroi*:<sup>5</sup>

σοί, Βάκχε, τάνδε Μοῦσαν ἀγλαΐζομεν,  
ἀπλοῦν ῥυθμὸν χέοντες αἰόλῳ μέλει,  
καινὰν ἀπαρθενεύτον, οὔτι ταῖς πάρος  
κεχρημέναν ὠδαῖσιν, ἀλλ' ἀκήρατον  
κατάρχομεν τὸν ὕμνον.<sup>6</sup>  
For you, Bacchus, we adorn this music,  
pouring forth a simple rhythm in varied song,  
a Muse fresh and maiden, never used  
in earlier songs; but virgin-pure  
we raise our hymn.

When the Spartan Alcman invoked his Muse, he drew attention to the newness of his maiden-song:

Μῶσ' ἄγε, Μῶσα λιγεῖα πολυμελές  
αἰενάοιδε, μέλος  
νεοχμὸν ἄρχε παρσένοις ἀείδεν.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Psalm* 96.1, 'O sing unto the Lord a new song.'

<sup>4</sup> Hes. fr. 357.

<sup>5</sup> The date cannot be ascertained, but the *phallophoroi* were related to the origins of comedy: Pickard-Cambridge (1962) 137-47.

<sup>6</sup> *Carm. Pop. PMG* 851b (=Athen. 14.622d).

<sup>7</sup> Alc. fr. 30 *PMG*.

Come, Muse, clear-voiced Muse of many tunes  
and everlasting song, begin  
a new strain for girls to sing.

Pindar elaborated the notion by suggesting that, unlike in other matters, newness rather than age should be valued in music:

αἶνει δὲ παλαιὸν μὲν οἶνον, ἄνθεα δ' ὕμνων νεωτέρων.<sup>8</sup>  
Praise wine that is old, but songs whose bouquet is new.

Such newness conferred on the poet a divinely-inspired glory comparable to that of the victorious charioteer:

Μοῖσα δ' οὕτω ποι παρέστα μοι  
νεοσίγαλον εὐρόντι τρόπον  
Δωρίῳ φωνὰν ἔναρμόξαι πεδίλῳ  
ἀγλαόκωμον.<sup>9</sup>  
So too the Muse stood by my side  
as I found a gleaming new mode  
with which to yoke to the Dorian dancing-sandal  
the glorious processional song.

The musical novelty referred to embraced both the form and content of a composition. But Pindar warned that the creative ability to refigure ancient tales in modern ways could inspire envy as well as praise:

πολλὰ γὰρ πολλῶ λέλεκται· νεαρὰ δ' ἐξευρόντα δόμεν βασάνῳ  
ἐς ἔλεγχον, ἅπας κίνδυνος· ὄψον δὲ λόγοι φθονεροῖσιν.<sup>10</sup>

Many a tale is told in many a way: but for the one who coins novelties and submits them to the touchstone, danger abounds. Words are a bait for envy.

---

<sup>8</sup> Pi. *Ol.* 9.53.

<sup>9</sup> Pi. *Ol.* 3.4-6.

<sup>10</sup> Pi. *Nem.* 8.20-1.

Fear of *phthonos* might set a natural limit to the kind of innovation that was possible and desirable. However, the variety and originality of Pindar's own work might have been felt to leave less room for other poets to manoeuvre. In one of his paeans Bacchylides comments on the ambiguous nature of poetic σοφία:

ἕτερος ἐξ ἑτέρου σοφός  
τό τε πάλαι τό τε νῦν.  
ἀρρήτων ἐπέων πύλας  
ἐξευρεῖν.<sup>11</sup>

One poet takes his cue from another,  
both in the old days and now.  
Gates of words hitherto unsaid  
must be found.

Nonetheless, it is in a dithyramb of Bacchylides composed for Athens that the earliest use of *καινός* with unmistakably positive overtones is attested.<sup>12</sup> Although the context is the familiar *topos* of musico-poetic novelty, the word itself seems to strike a new note.

Of all the genres, the dithyramb was particularly subject to innovative elaboration and reinvention from early times, undergoing a formal transformation into the *kuklios choros* at Athens at the end of the sixth century.<sup>13</sup> It became particularly noted for the novelty and extravagance of its words and music in the late fifth century, as indicated by Aristophanes' satire of the dithyrambist Cinesias in *Birds*:

KI. ἀναπέτομαι δὴ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον πτερύγεσσι κούφαις·  
πέτομαι δ' ὁδὸν ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἄλλαν μελέων -

ΠΕ. τουτὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα φορτίου δεῖται πτερῶν.

KI. ἀφόβῳ φρενὶ σώματί τε νέαν ἐφέπων.<sup>14</sup>

Cin: I soar towards heaven on wings of gossamer;

flying high, I make my way from one melody to the next -

<sup>11</sup> Bacch. *Paeon* 5 SM.

<sup>12</sup> Bacch. *Dith.* 19 SM: see Ch. 1, Sect. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. D'Angour (1997).

<sup>14</sup> Ar. *Av.* 1372-5.

Pei: You must need a cartload of wings.

Cin: ...ever seeking the new, intrepid in mind and body.

Along with the embellishment and reinterpretation of traditional myths, the striving for novelty might require an approach to music which did not aim simply to recreate and recombine traditional tropes, but to experiment with novel and unusual musical styles for the melodic accompaniment.

Despite the precedent set by Bacchylides, the championing of τὸ καινόν in music in the latter decades of the fifth century has a different tone. Timotheus of Miletus' proclamation of his new music and corresponding rejection of the old sound like the *cri de guerre* of a defiant modernist:

οὐκ αἰίδω τὰ παλαιά,  
 καινὰ γὰρ ἀμὰ κρείσσω  
 νέος ὁ Ζεὺς βασιλεύει,  
 τὸ πάλαι δ' ἦν Κρόνος ἄρχων.  
 ἀπίτω Μοῦσα παλαιά.<sup>15</sup>  
 I don't sing the old songs,  
 my new ones are better.  
 Now young Zeus is king:  
 In the old days Kronos held sway.  
 Go away, ancient Muse.

This was probably written around the 420s B.C., at the height of what has been portrayed as a musical revolution at Athens.<sup>16</sup> Timotheus stood at the forefront of musical innovation in the period, though elsewhere, evidently in response to Spartan criticism, he might seek to stress his conservatism.<sup>17</sup> In Athens, the impact of novelty created by his music and that of his fellow-modernists evoked a

---

<sup>15</sup> Timoth. *PMG* 796.

<sup>16</sup> The date is not certain: Timotheus was born around 450 B.C., as the *Marmor Parium* records that he died aged 90 at a date between 365 and 357.

<sup>17</sup> Timoth. *PMG* 791.202-236.

response that invites comparison with the reaction by the Counter-Reformation to the *musica nova* of the sixteenth century.<sup>18</sup>

The scant evidence of musical scores gives little clue to how the innovations actually sounded to Athenian ears.<sup>19</sup> The late subjection of Greek musical traditions to systematic analysis and written form, and the lack of a convenient melodic notation in the fifth century, reflect the continuing oral nature of Greek society and of its musico-literary culture. Later technical and theoretical discussions of music, such as those of Aristoxenus and Alypius, offer an insight into the underlying melodic and modal structures of the Greek musical language, but we do not know how and to what extent these changed and developed in the course of the fifth and early fourth centuries. However, discussions in Plato and Aristotle support the testimony of writers of Old Comedy in suggesting an atmosphere of lively controversy aroused by musical innovations at Athens in this period. Plato's concern to limit the true significance of the Homeric verses suggests that, in his ears, musicians of recent generations had gone much further than simply composing fresh compositions which followed traditional musical principles. Rather, their innovations seemed to him to subvert the essential nature of μουσική.

## II

### *The traditional background*

Some idea of why the New Music aroused such controversy emerges when the innovations of the late fifth century are viewed against the background of musical activity in Greek culture as a whole. The Homeric reference to *oidâ* is a reminder that the central feature of the Greek conception of μουσική was its relationship with sung words. The ambiguity of the term μουσική, which thus embraced both music and literature, could lead to confusion about the terms of the debate. The

---

<sup>18</sup> *Musica nova* was the title of a collection by the Netherlands composer Adriaan Willaert, published in 1559: the new style came under censure by the Council of Trent: Grout (1973) 210, 262.

<sup>19</sup> The major fragments are conveniently collected and transcribed in modern notation in West (1992) 277-326.

strictly musical (as opposed to literary) aspects are discussed by Peripatetic authors and comic poets preserved largely in citations in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistai* and in the *On Music* attributed to Plutarch. These sources tend to focus on individual innovators in the development of instruments, techniques and musical styles, offering a schematic chronology of successive *πρῶτοι εὐρεταί* in music from the time of Terpander of Lesbos, the first victor in the Spartan Karneia of c. 675 B.C.<sup>20</sup> Despite the simplistic suggestion of a linear evolution, with each innovator surpassing the last, they testify to a vigorous tradition of musical inventiveness.

In a predominantly oral society, rhythm, melody and movement are common ways of enhancing memorability and preserving utterance for posterity. Μουσική was first and foremost the handmaiden of memory, since the Muses were the daughters of Mnemosyne.<sup>21</sup> Homer calls on the Muses before he embarks on the Catalogue of Ships, and other names by which the Muses were called make clear the connection with memory and mnemonic skills.<sup>22</sup> The 'music' in our terms was therefore intimately associated with the words it accompanied.<sup>23</sup> Specific forms of musical expression accompanied texts of religious, moral, and even legal significance.<sup>24</sup> These styles might be importantly distinct from those used in more informal contexts such as symposia.

An ever-present element of ritual and social congress, music for the Greeks tended to consist of a melodic line sung and played in a particular 'mode', a distinctive melodic structure that may be compared in this respect to major and minor keys. The melody was combined with more or less repetitive rhythmical units based on the natural vowel-lengths of words. While harmony and polyphony were unknown, the music occasionally involved a limited kind of heterophony (two

---

<sup>20</sup> Kleingünther (1933) 38 f.; West (1992) 329-372.

<sup>21</sup> Hes. *Theog.*54, with refs. in West (1966) *ad loc.*

<sup>22</sup> They were known as 'Mneiai' (Plut. *Mor.* 743d), and the three original Muses of Helicon were named Melete, Mneme and Aoide (Paus. 9.29.2).

<sup>23</sup> I use the English term 'music' (with and without inverted commas) in distinction to Greek *mousikê*, to connote elements of melody, harmony etc. as distinct from words. Havelock (1963) 150-151 exaggerates the synaesthetic connotation of *mousikê* as a 'convention designed to set up motions and reflexes which would assist the record and recall of significant speech.' Aristotle, for instance, mentions solo dances accompanied by music (*Poet.* 1447a27; see Lucas [1972] *ad loc.*).

<sup>24</sup> For the surprising amount of evidence for the latter, see Thomas (1995) 63.



voices sung or played at different pitches), as indicated by the use of the double *aulos* and by instrumental markings on a score-fragment from Euripides' *Orestes*.<sup>25</sup>

Musical instruction was widespread in educated circles in the fifth century, and lack of instrumental technique suggested a proverbial lack of basic education: Philocleon in *Wasps* might hope to excuse his canine client's criminal tendency by claiming *κιθαρίζειν οὐκ ἐπίσταται*, 'he doesn't know his ABC'.<sup>26</sup> Themistocles was considered ἄμουσος for his inability to play the lyre and sing.<sup>27</sup> The practice of aulody, singing to *aulos* accompaniment, might also be expected at symposia, where pipers could be hired to accompany rounds of recitations.<sup>28</sup> The *aulos* itself, which came to have dubious associations with Dionysiac revelry, was at one time cultivated in Athens:

ἔτι τε πρότερον καὶ μετὰ τὰ Μηδικά...περὶ Ἀθῆνας οὕτως ἐπεχωρίασεν ὥστε σχεδὸν οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν ἐλευθέρων μετεῖχον αὐτῆς.<sup>29</sup>

Both in earlier times, and after the Persian Wars...[playing the *aulos*] was so fashionable at Athens that virtually every citizen was involved with it.

By contrast with its connection with ἐλεύθεροι, in the later fifth century the skill was more often the province of female slaves, αὐλητρίδες. But the *aulos* still appears to have been fashionable when Alcibiades was said to have abjured it on the grounds that it hindered conversation and that its players looked undignified.<sup>30</sup>

Some forms of traditional poetry, such as *hymnoi* and *nomoi*, had a certain fixed musical identity and will have been learned exclusively to melodic accompaniment. The names of many individual *nomoi*, 'tunes', survived from the Archaic period.<sup>31</sup> It would be natural to use the familiar μέλη when the *nomoi* were performed at gatherings, and a later writer also talks about 'an intermediate style of

<sup>25</sup> West (1992) 103-4.

<sup>26</sup> Ar. *Vesp.* 959; cf. Pl. *Prot.* 326a-c.

<sup>27</sup> Ion of Chios, *FGrH* 392 F 13.

<sup>28</sup> Dicaearchus fr. 88-89 Wehrli.

<sup>29</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 8. 1341a29f.

<sup>30</sup> Plut. *Alc.* 2.5; cf. Ar. *Pol.* 8. 1341b4-8.

<sup>31</sup> West (1992) 215-17.

utterance which we use in quoting poetry' (μέση [κίνησις] ἢ τὰς τῶν ποιημάτων ἀναγνώσεις ποιούμεθα).<sup>32</sup>

In origin at least, most Greek music was quasi-improvisatory within certain conventional structures, and it was still the norm in the fifth century for specific modes to be used exclusively in certain genres of poetry and circumstances of performance. Musicians, whether composers or performers, were expected to be aware of appropriate stylistic conventions. In *Frogs*, Aristophanes has Aeschylus disparage Euripides for having sullied the Muse by introducing inappropriate associations into his music and creating an unnatural confusion of styles:

οὔτος δ' ἀπὸ πάντων μέλι φέρει, πορνῳδιῶν,  
σκολίων Μελήτου, Καρικῶν αὐλημάτων,  
θρήνων, χορειῶν.<sup>33</sup>

The fellow collects his honey from all over - whores' songs,  
Meletus' drinking-songs, Carian pipings,  
dirges and dances.

The humorous exaggeration points to Euripides' success in going beyond the boundaries of musical conventions. But anecdotal evidence suggested that these were hard to flout, even for the most determined modernists like the dithyrambist Philoxenus of Cythera:

οἶον ὁ διθύραμβος ὁμολογουμένως εἶναι δοκεῖ Φρύγιον, καὶ τούτου πολλὰ παραδείγματα λέγουσιν οἱ περὶ τὴν σύνεσιν ταύτην ἄλλα τε, καὶ διότι Φιλόξενος ἐγχειρήσας ἐν τῇ δωριστὶ ποιῆσαι διθύραμβον τοὺς Μύσους οὐχ οἶός τ' ἦν, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῆς φύσεως αὐτῆς ἐξέπεσεν εἰς τὴν φρυγιστὶ τὴν προσήκουσαν ἀρμονίαν πάλιν.<sup>34</sup>

For example, the dithyramb is by general admission a genre that requires the Phrygian mode. Musical experts adduce many instances to prove this, especially how when Philoxenus attempted to compose his dithyramb *The Mysians* in the Dorian mode he could not, but lapsed back naturally into the appropriate Phrygian.

<sup>32</sup> Arist. Quint. *De mus.* 6.4.

<sup>33</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 1301-3 as emended by Meineke (*codd.* μὲν φέρει πορνιδίων), perhaps punning on μέλι / μέλη.

<sup>34</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 8. 1342b.

## III

*Evolution of musical τέχνη*

At the beginning of the *Poetics*, Aristotle notes the lack of a term in Greek for prose or verse unaccompanied by music:

ἡ δὲ [sc. μιμητικὴ τέχνη] μόνον τοῖς λόγοις ψιλοῖς ἢ τοῖς μέτροις, καὶ τουτοῖς εἴτε μιγνύσα μετ' ἀλλήλων εἶθ' ἐνὶ τινὶ γένει χρωμένη τῶν μέτρων, <ἀνώνυμος> τυγχάνει οὐσα μέχρι τοῦ νῦν.<sup>35</sup>

But the genre of representation that uses unaccompanied words or verses, whether it combines different metres or uses a single rhythm, has no name to this day.

All the early poets were believed to have composed their poetry to music:

μελωδηθῆναί φησιν οὐ μόνον τὰ Ὅμηρου, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ Ἡσίοδου καὶ Ἀρχιλόχου, ἔτι δὲ Μιμνέρμου καὶ Φωκυλίδου.<sup>36</sup>

They say that not only the songs of Homer, but also those of Hesiod and Archilochus and even Mimnermus and Phocylides were sung to melodies.

Hexameters were composed to music at least up to the time of Stesichorus in the early sixth century. Heraclides of Pontus stated that

οὐ λελυμένην εἶναι τῶν προειρημένων τὴν τῶν ποιημάτων λέξιν καὶ μέτρον οὐκ ἔχουσαν, ἀλλὰ κάθαπερ Στησιχόρου τε καὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων μελοποιῶν οἱ ποιῶντες ἔπη τουτοῖς μέλη περιετίθεσαν.<sup>37</sup>

the works of the aforementioned were not in loose prose without a rhythmical structure, but were like the poetry of Stesichorus and the old bards, who composed epic verses and attached melodies to them.

<sup>35</sup> Arist. *Poet.* 1447a28-b2: ἀνώνυμος is supplied from the Arabic text, and was read by Tzetzes: Janko (1987) *ad loc.*

<sup>36</sup> Chamaeleon fr. 28 Wehrli (Athen. 14. 620c).

<sup>37</sup> [Plut.] *De mus.* 1132ab.

The separating out of the elements of verbal and 'musical' expression, and hence the notion of composition involving the use of metre but not sung melody, was initially associated with non-hexameter verse forms which arose in the seventh century B.C. Archilochus, who employed a wide range of styles and metres, was credited with the invention of παρακαταλογή, recitation to musical accompaniment.<sup>38</sup> Alcman, composing in Sparta in the following generation, was said to have been the first to set non-hexameter poetry to music.<sup>39</sup>

The logic of these developments was exploited in the course of the sixth century by hexameter poets and elegists whose purpose was more prosaic than musical. Later commentators spoke of them as self-conscious versifiers, less concerned with music than with the use of words:

Ξενοφάνης δὲ καὶ Σόλων καὶ Θεόγνις καὶ Φωκυλίδης, ἔτι δὲ Περιάνδρος ὁ Κορίνθιος ἐλεγχοποιὸς καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν οἱ μὴ προσάγοντες πρὸς τὰ ποιήματα μελωδίαν ἐκπονοῦσι τοὺς στίχους τοῖς ἀριθμοῖς καὶ τῇ τάξει τῶν μέτρων καὶ σκοποῦσιν ὅπως αὐτῶν μηθεὶς μήτε ἀκέφαλος ἔσται μήτε λαγαρὸς μήτε μείουρος.<sup>40</sup>

Xenophanes, Solon, Theognis, Phocylides, and even Periander of Corinth (who composed elegies) and all the other poets who do not add music to their poems, polish the scansion of their verses and the structure of their metres, and take care that no verse should be 'acephalic' or 'slack' or 'weak-tailed'.

Increased awareness of verbal and metrical techniques in composition was matched by greater attention to the possibilities of musical sound in isolation. The first important theorist of musical technique was Lasos of Hermione.<sup>41</sup> The famous musician and *chorodidaskalos*, who was invited to Athens by the Peisistratids to establish dithyrambic competitions, was credited with the earliest written work (*logos*) on the subject.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> [Plut.] *De mus.* 1141a.

<sup>39</sup> Suda s.v. Ἀλκμάν. The simplistic supposition may have been that the music of lyric was derived from the ancient epic musical tradition.

<sup>40</sup> Athen. 14. 632d.

<sup>41</sup> Privitera (1965).

<sup>42</sup> Suda s.v. Λᾶσος.

The traditions regarding Lasos and his possible contemporary, Epigonus of Sicyon, signal a detailed attention to musical aspects apart from verbal considerations.<sup>43</sup> Lasos was remembered for his attention to euphony in combining voice and instrument: he was thought to have composed asigmatic dithyrambs because the sound of *s* clashed with the sound of the *aulos*.<sup>44</sup> Part of a satyr-play composed by Pratinas of Phlius around 500 B.C. may indicate that the new-style circular dithyramb established by Lasos encouraged the unwelcome predominance of the *aulos* accompaniment over the words in choral poetry.<sup>45</sup>

Peisistratus instituted musical events at the Great Panathenaea in about 525 B.C., and both the Pythian festival and the Spartan Karneia date from at least the early sixth century. Contests for citharodes, aulodes and auletes were a widespread feature of the Panhellenic festivals, and at Athens there was a constant public requirement for music in festivals and choral events, such as the performance of hymns, paeans and dithyrambs. The development of the τέχνη required the development of a teaching tradition: musical expertise broadened and flourished during the early fifth century, and the claim to σοφία became a theme in poetry.<sup>46</sup> The naming of modes in Pindar suggests that most listeners were expected to understand something of the nature of the musical styles to which their attention was being drawn.<sup>47</sup>

Attention to the possibilities of the solo instruments encouraged greater encroachment of musical sound on the essentially word-centred preserve of the Muses, and the growth of τέχνη in instrumental music brought further developments in both aulos- and kithara-playing. An example may be the innovations of the kitharist Lysander of Sicyon, perhaps early in the fifth century:<sup>48</sup>

πρῶτος μετέστησε τὴν ψιλοκιθαριστικὴν, μακροὺς τοὺς τόνους ἐντείνας καὶ τὴν φωνὴν εὐογκὸν ποιήσας.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>43</sup> West (1992) 225-6.

<sup>44</sup> Aristox. fr. 87 Wehrli (=Athen. 11.467).

<sup>45</sup> Pratinas *PMG* 708; D'Angour (1997) 339.

<sup>46</sup> The earliest uses of σοφιστής refer to music: Pi. *Isth.* 5.28, Aesch. fr. 314; cf. Guthrie (1969) 27-30.

<sup>47</sup> West (1992) 346-7.

<sup>48</sup> West (1992) 342.

<sup>49</sup> Philoch. *FGrH* 328 F 23.

He was the first to change the way the kithara was played as a solo instrument, by obtaining a longer resonance from the notes and making the sound robust.

The first appearance of the word μουσική (*sc.* τέχνη) occurs in Pindar in an ode composed in 472 B.C.<sup>50</sup> The earliest recorded instance of a craft-name in -ική, it may have become current in the previous generation, when acoustical investigations were being pursued in connection with the Pythagorean mathematics.<sup>51</sup>

More systematic accounts of melodic and rhythmic structures, and a theoretical vocabulary and notation with which to analyse them, developed in the latter half of the fifth century.<sup>52</sup> They may have taken their cue from the analytical studies of λόγος associated with sophists such as Protagoras and Prodicus, who was a friend of Pericles' influential mentor Damon of Oea.<sup>53</sup> A new social context encouraged the growth of musical exploration and accomplishment:

σχολαστικώτεροι γὰρ γιγνόμενοι διὰ τὰς εὐπορίας καὶ μεγαλοψυχότεροι πρὸς ἀρετὴν, ἔτι δὲ πρότερον καὶ μετὰ τὰ Μηδικὰ φρονηματισθέντες ἐκ τῶν ἔργων πάσης ἤπτοντο μαθησέως, οὐδὲν διακρίνοντες ἀλλ' ἐπιζητοῦντες, διὸ καὶ τὴν ἀύλητικὴν ἤγαγον πρὸς τὰς μαθήσεις.<sup>54</sup>

As wealth provided more leisure, they became more adventurous about areas in which excellence might be pursued. Buoyed up by their success in the Persian Wars, they engaged in all kinds of learning, as they had in former times. Nothing was excluded, but they continually sought out new areas of study: hence they even introduced the aulos into the curriculum.

In Greek communities, the practitioners and disseminators of specialist techniques tended to run in families.<sup>55</sup> But music and its associated λόγοι were too central to the entertainment and cohesion of the community to become the exclusive preserve of specialists. The professionalism of the few was outweighed by the ready

<sup>50</sup> Pi. *Ol.* 1. 15.

<sup>51</sup> West (1992: 225) suggests that the word was coined by Lasos himself.

<sup>52</sup> Pfeiffer (1968:53) suggests that Hippias may have been the first literary figure to pay attention to music as a distinct element of ποίησις.

<sup>53</sup> Pl. *Laches* 197d.

<sup>54</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 8. 1341a 25f.

<sup>55</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 694c-695b; cf. (for Sparta) Hdt. 6.60.

participation of all classes and ages in musical entertainment, of which the dithyramb was a major public manifestation and the symposium the upper-class private setting.<sup>56</sup>

Among the richer classes, slaves of non-Athenian origin (παιδαγωγοί) were bound to influence in the dissemination of Panhellenic musical styles and expertise. Performances by boys at symposia had a semi-formal educational purpose.<sup>57</sup> Literary evidence also testifies to a host of informal occasions at which music played a part: women singing lullabies, at the loom or while making bread,<sup>58</sup> shepherds watching their flocks, children playing games, and reapers being entertained by *aulos*-music,<sup>59</sup> workers on building-sites, rowers pulling on their oars, and soldiers on the march.<sup>60</sup> Folk-music and less sophisticated music-making existed side by side with the formal development of the art by dedicated musicians and professionals. By the beginning of the fifth century, the prevailing rhythms and modes of music were well established in Greek ears.

#### IV

##### *Sound and ethos*

The attempt to reconstruct the sounds and modes of Classical Greek music, whilst aided by analysis of the nature of the instruments used, the study of Greek metre and by ethnomusicological investigation, still relies largely on the works of later theorists, in particular the surviving works of Aristoxenus and the later systematisation in Ptolemy's *Harmonics*. For them, the basis of the Greek scale was the interval of the fourth (*e - a*), and combinations of the resulting tetrachords (e.g. *e f g a*) were used to construct the Greek scales used in different specific contexts.<sup>61</sup> Aristoxenus surmised that the tetrachords were derived from an original trichord (*e f a*) and may have thought that the diatonic sequence (*e f g a*) was the

<sup>56</sup> Pickard-Cambridge (1962); Murray, ed. (1990).

<sup>57</sup> Bremmer in Murray, ed. (1990) 137 f.

<sup>58</sup> E.g. Pl. *Leg.* 790de, Eur. *IA* 788, Ar. *Nub.*1358.

<sup>59</sup> E.g. Eur. *Alc.*577, Ar. fr.404, Theoc. *Id.* 10.16.41.

<sup>60</sup> Paus. 4. 27.7, Ar. *Ach.* 554, Thuc. 5.70.

<sup>61</sup> Note-values follow the conventions adopted by West (1992) 12.

earliest scale-section ‘since it is the first to which human beings are naturally inclined’ (πρῶτον γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἢ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσις προστυγχάνει).<sup>62</sup> The aulos-tune played at libations, attributed to the semi-legendary Olympus of Phrygia, used the enharmonic genus ( $e e\# f a$ ), but the older style of playing did not divide the semitone  $e-f$ .<sup>63</sup> Other evidence, however, points to the enharmonic rather than the diatonic being the earlier genus.<sup>64</sup>

The evolution of ἁρμονίαι, the ‘modes’, is obscure, but thanks largely to Plato’s concern to legislate against those with unsuitable ethical effects and Aristotle’s echoing of his concern, they are seen as of cardinal importance for the understanding of Greek musical theory and the idea of ethos in Greek music.<sup>65</sup> ἁρμονία means ‘attunement’ and must originally have referred to the tuning or *accordatura* of the strings of a lyre.<sup>66</sup> It was then used by extension to signify the scale pattern so represented. These scale patterns eventually became the Aristoxenian system of τόνοι, species of the octave fixed at relative pitches which approximate to modern ‘keys’.<sup>67</sup> The system of six modes called as οἱ πάνυ παλαιότατοι may have articulated by Pericles’ mentor Damon of Oea, although individual names of the modes appear early in the Archaic period.<sup>68</sup> All the Damonian modes except the Lydian (which omits the lowest  $e$ ) incorporate the enharmonic version of the basic tetrachord; their compasses range from a sixth (Syntonolydian) to over an octave (Dorian, Lydian). Each mode was felt to be distinctive in quality and effect:

εὐθὺς γὰρ ἢ τῶν ἁρμονίων διέστηκε φύσις ὥστε ἀκούοντας ἄλλως διατίθεσθαι καὶ μὴ τὸν αὐτὸν ἔχειν τρόπον πρὸς ἐκάστην αὐτῶν.<sup>69</sup>

The nature of the modes is such that they dispose the listener in quite different ways, and each has a different effect.

<sup>62</sup> Aristox. *Harm.* 1.19.

<sup>63</sup> West (1992)163.

<sup>64</sup> West (1981)117.

<sup>65</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 3. 398e f., 4. 423d f.; *Leg.* 700a f., 799e f., 812b f. Arist. *Pol.* 8. 1339a f.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Heracl. fr. 51 DK: παλίντονος ἁρμονίη...λύρης.

<sup>67</sup> Winnington-Ingram (1936) 69.

<sup>68</sup> Arist. *Quint.* 18.5-19.10, cf. 80.29. The earliest instances of mode identification, that of the Φρύγιον μέλος, appear in the poetry of Alcman (*PMG* 126) and Stesichorus (*PMG* 212).

<sup>69</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 8. 1340a.



The internal structures of the modes appear insufficiently differentiated for modern ears to grasp how a listener might distinguish a μέλος employing one mode from that in another. In practice, different modes would have been recognisable from their distinctive affinities to subject-matter and by their concentration on specific intervals combined with the predominance of one note within the scale over the others i.e. the μέση functioning as a tonic.<sup>70</sup> Originally the tune itself, improvised according to traditional formulae within a modal framework, may not have been thought of as distinct from the mode, as implied by the remark that ‘the sequence (ἀγωγή) of melody that the Dorians used to perform they called the Dorian ἀρμονία’.<sup>71</sup>

The ascription of commendation or censure to the use of individual modes appears early in the fifth century. Pratinas instructed:

μήτε σύντονον δίωκε  
 μήτε τὰν ἀνείμεναν (Ἰαστὶ)  
 Μοῦσαν, ἀλλὰ τὰν μέσαν  
 νεῶν ἀρούραν αἰόλιζε τῷ μέλει.<sup>72</sup>  
 Pursue neither the tense  
 nor the relaxed [Ionian]  
 Muse, but take the middle way,  
 ploughing your furrow in Aeolian song.

The descriptions of ethos suggest that the characterisation of the modes was to a degree subjective, but the point may be that the level of approval varied with individual views about music’s function and effect. The Phrygian mode, for instance, associated with music for the aulos such as the dithyramb, could be thought of as exciting or dangerously inflammatory.<sup>73</sup> The warlike Dorian was generally well-regarded by conservative thinkers. Plato could allow it a place in his

<sup>70</sup> Winnington-Ingram (1936) 2, 57-9.

<sup>71</sup> Heracl. Pont. *ap.* Ath. 624d.

<sup>72</sup> Pratinas *PMG* 712 (cf. *PMG* 708). ‘Tense’ and ‘slack’ may refer to the *tessitura* of strings at different pitches, which would have given to the modes something of their distinctive qualities.

<sup>73</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 8.1342ab.

ideal state for its sober and martial qualities, and it appears to have been the tuning first taught to schoolboys.<sup>74</sup> Aristotle declared:

περὶ δὲ τῆς δωριστὶ πάντες ὁμολόγουσιν ὡς στασιμωτάτης οὔσης καὶ μάλιστα ἦθος ἐχούσης ἀνδρεῖον.<sup>75</sup>

Regarding the Dorian everyone agrees that it is the stateliest and has the most manly character.

The ethical qualities of music were a particular concern to Damon, Pericles' associate in the 440s and an educationist of whom Plato speaks with respect.<sup>76</sup> Damon was said to have addressed the Areopagus Council on the subject of morality and musical education.<sup>77</sup> The alarm evinced by Damon indicates the extent to which controversial experimentation with novel musical forms was already a feature of his time. Plato cited his views with approval:

εἶδος γὰρ καινὸν μουσικῆς μεταβάλλειν εὐλαβητέον ὡς ἐν ὄλῳ κινδυνεύοντα· οὐδαμοῦ κινδύνονται μουσικῆς τρόποι ἄνευ πολιτικῶν νόμων τῶν μεγίστων, ὡς φησὶ τε Δάμων καὶ ἐγὼ πείθομαι.<sup>78</sup>

The alteration of music to a new style must be guarded against as thoroughly dangerous. Musical styles are never altered without major upheavals in social norms, as Damon says and I too believe.

The alteration of musical conventions, largely in pursuit of the portrayal of emotion through music, was to be taken to new extremes by Timotheus. The music to which Timotheus set his dithyrambs and his nome *Persae* exploited the *καιροί* of their dramatic settings in an unprecedented fashion.<sup>79</sup> The notion of *καιρός* recalls contemporary discussions of rhetorical style, where the opponents were already lining up on either side of a stylistic divide between what were to become the

<sup>74</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 3.399a, Ar. *Eq.* 985-91.

<sup>75</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 8. 1342b 12.

<sup>76</sup> Pl. *Laches* 180d, 197d, *Alc.I.* 118c, *Rep.* 3.400ac, 4. 424c.

<sup>77</sup> Damon 37 B4 DK. Aristophanes' parody of the sophistic discussions of the 'proper' gender of words may have some connection with Damonian doctrines: Ar. *Nub.* 658 f.

<sup>78</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 4.424c.

<sup>79</sup> West (1992) 363.

Aristotelian categories of λέξις γραφική and λέξις ἀγωνιστική, where καιρός was a key issue. In that debate, the Sophist Alcidas of Elea was in the 390s to take up the argument on the side of λεχθέντες λόγοι and the richer, more poetic, naturally emotional style associated with skillfully improvised speech.<sup>80</sup> Alcidas was perhaps the author of a diatribe preserved on papyrus which attacks the view that certain types of music have the ethical effects alleged by moralists such as Damon, and that different melodies can make men disciplined, prudent, just, manly, or cowardly.<sup>81</sup> His rebuttal was later taken up by the Epicureans: Philodemus' Περὶ μουσικῆς was largely devoted to rebutting the ethical arguments recited by the Stoic philosopher Diogenes of Seleucia and asserting the hedonic properties of music.<sup>82</sup>

## V

### *Music and words*

The Greek language has its own music and a distinct melodic shape, combining varied word-lengths and rhythms with distinguishing pitch-accents. The latter, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, might alter the pitch of a syllable by a musical fifth.<sup>83</sup> Aristoxenus even thought it necessary to define musical melody as distinct from the melody of speech:

λέγεται γὰρ δὴ καὶ λογῶδες τι μέλος, τὸ συγκείμενον ἐκ τῶν προσφθίων τῶν ἐν τοῖς ὀνόμασιν.<sup>84</sup>

We actually talk about speech-melody too, which consists of the tonal inflections inherent in words.

---

<sup>80</sup> O'Sullivan (1992) 42-62.

<sup>81</sup> *P. Hib.* 13. 13-17; Brancacci (1988) 61-84.

<sup>82</sup> Delattre (1989).

<sup>83</sup> Dion.Hal. *De comp.* 58-62. Devine and Stephens (1994: 160 f.) state that this compares with the musical range of pitch inflections found in modern languages.

<sup>84</sup> Aristox. *Harm.* 1.18.

If Greek musical traditions originated in the spoken ‘music’ of the language, this might explain why the sound of music might be considered inseparable from the λόγος for which it was the vehicle.

By the end of the fifth century, the analytical scrutiny of both language and melody meant that the connection had been severed, at least in theory. In his *Helen* Gorgias offered a definition of poetry as λόγοι ἔχοντα μέτρον, with no mention of melody.<sup>85</sup> Although his purpose was to elaborate the connection of poetry and rhetoric (as the latter was not sung), the fact that he could ignore *melos* shows how the advance of literacy and prose-writing in the fifth century might help to open the way to the purely literary understanding of poetic texts, considered in isolation from the melodic context of their performance. Although the split had its roots in the Archaic period, the Greeks seem to have felt that the distinction undermined the ethical dimension of *mousikê*, and the relative value of ‘literary’ and musical instruction was still debated in the late fifth century: *Archytas et Evenus etiam subiectam grammaticen musicae putaverunt* (‘Archytas and Evenus even considered *grammatikê* to be subordinate to *mousikê*’).<sup>86</sup> The title of Glaucus of Rhegium’s book *On the Poets and Musicians of Old*, composed around 400 B.C., is an indication that the categories of poet and musician were no longer considered necessarily co-extensive.<sup>87</sup>

In the absence of musical notation, the composition of melody was bound to be essentially improvisatory within certain formulaic traditions and constraints. Separate notations for vocal and instrumental use appear to have developed from the fifth century onward, but an agreed system can only be attested from the mid-third century, the date of the earliest surviving fragments.<sup>88</sup> The tonal properties of spoken Greek and the rhythms inherent in the metrical quantities of syllables provided the only natural and easily memorable basis for creating the shape of the melody. This need not exclude considerable variety and subtlety, as demonstrated

---

<sup>85</sup> Gorg. *Helen* 9.

<sup>86</sup> Quint. *Inst.Or.* 10.17.

<sup>87</sup> Περὶ τῶν ἀρχαίων ποιητῶν καὶ μουσικῶν: [Plut.] *De mus.* 1132e.

<sup>88</sup> West (1992) 269-273.

by the Delphic Paean by Athenaeus of 127 B.C., which shows a consistent correspondence of word-accent and melodic shape.<sup>89</sup>

The singing of epic was one of the earliest and most continuous traditions of Greek musical expression. Accompanied note by note on the four-stringed φόρμιγξ, it may have employed the pentatonic scale-section, roughly equivalent to the modern notes *e f a d*, which later formed the kernel of most of the 'modes'. As there is no responsion in epic, musical pitch is likely to have been guided almost entirely by word-inflections, for which modern Yugoslav epic singing provides a parallel.<sup>90</sup> But just as the epic vocabulary had evolved a complex and somewhat artificial nature of its own, the music to which the epic was sung developed its own idiosyncrasies. Alexandrian scholars preserved some unusual Homeric accents conventionally used in rhapsodic recitations, which may represent fossilised forms of accentual variants employed for 'musical' purposes.<sup>91</sup> As pitch accent gave way to stress accent, this inherent melodic basis for music disappeared over the centuries. At a later date, hexameter singing could employ a repeated melodic line without concern for the pitch-contours of individual words.<sup>92</sup>

The introduction of strophic forms, perhaps first in the sixth century B.C., may have suggested the need for melody to diverge from the natural pitch-accent of words, but it is not certain when lines of the same metrical form were allowed to become melodically identical.<sup>93</sup> The Greek languages did not require full adherence to spoken pitch-patterns for the music to be intelligible, as do some other pitch-accented languages.<sup>94</sup> But disregard of pitch accents may have made it less easy for audiences to follow the words, even if it simplified the task of training choruses. The earliest evidence that in antistrophic passages of drama it may have been the practice not to take account of word-inflection is a fragment of Euripides' *Orestes* which may represent the playwright's own composition.<sup>95</sup> Euripides was noted for his unorthodox musical tastes, and the parody of Euripidean lyrics in *Frogs* (1309

---

<sup>89</sup> Devine and Stephens (1993).

<sup>90</sup> West (1992) 208-9.

<sup>91</sup> West (1981).

<sup>92</sup> E.g. in the 'Hymn to Asclepius': West (1992) 287-8.

<sup>93</sup> West (1992) 210.

<sup>94</sup> Devine and Stephens (1994) 160-70.

<sup>95</sup> West (1992) 284-5.

f.) implies the view that Euripides' melodies were as tuneless as his words were fatuous. A fixed melodic accompaniment in antistrophic sections of the drama would have created a uniform melodic line, but at the expense of a more accurate and intelligible correlation with word-inflections. Such an innovation would fit with Euripides' modernistic inclinations and his reputation for unconventionality. It would have been felt to be a startling and perhaps unnatural development of traditional style.

The practice seems not to have been widely followed, since the later musical fragments show that a significant degree of correspondence between melody and word-pitch continued to be the norm. But there appears to have been a split between the music composed to be performed by choruses and music requiring professional skill. Performance requirements increasingly dictated the level of compositional difficulty:

διὰ τί οἱ μὲν νόμοι οὐκ ἐν ἀντιστρόφοις ἐποιοῦντο, αἱ δὲ ἄλλαι ᾠδαὶ αἱ χορικάι; ἢ ὅτι οἱ μὲν νόμοι ἀγωνιστῶν ἦσαν, ὧν ἤδη μιμεῖσθαι δυναμένων καὶ διατείνεσθαι ἢ ᾠδὴ ἐγένετο μακρὰ καὶ πολυειδής;... ἢ δὲ ἀντίστροφος ἀπλοῦν· εἷς ῥυθμὸς γάρ ἐστι καὶ ἐνὶ μετρεῖται. τὸ δ' αὐτὸ αἴτιον καὶ διότι τὰ μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς οὐκ ἀντίστροφα, τὰ δὲ τοῦ χοροῦ ἀντίστροφα; ὁ μὲν γὰρ ὑποκριτῆς ἀγωνιστῆς καὶ μιμητῆς, ὁ δὲ χορὸς ἦττον μιμεῖται.<sup>96</sup>

Why were the *nomoi* not composed antistrophically while choric songs were? Is it because the *nomoi* were performed by professional musicians who were already capable of acting and singing at length, so that the songs were able to become long and complicated?...

Antistrophes are simple: they are in one dance-rhythm and in one metre. Is this why solo arias too are not antistrophic while choral arias are? Yes, because the stage performer is a professional actor, while the chorus is less capable of acting.

This commentator's analysis may hint at a progressive decline in the skills of choral performers, for which authors like Euripides may have sought to compensate by providing a fixed melody as well as set rhythm and movement, in distinction to the more complex musicianship required of his lead soloists. Such an innovation was

---

<sup>96</sup> [Arist.] *Pr.* 19. 918b.

bound to be spurned by those for whom choral training represented a civic practice akin to military training:

ἦν γὰρ τὸ τῆς ὀρχήσεως γένος τῆς ἐν τοῖς χοροῖς εὐσχημον τότε καὶ μεγαλοπρεπὲς καὶ ὡσανεὶ τὰς ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις κινήσεις ἀπομιμούμενον. ὅθεν γὰρ Σωκράτης ἐν τοῖς Ποιήμασιν τοὺς κάλλιστα χορεύοντας ἀρίστους φησὶν εἶναι τὰ πολέμια, λέγων οὕτως·

οἱ δὲ χοροῖς κάλλιστα θεοὺς τιμῶσιν, ἄριστοι  
ἐν πολέμῳ.<sup>97</sup>

The kind of dancing in the choruses was in those days well-ordered and impressive, as if mimicking the motions of soldiers in arms. That is why Socrates claims in his *Verses* that the best dancers are the best soldiers, when he says:

Those who honour the gods best in the dance are the best  
in battle.

The chorus of old men in Aristophanes' *Wasps* make the same connection in contrasting the heroism of former times to the unmanly effeminacy of the modern age:

ὦ πάλαι ποτ' ὄντες ἡμεῖς ἄλκιμοι μὲν ἐν χοροῖς,  
ἄλκιμοι δ' ἐν μάχαις,  
καὶ κατ' αὐτὸ δὴ μόνον τοῦτ' ἄνδρες ἄλκιμώτατοι.<sup>98</sup>  
Once upon a time we were heroes in the choruses  
and heroes in battle,  
and above all heroes in *this*.

The triumph of the new professionalism is indicated by the increasing popularity of complex kitharodic *nomoi*, such as Timotheus' *Persae* of 408-7.<sup>99</sup> The relative decline of public musical skills in the light of technical developments in music was irreversible. Alongside more formal choric performances accompanied by the aulos (as pictured on the 'Phrynichus' crater of c. 425), dithyrambs had also developed

<sup>97</sup> Athen. 14.628e.

<sup>98</sup> Ar. *Vesp.* 1060-3.

<sup>99</sup> Timoth. *PMG* 788-91; on the dating, see Janssen (1984) 22.

into virtuoso solo songs sung to lyre accompaniment.<sup>100</sup> Timotheus was famed for his dramatic new-style dithyrambs, the fashionable vehicles of musical display in late fifth century Athens. Their greater rhythmic, melodic, and dramatic complexity required professional skills. The new musical idioms were thus increasingly the preserve of star performers, excluding the wider public from traditional modes of civic participation in music.

## VI

### *The new professionals*

Against the background of ethical debate initiated by Damon, the new musicians appeared on the scene to loud controversy. Their technical innovations involved an exploration of the medium to a level not previously countenanced, in parallel to the growth of technical specialisation and the mood of exploration detectable in other areas of artistic and intellectual activity. The indignation they aroused was partly due to the spirit of commercialism that had entered many kinds of social interaction, creating a shift in traditional musical hierarchies. The novel procedures of payment reinforced the position of auletes as star performers:

ἀλλὰ γὰρ καὶ αὐλητικὴ ἀφ' ἀπλουστέρας εἰς ποικιλώτεραν μεταβέβηκε μουσικὴν. τὸ γὰρ παλαιόν, ἕως εἰς Μελανιπίδην τὸν τῶν διθυράμβων ποιητὴν, συμβεβήκει τοὺς αὐλητὰς παρὰ τῶν ποιητῶν λαμβάνειν τοὺς μισθοὺς, πρωταγωνιστοῦσης δηλόνοτι τῆς ποιησέως, τῶν δὲ αὐλητῶν ὑπηρετούντων τοῖς διδασκάλοις· ὕστερον δὲ καὶ τοῦτο διεφθάρη.<sup>101</sup>

Aulos-playing changed from a simple style to the more elaborate kind of music we find today. In the old days, up to the time of Melanippides the dithyrambist, it was customary for auletes to receive their fee from the poets, since obviously the poetry came first and the auletes were subordinate to them as chorus-trainers. At a later date this arrangement too became corrupted.

<sup>100</sup> 'Phrynichus' crater: Pickard-Cambridge (1962), Pl. 1b.

<sup>101</sup> [Plut.] *De mus.* 1141cd.



In their new commercial assertiveness, musicians could claim to be following a tradition. Simonides was said to have initiated the custom of taking large fees for his music, so that his name is a byword for financial greed in the conversation between Trygaeus and Hermes in *Peace*:

TP. ἐκ τοῦ Σοφοκλέους γίγνεται Σιμωνίδης.

EP. Σιμωνίδης; πῶς;

TP. ὅτι γέρων ὦν καὶ σαπρὸς  
κέρδους ἕκατι κᾶν ἐπὶ ῥιπὸς πλέοι.<sup>102</sup>

Tr: Sophocles has turned into Simonides.

Her. How's that?

Tr. Old and fetid as he is,  
he'd put to sea in a sieve for the sake of money.

In Pherecrates' *Chiron*, the Muse identifies Melanippides of Melos as the originator of alarming changes in kithara-playing:

ἔμοι γὰρ ἦρξε τῶν κακῶν Μελανιπίδης,  
ἐν τοῖσι πρῶτος ὃς λαβὼν ἄνηκέ με  
χαλαρώτεράν τ' ἐποίησε χορδαῖς δώδεκα.  
ἀλλ' οὖν ὁμῶς οὗτος μὲν ἦν ἀποχρῶν ἀνήρ  
<εἰς τὴν τέχνην> ἔμοιγε πρὸς τὰ νῦν κακά.<sup>103</sup>

Melanippides was the beginning of my troubles;  
he was the first to grab hold of me and to loosen  
me up, with those twelve strings of his.  
But in the end he turned out to be a reasonable man  
to me [as regards his art], compared to the present disasters.

New strings added to the lower register of the kithara would in practice have been less taut than those tuned to a higher pitch. But the reference to 'loosening up' the Muse, with its sexual innuendo, alludes more generally to the increased range of

<sup>102</sup> Ar. *Pax* 697-9 with schol. *ad loc.*

<sup>103</sup> Pherecr. 155.3-7 KA, with Kaibel's supplement. 'Twelve strings' is a comic exaggeration, incorporating a pun on *chordai* ('sausages', *sensu obsceno*).

musical expression, in particular to the broadening of its traditional melodic compass.

Melanippides came from a family of professional musicians, and was known as a dithyrambist skilled in both lyre and aulos.<sup>104</sup> His role in pushing forward the possibilities of the solo aulos in the dithyramb was described by Aristotle as the replacement of ἀντίστροφαι by ἀναβολαί, the abandonment of strophic responsion in favour of a freer style of virtuoso performance.<sup>105</sup> Previously the aulete simply accompanied the vocal part, but the new music was a particularly suitable vehicle for virtuosity. Virtuoso technique may have included the increased employment of chromatic and enharmonic γένη, later acknowledged to be 'difficult' and abandoned for that reason.<sup>106</sup> Other auletes of the period contributed technical innovations: Pronomos of Thebes, for example, who was famous for his flamboyant performance style, invented a rotatable aulos collar to exploit the possibilities of new styles of modulation.<sup>107</sup>

In general, the kithara was considered a more conservative instrument than the aulos, its role being to accompany the singer by duplicating the sung melody.<sup>108</sup> However, unaccompanied lyre-playing (ψιλή κιθάριστις) had long existed; its invention was attributed to one Aristonicus, a compatriot and perhaps a contemporary of Sacadas of Argos.<sup>109</sup> It was introduced to the Pythian festival in 558 B.C., underwent some advances at the hands of Lysander of Sicyon, and features in prize contests at the Panathenaea in the early fourth century.<sup>110</sup> In the fourth century, Stratonicus of Athens was the star performer on unaccompanied kithara.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Cf. *RE* s.v. Melanippides. Another Melanippides, probably this one's grandfather, won a dithyrambic victory at Athens in 493. The dates of the younger Melanippides are uncertain: West (1992: 357) places his period of activity as 440-415, though Barker (1984: 94) favours 480-430.

<sup>105</sup> Arist. *Rhet.* 3. 1409b26.

<sup>106</sup> Arist. *Quint. De mus.* 16.10.

<sup>107</sup> West (1992) 87; Paus. 9.12.5: ἐπὶ τοῦ παντὸς κινήσει σώματος περισσῶς δὴ τι ἕτερπε τὰ θέατρα ('he drove the audience wild with pleasure through the wholesale gyrations of his body'). Cf. Arist. *Poet.* 26. 1461b26-36.

<sup>108</sup> [Plut.] *De mus.* 1141b, Pl. *Leg.* 8.12de, [Arist.] *Pr.* 19.9. 918a, 43.922a.

<sup>109</sup> Menaechmus *FGrH* 131 F 5. Herodotus 3.131.3 (perhaps an interpolation) mentions a period of Argive musical pre-eminence in the time of Polycrates of Samos, which points to regional traditions that made the Argolid a centre of musical progress in the sixth century.

<sup>110</sup> Paus. 10.7.7; *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.2311.15 (=SIG 1055).

<sup>111</sup> Phaen. fr. 32 Wehrli.

Despite his alarming innovations, Melanippides became ‘acceptable’ (ἀποχρῶν) to the Muse. By the end of the century, his dithyrambs were openly admired in musical circles, meriting comparison with Homer for epic and Sophocles for tragedy.<sup>112</sup> The Muse’s repeated refrain that each successive new musician became ἀποχρῶν suggests that, despite the initial shock of change, the innovations did not remain shocking for long, but were quickly absorbed into the mainstream of Athenian musical culture. This was also the case with the novel extensions of citharody attributed to his contemporary Phrynīs of Mitylene.<sup>113</sup> In Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, Right complains that boys no longer stick to the straight and narrow as they did in the old days:

εἰ δέ τις αὐτῶν βωμολοχεύσαιτ’ ἢ κάμψειέν τινα καμπὴν  
οἷας οἱ νῦν, τὰς κατὰ Φρύνιν ταύτας τὰς δυσκολοκάμπτους,  
ἐπετρίβετο τυπτόμενος πολλάς ὡς τὰς Μούσας ἀφανίζων.<sup>114</sup>  
And if any of them played the fool or turned a turn  
like those stomach-turning Phrynīs-turns we hear nowadays  
they’d get a good thrashing for wiping out the Muses.

καμπαί refer to the modulations between different modes, for which the technical term was μεταβολαί. Various representatives of the New Music were accused of indulging in this dubious and offensive modernism. The extravagances of the dithyrambist Cinesias were felt to be disturbing and unnatural: he seemed to turn music topsy-turvy, as if in a mirror.<sup>115</sup> He was notorious as a ‘free-thinker’, was reputed to have acquired wealth as a συκοφάντης, and came in for sustained satire from Aristophanes.<sup>116</sup> The subject of a comedy by Strattis, his popular success may

<sup>112</sup> Xen. *Mem.* 1.4.3. Melanippides’ reputation lasted: Plut. *Non posse suav.* 13.1095d.

<sup>113</sup> Schol. Ar. *Nub.* 971 says he won a Panathenaic victory in the archonship of Callias (456 B.C.), but the name might be amended to read Callimachus, archon in 446 (Davison [1958] 40). A mid-fourth century vase from Paestum, illustrated in Taplin (1993), shows a disreputable-looking Phrynīs with his lyre, resisting while ‘Pyronides’ drags him along. Pyronides, a character in Eupolis’ *Demes*, was based on Myronides, the στρατηγός in 457/6 and a stock representative of the good old days.

<sup>114</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 969-72; cf. Pherecr. 155. 8-13 KA.

<sup>115</sup> Pher. 155.8-13 KA; Pickard-Cambridge (1962) 44.

<sup>116</sup> Dodds (1959) 323; Ar. *Ran.* 153, *Nub.* 333, *Av.* 1379 f.

be gauged from the fact that he is singled out by Plato as an example of someone who composed the sort of music that aimed to gratify audiences.<sup>117</sup>

The need for players to shift to different registers where the note-patterns mapped out different modes encouraged attempts to extend the lyre's range. The number of strings of the kithara was increased by Phrynis to nine, and by Timotheus to eleven.<sup>118</sup> Although viewed as a striking citharodic innovation in their time, μεταβολαί were a natural development of musical style and technique. They were later seen as a normal feature of compositions for kithara:

τὸ δ' ὅλον ἢ μὲν κατὰ Τέρπανδρον κιθαρωδία καὶ μέχρι τῆς Φρύνιδος ἡλικίας παντελῶς ἀπλή τις οὔσα διετέλει· οὐ γὰρ ἐξῆν τὸ παλαιὸν οὕτω ποιεῖσθαι τὰς κιθαρωδίας ὡς νῦν οὐδὲ μεταφέρειν τὰς ἀρμονίας καὶ τοὺς ῥυθμούς· ἐν γὰρ τοῖς νόμοις ἐκάστῳ διετηροῦν τὴν οἰκεῖαν τάσιν. διὸ καὶ ταύτην τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν εἶχον· νόμοι γὰρ προσηγορεύθησαν.<sup>119</sup>

In general, citharody from Terpander up to the age of Phrynis continued to be quite simple. In the old days it was not allowed to compose citharodic pieces like nowadays, to keep modulating and changing rhythms. The *nomoi* kept their regular form: that's why they were called '*nomoi*'.

The initial 'lawlessness' of the musical experiments had a disorienting effect on the listener.<sup>120</sup> Pherecrates' Muse complains:

Φρύνις δ' ἴδιον στροβιλὸν ἐμβαλὼν τινα  
κάμπτων με καὶ στρέφων ὄλην διέφθορεν,  
ἐν πέντε χορδαῖς δώδεχ' ἀρμονίας ἔχων.  
ἀλλ' οὖν ἔμοιγε χ' οὗτος ἦν ἀποχρῶν ἀνήρ·  
εἰ γὰρ τι κάξήμαρτεν, αὐθις ἀνέλαβεν.<sup>121</sup>

Phrynis assaulted me with his own brand of whirlwind,

<sup>117</sup> Pl. *Gorg.* 501e-502a.

<sup>118</sup> [Plut.] *De mus.* 1133bc; Timoth. *PMG* 796.

<sup>119</sup> [Plut.] *De mus.* 1133b.

<sup>120</sup> Plato puns on παρανομία: *Rep.* 4. 424d.

<sup>121</sup> Pherecr. 155.14-18 KA. West (1992: 361) suggests emending the third line to εἰς πέντε χορδαῖς δώδεχ' ἀρμονίας ἔχων so that it might mean 'having up to five *harmoniai* in twelve strings'. Although this might be more strictly accurate, it would strain the Greek beyond easy comprehension. For Pherecrates' purposes such accuracy would not be to the point.

and ravaged me completely with his bending and twisting,  
 getting a dozen modes out of five strings.  
 All the same, he too proved to be a reasonable fellow:  
 if he went off the rails, he got back on again.

Despite dizzying the Muse with his modulations, Phrynis eventually reverted to the original mode. In retrospect, his advances were not felt to defy musical logic or propriety, and in the fourth century he was spoken of as a classic in the same breath as Terpander.<sup>122</sup>

Phrynis paved the way for his more adventurous successor, who beat him in a competition around 420 B.C.:<sup>123</sup> εἰ δὲ μὴ Φρύνις, Τιμόθεος οὐκ ἂν ἐγένετο ('if Phrynis had not existed, there would have been no Timotheus').<sup>124</sup> Timotheus boasted of his invention of the 11-stringed kithara with its added musical and expressive range.<sup>125</sup> He paraded his novelty with relish, and was noted for exploiting the possibilities of musical onomatopoeia and dynamic contrast.<sup>126</sup> A wide range of musical resources, appropriate to the dramatic *καίροι*, were exploited in his *Persae*.<sup>127</sup>

The possibilities of unprecedented musical expressiveness spilled over into the music of tragedy. Aristophanes' parody of Euripidean choral lyrics shows that the division of the first syllable of εἰλίσσω over three or more musical notes was sufficiently unusual to evoke satire.<sup>128</sup> The norm was still one note per syllable, but in this respect, as in others, Euripides was a modernist.<sup>129</sup> Ornamentation to achieve onomatopoeic effects was not entirely new: it is suggested by Simonides' use of the pseudo-epic form κνοώσσεις and the prolonging of πῦρ to πῦρ to

<sup>122</sup> Phaenias fr. 10 Wehrli: the quality of recent lyrics 'couldn't touch the *nomoi* of Terpander and Phrynis' (τῶν δὲ Τερπάνδρου καὶ Φρύνιδος νόμων οὐδὲ κατὰ μικρὸν ἐδύναντο ἐπιψαῦσαι).

<sup>123</sup> Timoth. *PMG* 802.

<sup>124</sup> Arist. *Meta.* 993b 15.

<sup>125</sup> Timoth. *PMG* 791.229.

<sup>126</sup> He imitated a storm in his *Nauplius* and Semele's birthpangs in his *Semele*: Athen. 8. 337f, 352a. West (1992: 44) also discusses 'quiet' singing, with reference to *PMG* 791. 216-20.

<sup>127</sup> Janssen (1984).

<sup>128</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 1314, 1348.

<sup>129</sup> Euripides was linked to Timotheus as his supporter and mentor: Sat. *Vita* 22. The tradition is unreliable, but both men represented artistic iconoclasm for the Athenians.

imitate a flickering fire.<sup>130</sup> In extending the principle, Euripides was ahead of his time: a later authority commended the effect of such a μέλισμα for its ‘euphonious and impressive effect’.<sup>131</sup> The second-century B.C. Delphic Paeans of Athenaeus and Limenius provide an attractive example of the musical use of this effect in the setting of the words αἰόλοις μέλεσιν to flickering chromatic notes.<sup>132</sup>

Departures from unadorned classical simplicity were anathema to Plato. Following the strictures of Damon, he considered the modes and rhythms of music to mirror the condition of the ψυχή, and consequently the πολιτεία. Since music imitated, and could engender, specific qualities and emotional states, it needed to be firmly regulated in the education and daily life of the ideal citizen:<sup>133</sup>

ἄρ' οὖν, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὦ Γλαύκων, τούτων ἔνεκα κυριωτάτη ἐν μουσικῇ τροφή, ὅτι μάλιστα καταδύεται εἰς τὸ ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς ὃ τε ῥυθμὸς καὶ ἄρμονία, καὶ ἐρρωμενέστατα ἄπτεται αὐτῆς, φέροντα τὴν εὐσχημοσύνην, καὶ ποιεῖ εὐσχήμονα ἐάν τις ὀρθῶς τράφη, εἰ δὲ μὴ τοῦναντίον;<sup>134</sup>

Well, Glaucon, I said, isn't proper musical education crucial for the very reason that rhythm and harmony sink deep into the soul and stay there fixed? So that the nobility of character produced by these becomes manifest in those who are correctly trained, whereas the opposite is the case for those who are not?

Plato conceded that the purpose of music might be to give pleasure, but this merely lowered its status to a form of ‘flattery’ (κολακεία).<sup>135</sup> The moral qualities of music were also stressed by Aristotle: ‘it has an influence on both the character and the soul’ (καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἦθος συντείνει καὶ πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν).<sup>136</sup> But he characteristically showed more sympathy for the view that music also has the function of providing entertainment and relaxation.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>130</sup> *PMG* 543.9, 587. κνωόσσω, despite its epic appearance, is not a form found in Homer. Simonides seems to have employed pseudo-epic diectasis for onomatopoeic effect: West (1980) 153-5.

<sup>131</sup> Demetr. *De eloc.* 74.

<sup>132</sup> West (1992) 201.

<sup>133</sup> *Pl. Rep.* 3. 399a-400a, *Leg.* 654e-655d etc.

<sup>134</sup> *Pl. Rep.* 3. 401d.

<sup>135</sup> *Pl. Gorg.* 502a-c.

<sup>136</sup> *Arist. Pol.* 8. 1340a-b.

<sup>137</sup> *Arist. Pol.* 8. 1339b; Lord (1982) 105-51.

## VII

*Reactions to the New Music*

The conservative attitude to music portrayed by Aristophanes and expressed by the philosophers suggests by contrast a sense of the popular excitement and pleasure aroused by the broadening of musical styles and techniques in Athens at the close of the fifth century. It was a mark of the age that elements of novelty were sought out and laboured until they became canonical. Music was no exception. The efforts of musical thinkers, practitioners, composers and virtuosi speak of a lively atmosphere of musical experimentation and inventiveness, complementing the influx of ideas in other intellectual and artistic pursuits such as philology and rhetoric, historical research and medicine, tragedy and comedy, sculpture and architecture.

Music was a means of popular entertainment in an Athens where social hierarchies were becoming more fluid owing to democratic and war-time pressures. New commercial attitudes, as well as private and public subsidies for democratically approved activities, led to increasing financial incentives for professional musicians to tailor their styles and performances to suit popular tastes. Attention to the formal genres of music suffered as a result, and traditional dance-forms were bound to generate less popular excitement than novel kinds of performance which incorporated extravagant movements and gestures.<sup>138</sup>

Plato censured musicians for pandering to the tastes of οἱ πολλοί at the expense of quality.<sup>139</sup> His complaints echo a recurrent feature of resistance to popular new music, repeated in every generation. In the third century B.C., Timotheus' dithyrambs were embraced as classics of the genre; but Aristoxenus could still deplore the modern desire to overturn older musical styles in the vulgar pursuit of making music more accessible to the uninitiated.<sup>140</sup> Once familiar in the ears of their audiences, musical innovations soon establish themselves as the norm, encouraging a constant search for new and stimulating sounds. A Hippocratic text

---

<sup>138</sup> Arist. *Pol.* 8. 1341b, Xen. *Symp.* 6.14.

<sup>139</sup> *Leg.* 700a-701a.

<sup>140</sup> Aristox. *Harm.* 1.123: τὸ βούλεσθαι γλυκαίνειν ἀεί.

of the mid fourth-century takes for granted that many notes and frequent modulations make for the most appealing music.<sup>141</sup>

The difficulty of mastering the performance of more complex modern styles and the move away from improvised music towards spectacular set-piece compositions encouraged the formation of a repertoire of 'classics'.<sup>142</sup> Playing the works of composers of a bygone age became customary, and heralded the increasing prominence of instrumentalists and χοροδιδάσκαλοι rather than poets.<sup>143</sup> In the theatre, repertory performances of tragedy were established at the Dionysia in 387/6 B.C., perhaps 'the single most important date in the history of fourth-century tragedy'.<sup>144</sup> The re-staging of an old comedy was to follow in 340/39.<sup>145</sup>

The rapid absorption of once controversial musical innovations into the mainstream is a salutary reminder that old-established customs are at one stage themselves new. But the problem of musical novelty exercised fifth- and fourth-century thinkers to a degree that cannot simply be put down to reactionary tendencies. One explanation is the widening of the deep-seated ambivalence in Greek culture regarding the pursuit of artistic originality as a function of the vitality of μουσική. Originality was admired and sought after insofar as it could be accommodated within traditions that were understood, acknowledged and revered. Although Timotheus championed τὸ καινόν as an explicit goal, it appeared to mean something different and more dangerous than the newness extolled by Pindar and Bacchylides.

Plato's distaste of innovation in music was such that he wanted to turn the clock back to a period which had never existed in reality. He was inclined to dismiss the aulos wholesale, along with triangles, harps (πηκτίδες) and other πολύχορδα καὶ πολυαρμόνια:

<sup>141</sup> [Hippocr.] *De victu* 1.18.1.

<sup>142</sup> A similar shift of emphasis arose in the nineteenth century, when hugely popular virtuosi such as Liszt and Paganini, themselves composers of great talent, encouraged the trend towards performance of the music of baroque composers.

<sup>143</sup> Pickard-Cambridge (1962) 56; cf. *RE* s.v. διδάσκαλος.

<sup>144</sup> Easterling (1997a) 213.

<sup>145</sup> *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.2318.201-3, 316-8; Davies (1978) 172.



οὐδέν γε...καινὸν ποιούμεν...κρίνοντες τὸν Ἀπόλλω καὶ τὰ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ὄργανα πρὸ Μαρσύου τε καὶ τῶν ἐκείνου ὀργάνων.<sup>146</sup>

We seek to do nothing novel, and consider Apollo and his instruments to take precedence to Marsyas and his.

Even music for unaccompanied kithara was considered tasteless and meaningless, aiming merely to ‘cause amazement for speed and virtuosity and through the production of animal-like sounds’.<sup>147</sup> Traditional Greek modal music required a degree of improvisation, but this meant a limited kind of innovation within a fixed framework. In citing Homer’s well-known verses about musical ‘novelty’, Plato did not rule out variation within melodies employing conventional and respectable modes. A limited sort of καινότης was needed if only to forestall boredom.<sup>148</sup> But he spoke with admiration about the static musical traditions of Egypt, which he believed were mirrored in their political stability. Their *nomoi*, in both senses, remained in his view happily unaltered over the centuries.<sup>149</sup>

## VIII

### Conclusions

Many of the characteristic aspects of the Athenians’ perspective on novelty, and the ways in which they sought to negotiate ambivalent feelings about the new, are apparent in the reactions to innovation in music. The desire for acclaim, the pursuit of ποικιλία, the unbounded elaboration of of τέχνη, the development of specialist expertise, the claims of tradition, the influence of external and internal social forces: all contributed to the sense of danger and excitement involved in the experience of change in this central area of Greek life. While the history of Greek music later came to be recounted as a series of deliberate innovations at each stage, the radical departures of the New Music in Athens in the late fifth century elicited

---

<sup>146</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 3. 399de.

<sup>147</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 669e-670a.

<sup>148</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 665c.

<sup>149</sup> Pl. *Leg.* 656d-657b.

reactions which exhibit a complex mixture of technical and philosophical considerations.

Although τὸ καινόν had been Bacchylides' explicit aim, there was no unequivocal cultural sanction for radical innovation in music. Rather, the musical παρανομία of the fifth century was felt as a transgression of ethical norms, matching the perceived immoralism of Sophistic rationalism. The increasing distancing of 'music' from its status as verbal accompaniment, a gradual process over the centuries which became more pronounced in the age of star performers, contributed to the sense of disintegration of the fabric of traditional Greek culture and values in late fifth-century Athens. The Old Oligarch supposed that the motivation for popular participation in traditional dramatic choruses, as in athletic contests, was wholly self-interested:

τοὺς δὲ γυμναζόμενους αὐτόθι καὶ τὴν μουσικὴν ἐπιτηδεύοντας καταλέλυκεν ὁ δῆμος νομίζων τοῦτο οὐ καλὸν εἶναι, γνοὺς ὅτι οὐ δύνατὰ ταῦτά ἐστιν ἐπιτηδεύειν. ἐν ταῖς χορηγίαις...γιγνώσκουσιν ὅτι χορηγοῦσι μὲν οἱ πλούσιοι, χορηγεῖται δὲ ὁ δῆμος...ἀξιοῖ γοῦν ἀργύριον λαμβάνειν ὁ δῆμος καὶ ἄδων καὶ τρέχων καὶ ὀρχούμενος καὶ πλέων ἐν ταῖς ναυσίν, ἵνα αὐτός τε ἔχη καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι πενέστεροι γίγνωνται.<sup>150</sup>

The *dêmos* have ruined athletic and musical activities at Athens because they consider them in an unfavourable light, knowing that they can't manage them. In the training of choruses...they know that the wealthy take on the obligation while the people are paid to participate...Anyway, the *dêmos* thinks itself worthy of taking money for singing, competing in races, dancing and sailing in the fleet, so that it can preserve its interests while the rich become poorer.

The opportunity arose for self-conscious musical experimentation by specialist musicians, for whom the mere repetition and recombination of older styles, redolent of civic functions and outdated rituals performed by musical amateurs, offered insufficient stimulation and excitement. The growth of instrumental technique and the perception of music as a τέχνη in its own right encouraged the acknowledgement that music could be a vehicle for instrumental virtuosity, and

---

<sup>150</sup> [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.13: the text of the first sentence is corrupt.

could profitably be approached as a source of spectacle and entertainment rather than simply as an accompaniment to moral and edifying λόγοι.

This perception was complemented and reinforced by the elevation of rhetoric and other literary genres to the status of separate disciplines. Technical alterations to instruments gave rise to an expanded expressive range for melody, while the use of modulation allowed for new ways of exploiting music's emotional effect. This might be deliberately exploited for crowd-pleasing purposes: morally uplifting associations might be replaced by less respectable sensations, just as the sinuous gyrations of solo performers replaced the solemn dance accompaniments of choral dithyrambs. The new musical styles that became popular in Athens in these decades were associated by conservative thinkers with educational laxness, sexual permissiveness, and antisocial individualism, attributes inevitably attached to the rebellious 'younger generation'. For the musicians themselves, they resulted from the freedom to experiment with the possibilities of their art and to acquire unprecedented popularity with audiences who, in a climate of widespread innovation, were no longer interested in musical styles which were perceived to be old-fashioned and technically unchallenging.

Advances and technical innovations by professional musicians had progressively put instrumental practices beyond the reach of the average participant in communal musical events and of the educated amateur. Professional musicians and star performers now held the stage with their complex compositions and sensation-seeking performances. Music-making was becoming associated less with the perpetuation of civic traditions through the creation of works of moral import and lasting value than with the composition of works of a more ephemeral nature performed for financial gain. The growing separation of musical practices from social rituals seemed to reflect a new emphasis on individual gratification and ἀπραγμοσύνη at the expense of the values of community expressed in the Periclean Funeral Speech.

The continuing influx, in the last decades of empire, of diverse local traditions and non-Greek styles and practices, may have contributed a sense of foreignness to musical developments at Athens, a counterpart to the infiltration of

ξενικοί λόγοι in the field of rhetoric.<sup>151</sup> The broadening range of musical possibilities, eschewed by many in the older generation, may have been welcomed by innovative performers keen to find new styles with which to rival their classic forerunners and to defeat their contemporaries in competitions. But the rapidity of change in musical practices seemed to contravene and belie deeply-held ideas of ethos in music. In the second half of the fifth century musical novelty had been linked by Damon with socio-political upheaval, and in the later decades his words may have seemed to have a prophetic ring.

The other side to the conservative, backward-looking reaction to musical innovation uncompromisingly expressed by Plato was the pleasure and pride with which the new professionals like Timotheus and Philoxenus grasped the opportunity to extend the bounds of their τέχνη. Their controversial innovations made their music conspicuous in its own time, and renowned in the ears of a posterity that absorbed its once radical novelty more readily than did the moralistic philosophers. The fourth-century comic poet Antiphanes singled out the daring musicianship of Philoxenus for the highest praise, contrasting it with the insipidity of successors who clung cautiously and derivatively to traditional canons of musical taste:

πολύ γ' ἐστὶ πάντων τῶν ποιητῶν διάφορος  
 ὁ Φιλόξενος. πρώτιστα μὲν γὰρ ὀνόμασιν  
 ἰδίοισι καὶ καινοῖσι χρῆται πανταχοῦ·  
 ἔπειτα <τὰ> μέλη μεταβολαῖς καὶ χρώμασιν  
 ὡς εὖ κέκρται. θεὸς ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἦν  
 ἐκεῖνος εἰδὼς τὴν ἀληθῶς μουσικὴν·  
 οἱ νῦν δὲ κισσόπλεκτα καὶ κρηναῖα καὶ  
 ἀνθεσιπτότατα μέλεα μελέοις ὀνόμασιν  
 ποιοῦσιν ἐμπλέκοντες ἀλλότρια μέλη.<sup>152</sup>

Philoxenus stands head and shoulders over  
 other poets. First of all he uses new words  
 of his own invention everywhere;

<sup>151</sup> Ar. *Ach.* 634, Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 3; cf. O'Sullivan (1992) 127-9.

<sup>152</sup> Antiph. fr. 207 KA (=Athen. 14.643d).

secondly, see how well his music combines modulations  
and key-changes. He was a god among men,  
for he knew what true music meant.

The poets of today only produce ivy-wreathed, spring-pure,  
flower-suckled poetry, wretched stuff,  
and they set others' music to their miserable words.

## 6. New arts of healing and *Ancient Medicine*.

A materialist medicine, in a world where science is powerless to prove its postulates, has no more claim to popular support than the psychologically more satisfying arts of the diviner.

Robert Parker, *Miasma*

### I

#### *Divination and reason*

The status of the healing arts in Greek thought is indicated by their priority in the passage of the Aeschylean *Prometheus Vincetus* where an outline is given of mankind's technical progress. Thanks to Prometheus, humans can profit from all the arts: *πάσαι τέχναι βροτοῖσιν ἐκ Προμηθέως*.<sup>1</sup> But the gift of medicine heads the list:

τὸ μὲν μέγιστον, εἴ τις ἐς νόσον πέσοι,  
οὐκ ἦν ἀλέξημι' οὐδέν, οὔτε βρώσιμον,  
οὐ χριστόν, οὐδὲ πιστόν, ἀλλὰ φαρμάκων  
χρεία κατεσκέλλοντο, πρὶν γ' ἐγὼ σφισιν  
ἔδειξα κράσεις ἠπίων ἀκεσμάτων,  
αἷς τὰς ἀπάσας ἐξαμύνονται νόσους.<sup>2</sup>

First and foremost, if one fell ill  
there was no recourse, no healing food,  
no ointment, no potion; but for lack of cures  
people wasted away, until I showed them  
how to mix soothing remedies,  
whereby they now ward off all kinds of illness.

The two subsequent *τέχναι* specified, those of divination and the mining of precious metals, hardly suggest that these resources are here envisaged as primary

<sup>1</sup> [Aesch.] *PV* 507.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 478-83.

inventions like farming, weaving and building, basic human skills whose invention might on that account be appropriately attributed to the philanthropic god. The implication is rather that there is a element of obscurity to these arts, a need to see hidden depths, which would suggest that their discovery could only be due to a peculiarly foresightful deity. In this respect, elements of medicine such as a healing diet, ointments, potions, and drugs, were more germane to the context than down-to-earth technical skills like surgery, cautery, and bandaging. In view of the warlike and athletic pursuits of Greek *poleis*, the latter would have been equally familiar components of healing, but there was no similar degree of mystery about the reasons for their efficacy.

Professional physicians of the fifth and fourth centuries, though not content to ascribe the efficacy of medicine to theological or quasi-magical explanations, sought to preserve the respect for medical practice implied by the attribution of their art to a deity. The sophist-physician who composed the Hippocratic treatise *Ancient Medicine* (Περὶ ἰητρικῆς τέχνης) emphasised the benefits of taking a rationalistic perspective:

οὐκ ἂν οὖν ἕτερα τούτων χρησιμώτερα οὐδ' ἀναγκαιότερα εἶη εἰδέναι δήπου, ὡς δὲ καλῶς καὶ λογισμῷ προσήκοντι ζητήσαντες πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου φύσιν εὗρον αὐτὰ οἱ πρῶτοι εὐρόντες, καὶ ῥήθησαν ἀξίην τὴν τέχνην θεῷ προσθεῖναι, ὥσπερ καὶ νομίζεται.<sup>3</sup>

Surely nothing would be more useful or more compelling to know than how the founders of the art, through skilful investigation and the application of sound reasoning about human nature, made their discoveries. They considered their art worthy to be ascribed to a god, as is commonly believed to be the case.

Such appeals to the importance of reason and knowledge in medical matters co-existed with non-rational beliefs about disease and cure. Medicine maintained strong connections with magical and religious practices such as prayers, divination,

---

<sup>3</sup> [Hippoc.] VM 14. 14-20. For the sake of convenience, I refer where possible to Hippocratic texts by Section and line number in the Loeb edition of Jones (1923-31), and indicate where I have followed other texts e.g. Jouanna (1991). I abbreviate using the standard Latin titles (e.g. VM for *De vetere medicina*, Art. for *De articulis*). References with the suffix L are to the page and line numbers of Littré (1839-61).

and oneiromancy. What both kinds of practice had in common was a concern for prognosis.<sup>4</sup> Prometheus' speech goes on directly to speak of divination:

τρόπους τε πολλοὺς μαντικῆς ἐστοίχισα  
κᾶκρινα πρῶτος ἐξ ὄνειράτων ἅ χρῆ  
ὑπαρ γενέσθαι.<sup>5</sup>

And I established many techniques of divination,  
and was the first to distinguish false dreams from  
those destined to come true.

The author of the surgical manual *On Joints* (Περὶ ἄρθρων) speaks in approving terms of forecasts, regardless of the outcome envisaged:

τὰ δὲ προρρήματα λαμπρὰ καὶ ἀγωνιστικὰ ἀπὸ τοῦ διαγινώσκειν ὅπῃ  
ἕκαστον καὶ οἷως καὶ ὅποτε τελευτήσῃ, ἦν τε ἐς τὸ ἀκεστὸν τράπηται.<sup>6</sup>

Brilliant and effective forecasts are made by distinguishing the way, manner and time in which each case will end, whether it will lead to recovery or be incurable.

The rationale for this procedure might be psychological rather than purely medical, as the chorus of *PV* suggests:

τοῖς νοσοῦσί τοι γλυκὺ  
τὸ λοιπὸν ἄλγος προὔξεπίστασθαι τορῶς.<sup>7</sup>

It's a comfort to those in sickness  
to know clearly beforehand what pain is still to come.

By contrast with *PV*, μαντική and ὄνειρατα do not merit a mention in the famous ode to human δεινότης in Sophocles' *Antigone*.<sup>8</sup> Albeit that Sophocles was the priest of a minor healing cult and welcomed Asclepius to Athens, his ode suggests that medical knowledge is a proud and efficacious human invention:

<sup>4</sup> Lloyd (1987) 39-41.

<sup>5</sup> [Aesch.] *PV* 484-6.

<sup>6</sup> [Hippoc.] *Art.* 58.65-69.

<sup>7</sup> [Aesch.] *PV* 698-9.

<sup>8</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 332-383.



ἄπορος ἐπ' οὐδὲν ἔρχεται  
τὸ μέλλον· "Αἶδα μόνον  
φεύξιν οὐκ ἐπάξεται·  
νόσων δ' ἀμηχάνων φυγὰς  
ξυμπέφρασται.<sup>9</sup>

In nothing does man go forth without resource  
to face the future. From Death alone  
will he find no escape,  
but for intractable diseases  
he has devised remedies.

Against such a background, part supernatural and part rational, how might Athenians of the late fifth century have conceptualised the possibility of medical innovation? In the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the period, the importation of foreign techniques seemed one obvious route to novelty. These included ideas of healing and cure from outside the Greek world, as well as those disseminated from Greek medical centres such as Cos and Cnidus to the East and Cyrene and Croton to the South and West. Another approach was to adapt to medical practice the growing body of theoretical speculation in the natural and physical sciences, leading to the adoption of non-empirical perspectives on human biology and physiology based on arbitrary intellectual premises.

However, in the absence of a truly 'scientific' understanding, when many other *technai* appeared to be finding new paths of progress through the application of intellect, the semblance and terminology of medical innovation might have seemed the best that could be attained by rational endeavour. The 'new' in medicine might simply be identified as something that appeared or could be presented as distinct from the old and the traditional. In the fifth century, this kind of innovation was also finding expression in the sphere of religion.<sup>10</sup> In view of the long-standing confluence of religious and medical ideas in Greek culture, it might

---

<sup>9</sup> Soph. *Ant.* 360-4.

<sup>10</sup> See Ch. 7, Sect. 5 below.

have been predicted that the introduction of a new healing deity would constitute a remarkably effective and popular form of 'medical' innovation.

## II

### *Foreign influence*

It was widely believed in antiquity that sickness itself was caused by supernatural forces, whether through the work of evil spirits or as a result of divine disapprobation. Homer links disease to divine agency in ascribing the plague at the beginning of the *Iliad* to Apollo's arrows, and νοῦσοι in Hesiod are personified as semi-divine, wreaking pestilence on the unjust city at Zeus' behest.<sup>11</sup> In Euripides' *Hippolytus*, the chorus of Troezenian women suggest that a deity must be responsible for Phaedra's malady:

ἦ γὰρ ἔνθεος, ᾧ κούρα,  
 εἴτ' ἐκ Πανὸς εἴθ' Ἑκάτας  
 ἢ σεμνῶν Κορυβάντων φοι-  
     τῶς ἢ ματρὸς ὀρείας;  
 σὺ δ' ἀμφὶ τὰν πολύθη-  
     ρον Δίκτυνναν ἀμπλακίαις  
 ἀνίερος ἀθύτων πελανῶν τρύχη;<sup>12</sup>  
 What god possesses your wits, princess?  
 Is it Pan or Hekate,  
 the holy Korybantes, or the  
 Mountain Mother, who makes you wander?  
 Is it for some insult to  
 Diktyнна of the wild beasts,  
 for the neglect of holy cake-offerings, that you waste away?

Identifying the deity responsible for inflicting the condition might be the first step to cure. Practical remedies for illness and injury traditionally involved prayers,

<sup>11</sup> Hom. *Il.* 1. 50-2, Hes. *Op.* 100-104, 238 f.

<sup>12</sup> Eur. *Hipp.* 141-147.

potions and magical incantations. When Odysseus was wounded in a boar-hunt, the sons of Autolycus

δῆσαν ἐπισταμένως, ἐπαιδῆ δ' αἷμα κελαινὸν  
ἔσχεθον.<sup>13</sup>

bandaged him with skill, and with an incantation  
stopped the dark blood flowing.

The incantation rather than the bandaging is said to stem the flow. But there is an explicit recognition of the value of human ἐπιστήμη in medical matters, and of the need to take practical measures to bring about cure.<sup>14</sup> Already in Homer, medical and magical skills go hand in hand. In the *Odyssey*, Helen offers her guests a relaxing drug given to her by Polydamna, a woman of Egypt:

τῆ πλεῖστα φέρει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα  
φάρμακα, πολλὰ μὲν ἐσθλὰ μεμιγμένα, πολλὰ δὲ λυγρὰ·  
ιητρὸς δὲ ἕκαστος ἐπιστάμενος περὶ πάντων  
ἀνθρώπων· ἦ γὰρ Παιήονός εἰσι γενέθλης.<sup>15</sup>

whose fertile soil produces a great many  
herbs, many beneficial in preparations and many poisonous.  
Egyptian physicians are skilful above all other  
people: they are the true offspring of Paeon the Healer.

The Greeks supposed, with some justification, that foreign peoples had developed special expertise in healing. Egyptian medicine in particular was a long-standing feature of popular consciousness. In some of the earliest extant medical writings, recorded on papyri in Egypt, practical prescriptions for cure existed alongside magical practices. The *Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus*, a text dating from the third millennium B.C., presents a thoroughly rational approach to the treatment of wounds, suggesting to some scholars that a non-religious approach to medicine

<sup>13</sup> Hom. *Od.* 19. 457-8.

<sup>14</sup> Majno (1991) 142 f.

<sup>15</sup> Hom. *Od.* 4. 229-32.

was well established in Egypt and influenced Greek medical practice.<sup>16</sup> Recent medical historians are sceptical about such a connection, finding stronger links with Babylonian medical practice, which recognised both religious and non-religious healing and made distinctions between treatments required by each.<sup>17</sup>

In the fifth century, Greek physicians might still have been inclined to look to Egypt for new medical ideas. Hippocratic texts refer to Egyptian oils, unguents, thistles and acorns, Egyptian beans for diet, Egyptian uterine purges and pessaries to induce menstruation and childbirth.<sup>18</sup> Herodotus reported that Egypt was full of doctors who specialised in different areas of health.<sup>19</sup> Although his age had seen a growth of new specialisations, medical specialisation was still a novel idea in Herodotus' time. Physicians would be well-advised to use all available means to bring about a cure if, as the Hippocratic treatise *The Art* (Περὶ τέχνης) suggests, medical *technê* was often considered to be no more effective than chance:

πολλή γὰρ ἀνάγκη καὶ τοὺς μὴ χρωμένους ἰητροῖσι νοσήσαντας δὲ καὶ ὑγιασθέντας εἰδέναι, ὅτι ἢ δρῶντές τι ἢ μὴ δρῶντες ὑγιάσθησαν· ἢ γὰρ ἀσιτίη ἢ πολυφαγίη, ἢ ποτῶ πλέονι ἢ δίψη, ἢ λουτροῖς ἢ ἀλουσίη, ἢ πόνοισιν ἢ ἡσυχίη, ἢ ὕπνοισιν ἢ ἀγρυπνίη, ἢ τῇ ἀπάντων τούτων ταραχῇ χρώμενοι ὑγιάσθησαν.<sup>20</sup>

For there is compelling evidence that even those who do not resort to a doctor have recovered from illness, either by doing something or avoiding something - either by fasting or by ample diet, by drinking more or not drinking at all, by bathing or refraining therefrom, by vigorous exercise or by rest, by sleeping or by staying awake, or by using a combination of any of these measures.

Reference to exotic medical ideas could be a source of amusement to Aristophanes' audience, as when he alludes to Herodotus' claim that Egyptians took purges for three consecutive days each month.<sup>21</sup> Egyptian physicians held that diseases arose from residues in the bowels which gave off noxious gases, a notion

<sup>16</sup> Breasted (1930); Sigerist (1951) 355.

<sup>17</sup> Nutton (1995).

<sup>18</sup> KF s.v. Αἰγύπτιος.

<sup>19</sup> Hdt. 2. 84.

<sup>20</sup> *De arte* 5. 12-18.

<sup>21</sup> Hdt. 2. 77. 2.

which may have influenced Hippocratic ideas about φύσαι ('winds') and περισσώματα ('superfluities').<sup>22</sup> But with the prospect of peace imminent at the close of the Archidamian War, the Egyptian custom suggested a new use for the helmetmaker's products:

πώλει βαδίζων αὐτὰ τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις·  
 ἔστιν γὰρ ἐπιτήδεια συρμαίαν μετρεῖν.<sup>23</sup>  
 Go down to Egypt and sell them there -  
 they're just the thing for measuring emetic!

Despite frequent references to the Egyptian provenance of medicines and methods, there is no firm evidence for the direct borrowing by the Greeks of Egypt in medical philosophy or practice. Rather, it is notable that a debt to Egypt is nowhere acknowledged. Herodotus in particular might have been expected to mention a historical connection if one were to be found. In his account of Democedes of Croton, he makes a point of stating that the most distinguished physician of his time used Greek medical methods (130.3, Ἑλληνικοῖσι ἰήμασι χρεώμενος) to cure Darius.<sup>24</sup> Plato makes no reference to Egypt in the discussion of medicine in the *Republic*;<sup>25</sup> and the author of *Ancient Medicine* sketched an account of the evolution of medicine without reference to foreign contributions.<sup>26</sup> In late fifth-century Athens, regular Greek medical practices were on the whole perceived as home-grown, and those seeking opportunities to produce new medical ideas did not need to go beyond the Greek-speaking world.

---

<sup>22</sup> Thivel (1981) 357-69.

<sup>23</sup> *Ar. Pax* 1253.

<sup>24</sup> *Hdt.* 3.125, 129-38.

<sup>25</sup> *Rep.* 3.405a f.

<sup>26</sup> *VM* 3.

## III

*Hippocratic medicine*

The great body of texts that has come down to us under the title of the Hippocratic Corpus has been thought to represent a major innovation in fifth-century Greek medical practice. The sixty-odd texts which comprise the collection are heterogeneous in nature and form, and the ascription to the historical Hippocrates cannot be made with any certainty.<sup>27</sup> They include polemical ἐπιδείξεις like *Ancient Medicine*, practical surgical manuals such as *On Joints*, the collection of medical *Aphorisms*, and the remarkable records of personal case-histories in *Epidemics*. They are the work of different hands at different dates between around 430 and 330 B.C. and express a variety of disparate and sometimes contradictory viewpoints on the causes and treatment of conditions. But the collection as a whole adopts such a fundamentally and systematically different perspective on disease and cure from that of earlier sources that it has often been represented as constituting evidence for a revolution in human thought, the invention of rational medicine.<sup>28</sup>

However, the rational, empirical approach exhibited by the Hippocratic texts is not in itself sufficient evidence that irrational medical ideas and practices were superseded at some stage in the late fifth century. The dating of the texts is uncertain, and there is scanty evidence for the range and nature of Greek medical practices prior to their composition. No unequivocal conclusion can therefore be drawn about what was new about the ideas and methods they record or when these were introduced. Writing itself can be a way of transmitting traditional knowledge, as well as formulating and drawing attention to new ideas.<sup>29</sup> The ideas and methods discussed in the texts may have been well established at the time they were recorded.<sup>30</sup> The doxographical papyrus known as *Anonymus Londinensis* cites the opinions of fifth- and fourth-century medical authorities of whom many were completely unknown to modern scholars before its discovery in 1892, highlighting

---

<sup>27</sup> Lloyd (1991) 194 f.

<sup>28</sup> Longrigg (1993).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. above, Ch. 3, Sect. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Majno (1991) 487 n.2.

our ignorance of the extent to which diverse medical ideas may have been discussed and disseminated.<sup>31</sup>

The Hippocratic *Ancient Medicine* (henceforth abbreviated to *VM*) is of particular interest here, since it conducts a sustained polemic against what are called *καινοὶ τρόποι* in medicine.<sup>32</sup> A rhetorical *epideixis* composed by a practising physician, it may fall into a period when claims about τὸ καινόν were being used to impress Athenian audiences in arenas such as music and rhetoric. The mention of Empedocles, who died in the 420s, has been used to argue that it is datable to around 420-410 B.C.<sup>33</sup> The style of *VM*, though less overtly rhetorical than treatises of similar date such as *Breaths* and *The Art*, also exhibits extravagant verbal effects of the kind introduced by Gorgias.<sup>34</sup> These include doublets with *paromoiosis* and *pariosis* e.g. ἐξαπάτηται καὶ ἐξαπατᾶται (2.8), νοσέουσι τε καὶ πονέουσιν (2.17), chiasmic antithesis as in τροφή τε καὶ αὔξησις...φθίσις τε καὶ ἄρρωστίη (6.5-7), homoioteleuton as in ἤψησάν τε καὶ ὤπησαν καὶ ἔμιξαν (3.40-1), and homoioteleuton combined with asyndeton as in σκοτοδινίη, δυσθυμίη, δυσεργείη (10.30-1). The fact that Hippocrates was later thought to have been a pupil of Gorgias was doubtless an inference from the rhetorical style of these treatises.<sup>35</sup>

Physicians were not just practical healers, but were required to be able to expound their methods in a manner that was meant to persuade. The use of rhetorical techniques shows that persuasion was felt to be an important aspect of the physician's craft, suggesting one way in which late fifth-century Athenians perceived how one might innovate in medicine.<sup>36</sup> But while allowances must be made for *VM*'s overt rhetorical purpose, its author's identification and characterisation of what is καινόν in contemporary medicine is unequivocal. His

<sup>31</sup> The papyrus was long thought to be a copy of a student's notes on a lecture based on the lost collection of medical δόξαι attributed by Galen to Aristotle's pupil Menon: Jones (1947) 1-8. The evidence for this view has been challenged by Manetti (1990) 219-21.

<sup>32</sup> *VM* contains three uses of καινός and the only use of καινουργέω, roughly a quarter of all uses of the lemma καιν- in the Corpus (KF s.vv). Only in *VM* does καινός actually connote 'novel' rather than simply 'another'.

<sup>33</sup> *VM* 20.6. Jouanna (1991) 85; *contra*, Hankinson (1992) 55.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. above Ch. 3, Sect. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Suda s.v.

<sup>36</sup> Phillips (1987) 187.

position is summed up in the words οὐκ ἤξιουν αὐτὴν [sc.τὴν ἰητρικὴν] ἔγωγε καινῆς ὑποθέσιος δεῖσθαι ('In my opinion medicine does not require a new *hypothesis*').<sup>37</sup> The insistence that medicine requires no *hypothesis* (cf. 2.26, οὐδὲν δεῖ ὑποθέσιος) may be understood in different ways. One is that medicine, insofar as it is a practical art established of old (2.1 πάλαι), does not need to be underpinned by speculative theories akin to those of natural philosophers. Another is that medicine is already based on a viable empirical *hypothesis* (in the looser sense of 'underlying basis') and has no need of another. The first interpretation seems likelier in view of the later comment about 'those who conduct research into medicine in the new fashion, basing it on a *hypothesis*' (13.1-2, τὸν καινὸν τρόπον τὴν τέχνην ζητεούντων ἐξ ὑποθέσιος). This would suggest the rejection of any *hypothesis* as representing a spurious and irrelevant methodology.

The use of ὑπόθεσις in *VM* is its earliest attestation.<sup>38</sup> While the audience is assumed to be familiar with the term, it may have fluctuated between the general meaning of 'basis' and the more technical connotation of 'postulate' as used in philosophical discourse.<sup>39</sup> The nature of the *hypotheses* to which the author objects is indicated at the start:

ὁκόσοι μὲν ἐπεχείρησαν περὶ ἰητρικῆς λέγειν ἢ γράφειν ὑπόθεσιν αὐτοὶ ἑωυτοῖσιν ὑποθέμενοι τῷ λόγῳ θερμὸν ἢ ψυχρὸν ἢ ὑγρὸν ἢ ξηρὸν ἢ ἄλλο τι ὃ ἂν θέλωσιν, ἐς βραχὺ ἄγοντες τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς αἰτίας τοῖσιν ἀνθρώποισιν τῶν νούσων τε καὶ τοῦ θανάτου καὶ πᾶσι τὴν αὐτὴν ἐν ἣ δύο ὑποθέμενοι...<sup>40</sup>

All who have attempted to speak or write about medicine, adopting as the basis of their argument a *hypothesis* such as the hot or cold or wet or dry or whatever else they may fancy, reduce the underlying principles of human disease and death to a narrow range by postulating that the causes are only one or two elements, and the same ones in all cases of illness.

<sup>37</sup> *VM* 1.20-1. The reading καινῆς (var. κενῆς) has been rejected on the grounds that it would imply that true medicine is also based on a *hypothesis*: Jones (1923-31) 14 n.1. However, it is confirmed by the subsequent use of καινός in relation to ὑπόθεσις (13.1-2).

<sup>38</sup> ὑπόθεσις occurs six times in *VM*, and the verb υποτίθεσθαι three times.

<sup>39</sup> Lloyd (1991) 49 f.

<sup>40</sup> *VM* 1.1-6 (using the text of Jouanna [1991]).



This passage assumes a considerable body of theoretical discussion and controversy, both in speech and in writing. In Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, Socrates confirms that medical writings already constituted an impressive collection:

Εἰπέ μοι, ἔφη, ὦ Εὐθύδημε, τῷ ὄντι, ὥσπερ ἐγὼ ἀκούω, πολλὰ γράμματα συνήχας τῶν λεγομένων σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν γεγονέναι; καὶ ὁ Εὐθύδημος, Νῆ τὸν Δί', ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες· καὶ ἔτι γε συνάγω, ἕως ἂν κτήσωμαι ὡς ἂν δύνωμαι πλεῖστα... Τί δὲ δὴ βουλόμενος ἀγαθὸς γενέσθαι, ἔφη, ὦ Εὐθύδημε, συλλέγεις τὰ γράμματα; ἐπεὶ δὲ διεσιώπησεν ὁ Εὐθύδημος σκοπῶν ὅτι ἀποκριναῖτο, πάλιν ὁ Σωκράτης, Ἔρα μὴ ἰατρός; ἔφη, πολλὰ γὰρ καὶ ἰατρῶν ἐστὶ συγγράμματα.

'Tell me, Euthydemus,' he said, 'Is what I hear true, that you own a large collection of books written by so-called wise men of the past?' Euthydemus replied 'By Zeus, yes, Socrates. And I'm still collecting books, so as to own as many as possible'... 'And in collecting these books, what is it you seek to become good at?' When Euthydemus fell silent considering what to answer, he said 'Maybe you want to be a doctor? Doctors' treatises alone make a considerable collection.'

The *hypotheses* scorned by *VM* reflect the ideas of the pre-Socratic natural philosophers, going back to Anaxagoras, Alcmaeon, Empedocles and ultimately Thales, φυσικοί who posited either a unitary ἀρχή or fundamental elements from which the world and man were constituted.<sup>41</sup> Specific candidates for the description of ἐν ἧ δύο ὑποθέμενοι include those whose doctrines are known only from *Anonymus Londinensis*, such as Hippocrates' nephew Polybus, Philolaus of Croton, and Petron of Aegina.<sup>42</sup> What *VM* finds new and undesirable in medicine is the attempt to narrow down the field of medical investigation by postulating reductionist *hypotheses* about human nature. In his view, observation shows the human constitution to be irreducibly complex:

<sup>41</sup> Jouanna (1992) 366-379.

<sup>42</sup> Lloyd (199: 58) derives from ἐν ἧ δύο his premise that 'the *main* theorists whom the author of *VM* had in mind were pathologists who held either one, or a pair, of these opposites to be the sole cause of diseases.' But it is unlikely that the numbers were intended to be taken literally.

ἔνι γὰρ ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ καὶ ἀλμυρὸν καὶ πικρὸν καὶ γλυκὺ καὶ ὄξυ καὶ στρυφνὸν καὶ πλαδαρὸν καὶ ἄλλα μυρία παντοίας δυνάμιας ἔχοντα πληθὸς τε καὶ ἰσχύον.<sup>43</sup>

For there is in man salt and bitter, sweet and sharp, astringent and neutral, and a multitude of other aspects with all kinds of properties both in number and strength.

*VM* goes on to promote physiological and pathological notions which have been thought just as speculative as those it dismisses.<sup>44</sup> But its purpose is not to promulgate a competing theory, but merely to demonstrate the multiplicity of different qualities discernible in practice in the human body which make simplistic *hypotheses* untenable.<sup>45</sup>

#### IV

#### *φύσις and empiricism*

The author of *VM* characterised the application of extraneous systems of thought as irrelevant to medicine, more suited to astrology and cosmology (1.16-17, *περὶ τῶν μετεώρων ἢ ὑπὸ γῆν*). In his view, the growth of medical knowledge had required wide-ranging and cumulative observation by skilled practitioners of the conditions of health and sickness: medicine was ‘a substantial discovery, the fruit of much investigation and skill’ (4.5-6, *τό γε εὔρημα μέγα τε καὶ πολλῆς σκέψιός τε καὶ τέχνης*). Everyday empirical principles remained the basis of medical knowledge and discovery:

ἔτι γοῦν καὶ νῦν οἱ τῶν γυμνασίων τε καὶ ἀσκησίων ἐπιμελόμενοι αἰεὶ τι προσεξευρίσκουσιν κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ὁδὸν ζητέοντες ὅ τι ἐσθίων τε καὶ πίνων ἐπικρατήσῃ τε αὐτοῦ μάλιστα καὶ ἰσχυρότερος αὐτὸς ἑωυτοῦ ἔσται.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> *VM* 14.31-5.

<sup>44</sup> Lloyd (1987) 15.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Hankinson (1992).

<sup>46</sup> *VM* 4.6-10.

At any rate even nowadays those involved with gyms and exercise are constantly discovering new things by following this same path in their search for what is best to eat and drink for them to become stronger.

The logic of this position was that medicine did not have all the answers: new avenues remained to be explored. But this acknowledgment caused problems for some who attempted to promote the validity of their empirical approach over that of proliferating, untestable *hypotheses*. Some Hippocratic authors honestly conceded the fallibility of their *technê*: ‘precision is seldom to be seen’ (τὸ δὲ ἀτρεκὲς ὀλιγάκις ἔστι κατιδεῖν).<sup>47</sup> Others were dogmatic about the efficacy and authoritative status of empirical medicine:

ἰητρικὴ δὴ μοι δοκίει ἤδη ἀνευρηθῆσθαι ὅλη, ἥτις οὕτως ἔχει...ὅς γὰρ οὕτως ἰητρικὴν ἐπίσταται, ἐλάχιστα τὴν τύχην ἐπιμένει, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἄνευ τύχης καὶ ξὺν τύχῃ εὐποιηθεῖη ἄν. βέβηκε γὰρ ἰητρικὴ πᾶσα, καὶ φαίνεται τῶν σοφισμάτων τὰ κάλλιστα ἐν αὐτῇ συγκείμενα ἐλάχιστα τύχης δεῖσθαι.<sup>48</sup>

In my opinion, the whole of this sort of medicine has been discovered...Someone who understands this sort of medicine is least inclined to wait on luck, but would obtain success regardless of the operation of chance. All of medicine is well established, and the soundest ideas of which it is comprised rely least on the element of chance.

In the absence of an uncontested scientific basis for medicine, the exposition of theoretical novelties before audiences of laymen and doctors might command a rhetorical premium. Speculations could be arbitrary or take their cue from serious attempts to formulate a basis for cure in human φύσις. The basing of medicine on a broader theory of human nature precisely recalls Plato’s characterisation in *Phaedrus* of Hippocrates’ own method:

<sup>47</sup> VM 9.21-2; cf. VM 12.12-13, *Morb.* 1.5, 1.9 L.

<sup>48</sup> *Loc.Hom.* 46. 342.4-9(L). Lloyd (1987) 114-135 points out the different rhetorical functions of dogmatism, uncertainty and self-criticism in the texts.

ΣΩ. ψυχῆς οὖν φύσιν ἀξίως λόγου κατανοῆσαι οἶει δυνατὸν εἶναι ἄνευ τῆς τοῦ ὅλου φύσεως; ΦΑΙ. εἰ μὲν οὖν Ἴπποκράτει γε τῷ τῶν Ἀσκληπιαδῶν δεῖ τι πείθεσθαι, οὐδὲ περὶ σώματος ἄνευ τῆς μεθόδου ταύτης.<sup>49</sup>

*Socrates:* So do you think it's possible to have a satisfactory understanding of the nature of the soul apart from universal nature? *Phaedrus:* Well, if we are to believe Hippocrates the Asclepiad, we can't even understand the body without a procedure of this kind.

The production of theories based on the idea of an underlying *phusis* recalls efforts taking place in other *technai* in the latter part of the fifth century. The system of universal bodily proportions propounded by Polykleitos of Argos for purposes of sculpture will have had particular bearing on medical theory:<sup>50</sup>

Sculptors, physicians, and natural philosophers had affinities among themselves in the fifth century, in part because none of them were very far from either the popular notions of anatomy and physiology, which frequently surface in medical literature, or from the milieu of up-to-date interpretations of physical phenomena. The physicians and natural philosophers had the task of translating their ideas into a useful new literary form, that of the prose essay, and the sculptors had the duty to create works embodying new ideas.<sup>51</sup>

By the 420s, *hypotheses* about human nature were a familiar and persuasive aspect of medical thinking, causing the author of *VM* to react with alarm against the promulgation of non-empirical theories. If such theorisation was itself no longer new by the time he was writing, the practice of rational, empirical practice was *a fortiori* an even less novel phenomenon. What would have been new, however, was that both kinds of approach had only recently been committed to writing for the first time.

*VM* rejected 'hypothetical' novelty on both methodological and practical grounds. Not only were the *hypotheses* unacceptably narrow in reference, but medical discovery could not be furthered by their use. On *VM*'s account, empirical

---

<sup>49</sup> Pl. *Phaedr.* 270c.

<sup>50</sup> See above, Ch. 4, Sect. 3.

<sup>51</sup> Métraux (1997) 92.

medicine was an established technique.<sup>52</sup> Confirmed through long ages of discovery, it was the only valid basis for further progress:

ἰητρικῆ δὲ πάλαι πάντα ὑπάρχει, καὶ ἀρχὴ καὶ ὁδὸς εὐρημένη, καθ' ἣν καὶ τὰ εὐρημένα πολλά τε καὶ καλῶς ἔχοντα εὐρηται ἐν πολλῷ χρόνῳ, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ εὐρεθήσεται, ἢν τις ἰκανὸς τ' ἐὼν καὶ τὰ εὐρημένα εἰδὼς ἐκ τούτων ὀρμώμενος ζητῆ. <sup>53</sup>

The entire field of medicine has long been in existence, and a basis and method has been devised whereby numerous sound discoveries have been made over a long period. The remainder will also be found out if a competent inquirer investigates with the knowledge of past discoveries, and uses them as his starting-point.

The possibility of genuine incremental innovation in medicine could thus be countenanced. New discoveries were considered both desirable and likely, and the author could reiterate his optimistic assertion:

ταῦτα δὴ πάντα τεκμήρια, ὅτι αὕτη ἡ τέχνη πᾶσα ἡ ἰητρικὴ τῆ αὐτῆ ὁδῷ ζητεομένη εὐρίσκοιτο ἄν.<sup>54</sup>

All this is proof that, using the same method of inquiry, this whole art of medicine could be discovered.

In a similar vein, the author of *The Art* contended:

ἐμοὶ δὲ τὸ μὲν τι τῶν μὴ εὐρημένων ἐξευρίσκειν, ὅτι καὶ εὐρεθὲν κρέσσον ἢ ἢ ἀνεξεύρετον, συνέσιος δοκεῖ ἐπιθύμημά τε καὶ ἔργον εἶναι, καὶ τὸ τὰ ἡμίεργα ἐς τέλος ἐξεργάζεσθαι ὡσαύτως.<sup>55</sup>

It seems to me that to discover what is undiscovered, insofar as the discovery is useful, is the aim and function of intelligence, and so is to bring to completion tasks that are half-finished.

<sup>52</sup> VM 1.9 τέχνης ἐούσης: the participle has a 'pregnant significance' (Jouanna [1990] *ad loc.*). Cf. VM 12.11 τὴν τέχνην ὡς οὐκ ἐοῦσαν and *De arte* 2.2 τέχνη...οὐδεμία οὐκ ἐοῦσα.

<sup>53</sup> VM 2.1-5.

<sup>54</sup> VM 8.19-20.

<sup>55</sup> *De arte* 1.4-8.

Despite the authors' clear intention to reassure their hearers, the very confidence they express ironically betrays the relative newness of the application and articulation of empirical medicine. Had a secure record existed of centuries of empirical medical research, it would surely have blunted any optimism that the task might soon be complete.

## V

### *Asclepius and Asclepiads*

In the agonistic and strife-ridden communities of ancient Greece, there was a constant requirement for effective treatment of disease, wounding, plague, and diverse physical and psychological problems. Common circumstances like childbirth also called for competent treatment rather than speculative expertise, and a significant proportion of Hippocratic treatises are devoted to gynecological matters.<sup>56</sup> Tried-and-tested medical methods to treat such conditions were bound to encounter a degree of failure, but they were more likely to be relied on than innovations for which the evidence for efficacy was no more persuasive.

In such circumstances, it is not surprising that a body of traditional practice existed that could at least offer comfort and reassurance to the ill, the invalid and the wounded. A mass of evidence for Greek medical practice centres around the name of Asclepius.<sup>57</sup> Pindar relates the legend of Asclepius in an ode addressed to Hieron, during the latter's own illness in the 470s B.C., which gives an indication of the range of ailments for which patients sought a cure, and the sort of treatments they might expect:

τοὺς μὲν ὦν, ὅσσοι μόλον αὐτοφύτων  
 ἐλκέων ξυνάονες, ἢ πολιῶ χαλ-  
 κῶ μέλη τετρωμένοι  
 ἢ χερμάδι τηλεβόλω,  
 ἢ θερινῶ πυρὶ περθόμενοι δέμας ἢ χει-

<sup>56</sup> 10 out of the 60-odd treatises exclusively so; see in general Dean-Jones (1995).

<sup>57</sup> Edelstein and Edelstein (1945).

μῶνι, λύσαις ἄλλον ἀλλοίων ἀχέων  
 ἔξαγεν, τοὺς μὲν μαλακαῖς ἐπαιδαῖς ἀμφέπων,  
 τοὺς δὲ προσανέα πίνοντας, ἢ γυί-  
 οῖς περάπτων πάντοθεν  
 φάρμακα, τοὺς δὲ τομαῖς ἔστασεν ὀρθούς.<sup>58</sup>  
 And whoever came suffering from natural  
 ailments, or with limbs pierced  
 by gray bronze  
 or by slingstones,  
 or whose bodies were wasted by summer's heat or  
 winter's cold, he delivered from pains of all  
 kinds, tending some with soft incantations,  
 others by soothing potions or by  
 wrapping their limbs around with  
 herbs, and others he restored with surgery.

The cult of Asclepius had roots in Thessaly, a region long associated with magical practices and healing: in Homer, Asclepius was not yet a god, but the prince of Thessalian Tricca. Having acquired his skills from the centaur Chiron, he had sent his sons Machaon and Podalirius to Troy.<sup>59</sup> Hippocrates too was connected with Thessaly: he is said to have visited Larissa and to have died there, and one of his sons was allegedly called Thessalus.<sup>60</sup>

The treatments offered in Asclepius' shrines consisted mainly of the ritual of incubation, the mantic interpretation of dreams, and the healing visitation of the god in dreams. The sanctuaries were equipped with fountains, gymnasia and theatres, enabling them to exploit the therapeutic potential of baths, exercise, and entertainment alongside diet, religious rituals and supernatural modes of healing. Hundreds of dedicatory inscriptions recovered from the principal shrine at Epidaurus record cures for a variety of ailments. They suggest the workings of faith and auto-suggestion in a manner that has ample analogies in more recent times. A typical example is that of the sufferer who dreamed during incubation that

<sup>58</sup> Pi. *Pyth.* 3.47-53.

<sup>59</sup> Hom. *Il.* 2. 729-32, 4.204, 219.

<sup>60</sup> *Suda* s.v. Ἴπποκράτης: Pinault (1992) 12.

his ulcerous toe was being treated and woke up to find it cured.<sup>61</sup> The inscriptions only record success: it was obviously inappropriate to record failure.<sup>62</sup> A recurrent motif in the inscriptions suggested the inadvisability of scoffing at or doubting Asclepius' power.<sup>63</sup> For Athenians with a sceptical bent, the case of Ambrosia of Athens recorded on a stele at Epidaurus was a cautionary tale. Blind in one eye, she had mocked the methods of cure she witnessed taking place in the sanctuary. The god visited her during incubation and commanded her to make a donation as a penalty for her disbelief.<sup>64</sup> The danger of slighting the god was indicated by the case of a man who, cured of blindness by Asclepius, was struck blind again for omitting to make a donation.<sup>65</sup>

As centres of popular healing, the shrines of Asclepius are bound to have attracted the attention of medical thinkers and practitioners. The Corpus testifies to the activities of Hippocratic consultants over a wide area, including many regions of the Peloponnese, central and northern Greece, the islands, and Cnidus in Asia Minor.<sup>66</sup> The author of *Airs, Waters, Places*, recommending that physicians should acquire knowledge of local conditions, clearly envisages them as itinerant, and physicians were later termed *περιοδευταί*.<sup>67</sup> Hippocratic physicians may have ascribed different aetiologies to disease and cure, but these were not thought incompatible with Asclepius' healing powers. However, Asclepius is nowhere mentioned in the Hippocratic Corpus, except in the Oath. The physicians' project, the development and dissemination of a practical *τέχνη* of medicine, was not to be furthered by reference to their divine patron.

While religious healing does not feature in the Hippocratic texts, neither is there evidence of hostility. Physicians appreciated the therapeutic value of religious belief and could even support the advice of dream-interpreters:

---

<sup>61</sup> Edelstein and Edelstein (1945), Vol. I, no. 423.

<sup>62</sup> Lloyd (1979) 46.

<sup>63</sup> E.g. nos. 3, 4, 9, 10, 35, 36, and 37 in Herzog (1931).

<sup>64</sup> Herzog (1931) no. 4.

<sup>65</sup> Herzog (1931) no. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Jouanna (1992) 283-4.

<sup>67</sup> *Aër*. 1-2, LSJ s.v.



οἱ δ' οὖν οὐ διδάσκουσιν ὡς χρὴ φυλάσσεσθαι, ἀλλὰ θεοῖσιν εὐχεσθαι κελεύουσι· καὶ τὸ μὲν εὐχεσθαι ἀγαθόν· δεῖ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν συλλαμβάνοντα τοὺς θεοὺς ἐπικαλεῖσθαι.<sup>68</sup>

They do not teach you how to take precautions, but instruct you to pray to the gods. Prayer is a good thing. But one should take oneself in hand, and merely call on the gods to assist.

Asclepius and Hippocrates were so closely associated in the ancient mind that the cult of the god was later thought to have offered the basis for empirical medicine:

Medical knowledge was hidden in darkness until the Peloponnesian War. Then Hippocrates of Cos, a famous and influential doctor in the service of Aesculapius, brought it into the light. Patients who had recovered from illness customarily inscribed in the god's temple an account of the help they had received, so that similar treatment might prove beneficial to others. Hippocrates is said to have copied out these inscriptions, and, Varro believes, it was after the temple burned down that he founded the branch of medicine we call clinical.<sup>69</sup>

Although the connection of Hippocrates himself with the cult of Asclepius may have been a subsequent rationalisation, temple healing may have been sufficiently effective to be embraced by doctors and laymen alike:

The methods of healing used both in what we may call 'rationalistic' and in temple medicine had much in common - the priests had recourse to drugs, prescriptions concerning diet, and phlebotomy, just as some of the rationalistic doctors did not rule out amulets and prayers...both sides appeal to, and look to be judged by, the practical results they achieved.<sup>70</sup>

Given the presence of religious elements in even the most rational aspects of Greek daily life and the widespread susceptibility to 'double determination', there was likely to be mutual influence and interaction of ideas stemming from both religious and rational premises.

---

<sup>68</sup> *Vict.* 4.87 L.

<sup>69</sup> Pliny *N.H.* 29.2.

<sup>70</sup> Lloyd (1979) 45, 47.

A further reason for Hippocrates being connected with the cult of Asclepius was that doctors who took the Hippocratic Oath were called Asclepiadae and swore by Asclepius along with Apollo and Hygieia. Their title may originally have meant to imply lineal descent from Asclepius, in the same way as the guild of rhapsodes based on Chios distinguished themselves as Homeridae.<sup>71</sup> Since Asclepiadic doctors sought to combine rational medicine with respect for traditional religious beliefs about healing, connecting Asclepius to the supposed founder of rational medical practice was an inevitable corollary. In Plato's time, Hippocrates could be referred to as an Asclepiad without qualification.<sup>72</sup>

The plague of 430-26 B.C. brought home to Athenians the extent of their ἀγνοία in matters both medical and divine, and led to the most conspicuous medical innovation of the period. Thucydides' account gives an indication of popular perspectives on medicine at this juncture. He relates how the Athenians succumbed to despair in the face of the plague's ravages:

οὔτε γὰρ ἰατροὶ ἤρκουν τὸ πρῶτον θεραπεύοντες ἀγνοία, ἀλλ' αὐτοὶ μάλιστα ἔθνησκον ὄσω καὶ μάλιστα προσήσαν, οὔτε ἄλλη ἀνθρωπεία τέχνη οὐδεμία· ὅσα τε πρὸς ἱεροῖς ἰκέτευσαν ἢ μαντείοις καὶ τοῖς τοιούτοις ἐχρήσαντο, πάντα ἀνωφελεῖ ἦν, τελευτῶντές τε αὐτῶν ἀπέστησαν ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ νικώμενοι.<sup>73</sup>

Doctors too did not know at first how to treat the disease, but they themselves were its main victims insofar as they were most involved with it. Nor did any other human skill avail. All supplications at shrines, oracles and the like were useless, and in the end people, baffled by the plague, stayed away from them.

Here was the opportunity for practitioners of the new medical τέχνη to prove their worth. In one sense, they seem to have done so. In the absence of cure, the duty of care was an important aspect of the doctor's art, as detailed in the late treatise

---

<sup>71</sup> Jouanna (1992: 289) suggests that an epigram ascribed to Theocritus (*Epig.* 8 = *Anth.Pal.* 6.337) makes a distinction between being connected to Asclepius by *technê* rather than blood. However, it is clear from the context that *technê* refers to that of the sculptor of the statue that accompanied the epigram.

<sup>72</sup> Pl. *Prot.* 311b, *Phaedrus* 270c.

<sup>73</sup> Thuc. 2.47.4.

*Decorum* (Περὶ εὐσχημοσύνης).<sup>74</sup> Thucydides' observation that the physicians selflessly exposed themselves to danger resonates with the ethical premises of the Hippocratic tradition: later legends related that Hippocrates himself was present in Athens and warded off the plague by the use of fire and herbs.<sup>75</sup> However, a more effective insurance was required against the return of the plague. In 420 B.C., during the interlude of peace with Sparta, Asclepius was brought to Athens from Epidaurus and the god's cult officially established in the city.<sup>76</sup> The acceptance of Asclepius in Athens signified an important extension of the god's influence. By the end of the fifth century, Asclepius had been transformed from a cult hero into a major deity of healing, and his connection with rational medicine was formalised.

## VI

### *Newness vs. novelty*

At Athens in 388 B.C., the methods of Asclepiadic incubation may have been felt to be at variance with the spirit of the times, and were the subject of Aristophanic satire.<sup>77</sup> But Aristophanes' plays also reflect the public involvement in rationalistic medicine, not least in their satirising of the jargon doctors were thought to affect. At the beginning of *Clouds*, Strepsiades coins a pseudo-medical term in complaining about his horse-mad son:

ἀλλ' ἵπερόν μου κατέχεεν τῶν χρημάτων.<sup>78</sup>

But he infused my property with horse-mania.

As well as containing a pun on ἐρός, ἵπερός is a play on ἵκτερος, 'jaundice' and ὕδρεος, 'dropsy'. By applying a new, technical-sounding word to the condition, Strepsiades might be accused of doing no more than the professional physicians of his day.

<sup>74</sup> Jones (1923-31) vol. 2, 269 f.

<sup>75</sup> Pinault (1992) 35-60

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Ch. 7, Sect. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Ar. *Plut.* 659 f.

<sup>78</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 74.

Anthrax, arthritis, asthma, crisis, hypochondria, dysentery, pleuritis, rheuma, sepsis, stranguria, tetanos: the abundance of Hippocratic technical terms for medical conditions, many still in use today, impart an impressive aura of knowledge and modernity.<sup>79</sup> Aristophanes expected his audience to be familiar with many such terms used in both professional and lay medicine. Some were still sufficiently novel to be the subject of parody, and could be used in a comically incongruous fashion.<sup>80</sup> Others had entered the vocabulary of the average Athenian and could be used metaphorically in common parlance.<sup>81</sup> In their desire to impress and pretensions to expertise, physicians could be linked to the expounders of the other meretricious novelties of the age:

Θουριομάντεις, ἰατροτέχνας, σφραγιδονυχαργοκομήτας.<sup>82</sup>

Soothsaying Thurieticians, scribbling physicians, flashy long-haired intellectuals.

Many of the medical terms and neologisms bandied about by ἰατροτέχνηται may soon have lost their aura of importance and expertise. The author of *VM* suggested that ‘technical gibberish’ (15.1, ληρείν) was often used as a cover for ignorance. Plato too was scathing about medical jargon:

Φύσας τε καὶ κατάρρους νοσήμασιν ὀνόματα τίθεσθαι ἀναγκάζειν τοὺς κομψοὺς Ἀσκληπιάδας, οὐκ αἰσχρὸν δοκεῖ; Καὶ μάλ', ἔφη, ὡς ἀληθῶς καινὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἄτοπα νοσημάτων ὀνόματα.<sup>83</sup>

‘To force these ingenious Asclepiads to give names like ‘fluxes’ and ‘catarrhs’ to diseases - don’t you think it a disgrace?’ ‘Yes’, he said, ‘they really monstrously new-fangled terms for such conditions’.

Traditional doctrines and practices may have appeared more honest and reliable than the wordiness of physicians. Since cure could not be guaranteed by medical

<sup>79</sup> Majno (1991) 141. Cf. Aristophanes’ own list in *Heroes* (fr. \*322 KA): Parker (1983) 243.

<sup>80</sup> Miller (1945).

<sup>81</sup> Zimmermann (1992b).

<sup>82</sup> *Ar. Nub.* 332.

<sup>83</sup> *Pl. Rep.* 3. 405d.

treatment, the recognition of dependence on divine goodwill might be both more effective and offer more comfort to sufferers.

But in the age of the Sophists, medicine was one of many areas which became the subject of rhetorical presentation and debate. As a result, the pursuit of professionalism tended in potentially contrary directions. On the one hand the need for and benefit of specialisation was creating distinct disciplines within medicine such as surgery and dietetics, whose different logic and methods came under theoretical and practical scrutiny. On the other, the development of knowledge, reasoning, and written handbooks in areas like art and physical science had repercussions on the evolution of other *technai*. The new ideas and methodologies applied in related areas of thought might reasonably be hoped to contribute to medical thinking. But medical theories needed to be put to the test in practice as well as theory:

ὅτι μὲν οὖν καὶ λόγους ἐν ἑωυτῇ εὐποροῦς ἐς τὰς ἐπικουρίας ἔχει ἡ ἰητρικὴ, καὶ οὐκ εὐδιορθώτοισι δικαίως οὐκ ἂν ἐγχειρόη τῆσι νούσοισιν, ἢ ἐγχειρευμένας ἀναμαρτήτους ἂν παρέχοι, οἳ τε νῦν λεγόμενοι λόγοι δηλοῦσιν αἷ τε τῶν εἰδότην τὴν τέχνην ἐπιδείξεις, ὡς ἐκ τῶν ἔργων ἐπιδεικνύουσιν, οὐ τὸ λέγειν καταμελετήσαντες, ἀλλὰ τὴν πίστιν τῷ πλήθει ἐξ ὧν ἂν ἴδωσιν οἰκειοτέρην ἡγεύμενοι ἢ ἐξ ὧν ἂν ἀκούσωσιν.<sup>84</sup>

Medicine has good reasons of its own to justify its treatments, and would reasonably refuse to treat intractable cases, or would undertake them without making mistakes. This is shown by the present exposition and by those of experienced practitioners who demonstrate it in practice, not in words, in the conviction that the majority find it more natural to believe the evidence of their own eyes than what they are told.

The need for justification suggests a distinction between the innovations recognised or rejected by a medical élite with professional interests and those that might still have appeared novel in the eyes of Athenians. Doctors served the community, and the success of their methods depended to some degree on popular co-operation

---

<sup>84</sup> *De arte* 14; by contrast, Cleon rhetorically accused Athenians in 427 of preferring to believe what they were told by clever speakers than what they saw with their own eyes (Thuc. 3.38.4-5; see Ch. 3, Sect. 1 above).

and approbation. The author of *VM* even implies that public acceptance was a test of the validity of medical knowledge:

μάλιστα δέ μοι δοκεῖ περὶ ταύτης δεῖν λέγοντα τῆς τέχνης γνωστὰ λέγειν τοῖσι δημότησι...εἰ δέ τις τῆς τῶν ἰδιωτέων γνώμης ἀποτεύξεται καὶ μὴ διαθήσει τοὺς ἀκούοντας οὕτως, τοῦ ἐόντος ἀποτεύξεται.<sup>85</sup>

I believe it is very important that anyone speaking on the art of medicine should use terms that are familiar to the general public...If he fails to be understood by laymen and does not dispose his audience to grasp his meaning, he will fail to get to the truth of the matter.

In circumstances where the genuine basis of medical expertise might be a matter for doubt, the ability to communicate persuasively, essential for practitioners, could encourage the production of new theories for their own sake. Sound but familiar empirical methods may have seemed less exciting to audiences than the ideas of Sophist-physicians who profited from the promotion of their novel perspectives.

Athens and other Greek cities had a tradition of public doctors. By Herodotus' time, the career of Democedes of Croton in Aegina, Athens, Samos and Persia had acquired legendary characteristics.<sup>86</sup> His successors seemed to be less spectacular: in *Acharnians* and *Wasps*, Aristophanes makes fun of Pittalos, who may have held the position of public doctor at Athens over a number of years.<sup>87</sup> In an atmosphere of open debate, the need to impress and educate a wider public meant that competing physicians' authority might rest less on specialist knowledge of their field than on their ability to defend their ideas vis-à-vis competing theories. The author of *Nature of Man* was concerned to distinguish his treatment of the question of ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις from that of others who in his opinion sought to adduce irrelevant theories:

δῆλον ὅτι οὐδὲν γινώσκουσι, γνοίη δ' ἂν τῆδέ τις μάλιστα παραγενόμενος αὐτοῖσιν ἀντιλέγουσιν· πρὸς γὰρ ἀλλήλους ἀντιλέγοντες οἱ αὐτοὶ ἄνδρες τῶν αὐτῶν ἐναντίον ἀκροατέων οὐδέποτε τρὶς ἐφεξῆς ὁ αὐτὸς περιγίνεται

<sup>85</sup> *VM* 2. 13-14, 23-5.

<sup>86</sup> Griffiths (1987).

<sup>87</sup> *Ar. Ach.* 1030 f., *Vesp.* 1432; Jouanna (1992) 111.

ἐν τῷ λόγῳ, ἀλλὰ τοτὲ μὲν οὗτος ἐπικρατεῖ, τοτὲ δὲ οὗτος, τοτὲ δὲ ἢ ἂν τύχη μάλιστα ἢ γλῶσσα ἐπιρρυεῖσα πρὸς τὸν ὄχλον.<sup>88</sup>

It is clear that they have no real knowledge. Anyone present at their debates would see this very clearly. When these men debate in front of an audience, the same speaker will never win the argument three times in a row. The victory will go to one, then to another, and then to whoever happens to speak most glibly in front of the crowd.

This recalls Socrates' view that the inconsistency of the φυσικοί negated the very purpose of their inquiries:

ἐθαύμαζε δ' εἰ μὴ φανερόν αὐτοῖς ἔστιν, ὅτι ταῦτα οὐ δυνατόν ἔστιν ἀνθρώποις εὐρεῖν· ἐπεὶ καὶ τοὺς μέγιστον φρονούντας ἐπὶ τῇ περὶ τούτων λέγειν οὐ ταῦτὰ δοξάζειν ἀλλήλοις, ἀλλὰ τοῖς μαινομένοις ὁμοίως διακεῖσθαι πρὸς ἀλλήλους.<sup>89</sup>

He was amazed that it was not obvious to them these things could not be solved by human beings. Even the most authoritative-sounding speakers about these issues could not agree with one another about the basis of their opinions, but acted towards each other like raving lunatics.

In Athens as elsewhere in Greece there was likely to be pressure to speculate and to seek a reasoned basis for the practice of medicine as well as the pressure for overt innovativeness.<sup>90</sup> Rhetoric placed a premium on appearance of originality, and a feature of medical *epideixeis* was their emphasis on an authorial *ego*.<sup>91</sup> But in the absence of a solid foundation for gathering empirical evidence regarding medical knowledge, there might be no other yardstick for judging competing opinions apart from the skill of the speaker.

In such an atmosphere it will not always have been easy to distinguish the serious pursuit of medical knowledge from the charlatantry which sought to impress for less reputable reasons. In the absence of genuine innovation, spurious novelty might suffice. The author of *VM* sought to distance his craft from the kind of meretricious novelty created by the notion of the combination of elements,

<sup>88</sup> *Nat. Hom.* 1. 1.

<sup>89</sup> *Xen. Mem.* 1.1.13

<sup>90</sup> E.g. *VM* 12.4, *De arte* 7.1; Lloyd (1987) 68, 96.

<sup>91</sup> Lloyd (1987).

something he considered closer to painting than to medicine.<sup>92</sup> Aristophanes' burlesque of medical practitioners along with other purveyors of jargon could count on popular scepticism of new-fangled methods and terminology. However, Hippocratic texts show some ambivalence towards courting popular understanding. The vulgar pursuit of novelty for its own sake was recognised as a feature which needed to be guarded against, but might also be exploited for positive medical benefit. The author of *On Fractures* criticises practitioners who 'get a name for cleverness' (σοφοὺς δόξαντας εἶναι) for their unorthodox methods of treating broken arms, and goes on to remark about the sort of popular reaction that encouraged such behaviour:

ἀλλὰ γὰρ πολλὰ οὕτω ταύτης τῆς τέχνης κρίνεται· τὸ γὰρ ξενοπρεπὲς οὐπω ξυνιέντες εἰ χρηστὸν, μᾶλλον ἐπαινέουσιν ἢ τὸ ξύνηθες, ὃ ἤδη οἶδασιν ὅτι χρηστὸν, καὶ τὸ ἀλλόκοτον ἢ τὸ εὐδηλον.<sup>93</sup>

Many other aspects of this art are judged in the same way. They praise what seems outlandish without knowing if it does any good, rather than the commonplace which they already know works; in other words, the bizarre is preferred to the straightforward.

Surgery in particular lent itself to such novelties. *On Joints* gives a graphic description of the sort of devices that surgeons might resort to in order to please the crowds, such as treating conditions of hunchback by tying sufferers to a ladder and shaking them:

χρέονται δὲ οἱ ἰητροὶ μάλιστα αὐτῇ οὗτοι οἱ ἐπιθυμέοντες ἐκχαυνοῦν τὸν πολὺν ὄχλον· τοῖσι γὰρ τοιούτοις ταῦτα θαυμάσια ἐστίν, ἢν ἢ κρεμάμενον ἴδωσιν, ἢ ῥιπτεόμενον, ἢ ὅσα τοῖσι τοιούτοις ἔοικε, καὶ ταῦτα κληῖζουσιν αἰεὶ, καὶ οὐκέτι αὐτοῖσι μέλει, ὅκοῖόν τι ἀπέβη ἀπὸ τοῦ χειρίσματος, εἴτε κακόν, εἴτε ἀγαθόν.<sup>94</sup>

The doctors who use it are mainly those who want to make the crowd gape with wonder. The latter think it amazing to see a man suspended and shaken, or subjected to

<sup>92</sup> VM 20. 2. Cf. Ch. 4, Sect. 3.

<sup>93</sup> *Fract.* 1.16-20.

<sup>94</sup> *Art.* 42 (L) 4.182.15-20.



the other treatments which such doctors use. They always cheer them on, quite unconcerned whether the actual result of the man-handling is positive or negative.

## VII

### *Conclusions*

In reviewing the sort of things that would have counted as novelty in medicine in ancient Athens, it may be instructive to consider what medical innovation means in the modern world. Modern medicine is securely established as a science, a testable and widely trusted system of knowledge and practice based on the results of repeatable experiments and the rigorous investigation of anatomy and physiology. There is a clear framework for innovations and advances in medicine. New drugs are found and manufactured, surgical techniques are invented, new technology is employed for diagnosis and treatment, and therapeutic approaches are devised to satisfy changing fashions, popular needs, and commercial pressures.

No widely accepted scientific basis existed for ancient medicine. However, the claims made for medicine by the authors of *VM* and *The Art* exhibit confidence in the grounding of medicine as a τέχνη from which future discoveries will emerge. The sense of awe surrounding the history of exceptional medical practitioners such as Democedes and Hippocrates also shows an acceptance of medicine's claim to specialist status. Physicians, whether priests of Asclepius or practitioners of rational medicine, counted on a widespread trust, however misplaced, in the possibility of cure. The association of the medical art with a divine patron, whether Apollo, Asclepius or Prometheus, also enhanced popular respect for the profession and its responsibilities.

In the increasingly rational context of fifth-century thought, there was bound to exist a diversity of opinion regarding the use of treatments and remedies, especially those whose spectacular nature might be in inverse proportion to their efficacy. Against this background, the search within the profession for forms of treatment which might constitute a genuine advance on prevailing knowledge seems to have arisen from much the same impulse as it does today. On the one

hand, there were serious attempts to discover a more accurate basis for diagnosis and cure, as illustrated most vividly by the detailed and sometimes brutally honest case-histories in the *Epidemics*. On the other, there was the response to increasing pressure to achieve and to demonstrate success in a public forum, given the specific cultural modalities whereby such success might obtain its reward.<sup>95</sup>

Treatments with demonstrable practical results which take place within a well-established field of official medicine are one kind of innovation. The Asclepiad temple dedications seemed to offer a better analogy for such treatment than the painstaking research of the Hippocratic physicians. On the basis of such evidence, the acceptance of Asclepius into Athens was an eminently rational decision. Another kind of innovation is the introduction of new and different modes of understanding, whether derived from within or introduced from outside a particular medical culture. Western societies today are increasingly embracing 'alternative' therapies, such as homoeopathy, osteopathy, naturopathy, acupuncture, and psychotherapy. Whilst many of the new therapies are recent arrivals and may have only a transient appeal, others have an ancient pedigree, their apparent newness arising from cultural unfamiliarity and ignorance. What the 'alternative' therapies have in common is that their philosophical and evidential basis does not derive from the official medical model of treatment. Many prefer to stress holistic, psychical, or psycho-physical orientations that are not as easily susceptible to scientific analysis and to the canons of proof required by medical orthodoxy.<sup>96</sup>

As a result, although they may be supported by a large body of empirical evidence, modern alternative therapies are often dismissed as 'unscientific'. This is as true for homoeopathy, which in its modern form is less than a century old, as for acupuncture, which is both a body of practical knowledge that has been practised for centuries and an elaborate system based on energy points which theorises the prevention and cure of disease as balancing the body's *qi* or vital force. The theoretical systems on which many such treatments depend often appear fanciful and unconvincing to the 'scientific' mind, regardless of any demonstration of

---

<sup>95</sup> Lloyd (1987) 68.

<sup>96</sup> Connor (1995).

practical therapeutic results. The causal assumptions of these 'new' therapeutic systems may sit awkwardly with more conventional explanations of treatment.

However, some system may appear better than no system, as long as it does not conflict with canons of common sense. But if 'common sense' is to be the ultimate arbiter of a therapy's widespread acceptance, it is important to consider whether it represents a discourse which changes with different structures of power as well as with advances in scientific knowledge and different world-views.<sup>97</sup> For Athenians of the late fifth century, proud of their reputation for *sophia*, a τέχνη worthy of the name needed at least to be underpinned by a plausible theoretical system. Although the authors of *VM* and *The Art* sought to dismiss any such system as being irrelevant to the practice of genuine medicine, they too recognised the need to submit to the requirement they criticised as 'novel' and to offer a systematic elucidation of their own views and assumptions.

The kind of novelty manifested today by the introduction of alternative systems of medicine constitutes a parallel to the target of *VM*'s attack. The new-fangled theories criticised there were derived from reductionist modes of reasoning rather than traditional empirical methods. Contemporary debate about the status of psychoanalysis, whether it is a science, an art, or simply worthless, has resulted in similar kinds of argument being raised. The theoretical terms used in psychoanalysis, such as the notions of the unconscious and of the complexes, are variously criticised for being speculative, redundant, and reductionist.<sup>98</sup>

As the popularity and perceived efficacy of a new therapy increases, its advocates and practitioners commonly seek to provide it with an external validation and authority. These include disseminating publications which promote the treatment as safe, valuable and effective, creating institutes and centres of expertise authorised to provide official training and qualifications, and lobbying medical and governmental authorities for recognition. Similar strategies were used in the ancient world, with the promulgation of written works on practical and

---

<sup>97</sup> Foucault (1967).

<sup>98</sup> I have not attempted here to discuss new approaches to psychological conditions. Antiphon (A6 DK) may have prefigured modern psychotherapeutic techniques by millennia, if Plutarch's account is true that he practised in Corinth a τέχνη ἀλυπίας based on words (Guthrie [1969] 168, 290 f.).

theoretical medicine, the eventual establishment of Asclepius' shrines throughout Greece, and the 'official' consolidation of Asclepiadic medicine through the merging of Asclepius with rational medical methods. The diffusion of writing encouraged the development of systematic theories, some of which, such as that of the humours, were to hold sway for centuries.

By harping on the question of novelty, the author of *VM* appears keen to be thought of as the voice of established modern medicine, while being concerned to reject what he considers to be the excesses of modernity. Socrates' claim to be a 'doctor of the soul', though disclaiming possession of a τέχνη in this respect, perhaps met a similar kind of resistance from those who viewed aetiology and cure from the perspective of traditional religion. The moral framework of the dialectical method suggested a wholly different paradigm for the meaning of 'treatment' and 'cure' from the drugs and spells Socrates ironically offers first as a cure for his interlocutor's headache in the *Charmides*.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> Pl. *Charm.* 155e.

## 7. New gods: religious innovation in the age of Socrates

‘Traditional’ polytheisms are subject to constant change; that is one of their traditions.

Robert Parker, *Athenian Religion: a History*.

### I

#### *Varieties of religious change*

Religion - the ‘binding back’ of individuals and communities to supposedly immutable or transcendental truths - is on one level wholly incompatible with the idea of innovation. An action or belief is only considered to be religious if it partakes of or repeats an earlier, and ultimately divinely sanctioned, procedure.<sup>1</sup> Religion, like nature itself, recapitulates rather than innovates. Although religious innovations may be identified as such in retrospect, the attempt to institute changes through overt human agency in sanctified traditions of worship or belief is thus in principle problematic. If changes are to occur they must come about through an expression of the logic proper to religion, like ‘divine intervention’. In practice, this means that they may either be sanctioned by the very stream of tradition whereof they become a part, or be imposed from outside the boundaries that define a society’s cohesive religious identity. Adherents of established religions resist the notion of radical novelty insofar as it is perceived both to conflict with the notion of religious tradition and to undermine its claims to transcendent validity. The practices of religion ultimately imply a fundamentally unhistorical (or ahistorical) perspective. This was bound to come under challenge in a period characterised by the growth of new forms of reasoning and inquiry, not least the elaboration of a new kind of historiography focussing on grand events of the recent past.<sup>2</sup>

While radical novelty seems to stand in direct antithesis to traditional piety, innovation has always had some part to play in religion. First, it is a regular element in religious self-description, in accounts of the genesis of beliefs, and in

---

<sup>1</sup> Eliade (1971) similarly characterizes the ‘archaic’ world-view: ‘The gesture acquires meaning, reality, solely to the extent to which it repeats a primordial act’.

<sup>2</sup> Hornblower (1994) 14.

religious eschatology. Thus specific beliefs and rituals involved in any particular religious system are for the most part culturally and temporally specific, their origins often ascribed to an *aition* set in a historical, quasi-historical, or mythical context. In Greek myth, Kronos overthrew Uranus and was in turn replaced by the new order of Zeus;<sup>3</sup> Athena embodied her own non-evolutionary divinity by springing full-grown from Zeus' head;<sup>4</sup> while Dionysos was portrayed by Euripides as a 'parvenu deity', νεωστὶ δαίμων, introducing a radically new kind of worship to Greece.<sup>5</sup> The trauma of newness is symbolised, as well as assuaged, by the continued repetition and re-enactment in art and ritual of such mythical origins. But the myths also serve as reminders and models in the sphere of the divine for the possibility of radical innovation on the earthly plane. Since these gods were themselves 'new' once, what is to prevent the appearance of new gods in more recent times?

Secondly, religious change is often consequent on social change, and religious innovation an inevitable expression of other forms of social, technical and intellectual innovation. The shifting of social boundaries, for instance, opens the membership and management of cult to new candidates.<sup>6</sup> Technical developments mean that the gods are worshipped with new songs, performed on new instruments and in modern modes;<sup>7</sup> while their shrines and images are sculpted in new styles and materials.<sup>8</sup> The development of the written media in the late fifth century also gave new impetus to religious practices associated with holy texts, such as Orphism:

ἀγύρται δὲ καὶ μάντιες ἐπὶ πλουσίων θύρας ἰόντες πείθουσιν ὡς ἔστι παρὰ σφίσι δύναμις ἐκ θεῶν ποριζομένη θυσίαις τε καὶ ἐπρωδαῖς, εἴτε τι ἰδίκημα του γέγονεν αὐτοῦ ἢ προγόνων, ἀκεῖσθαι μεθ' ἡδονῶν τε καὶ ἐορτῶν...βίβλων

<sup>3</sup> Hes. *Th.* 924 f.

<sup>4</sup> Pi. *Ol.* 7.34 f.

<sup>5</sup> Eur. *Ba.* 219; cf. 256 τὸν δαίμον' ἀνθρώποισιν εἰσφέρων νέον.

<sup>6</sup> Priesthoods were traditionally held by priestly *genê* like the Eumolpidae and Eteobutadae, but new cults seem not to have been assigned to *genê* after the 440s; Parker (1996) 125-6.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. Lasos' asigmatic *Hymn to Demeter*, in *Aeolian*: West (1992) 342.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. earlier βρέτη were wooden and aniconic (Paus. 8.17.2 etc.). In the late fifth century the term *xoanon*, which reappears in Euripides, seems to signify 'luxurious divine statuary on a grand scale' and has been connected with Athenian preoccupations with Persia (Donohue [1988] 30-32).

δὲ ὄμαδον παρέχονται Μουσαίου καὶ Ὀρφέως, Σελήνης τε καὶ Μουσῶν ἐγγόνων, ὡς φασί, καθ' ἧς θυηπολοῦσι, πείθοντες οὐ μόνον ἰδιώτας ἀλλὰ καὶ πόλεις, ὡς ἄρα λύσεις τε καὶ καθαρμοὶ ἀδικημάτων διὰ θυσιῶν καὶ παιδιᾶς ἡδονῶν εἰσὶ μὲν ἔτι ζῶσιν, εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ τελευτήσασιν, ἧς δὴ τελετὰς καλοῦσιν, αἱ τῶν ἐκεῖ κακῶν ἀπολύουσιν ἡμᾶς, μὴ θύσαντας δὲ δεινὰ περιμένει.<sup>9</sup>

Beggar-priests and seers knock on the doors of rich men and persuade them that they have acquired the god-given power to heal them, should they or their ancestors have committed a sin, by means of sacrifices and incantations performed in conjunction with appealing rituals and events...They produce a bundle of books of Musaeus and Orpheus, allegedly sons of the Moon and the Muses, according to which they perform their sacrifices. They convince not only individuals but cities that there can actually be remission and purification from misdeeds by means of sacrifice and fun for the living, and also for the defunct through so-called 'functions', which deliver us from evil in the afterlife. Those who don't sacrifice are told that terrible things await them.

Burkert writes:

The characteristic appeal to books is indicative of a revolution: with the *Orphica* literacy takes hold in a field that had previously been dominated by the immediacy of ritual and the spoken word of myth. The new form of transmission introduces a new form of authority to which the individual, provided that he can read, has direct access without collective mediation. The emancipation of the individual and the appearance of books go together in religion as elsewhere.<sup>10</sup>

In a culture where religion was a communal activity *par excellence*, such individualism, combined with potentially elitist (pseudo)-intellectualism, might cause the the kind of angry ridicule of 'oracle-mongers' depicted in Aristophanes' *Peace* and *Birds*.

The conservative inertia of religion is also shaken when perceptions of gods themselves and discourses of religion are modified in line with prevailing intellectual movements and ideas. In Euripides' *Trojan Women*, Hecuba's

<sup>9</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 364b-365a. Cf. Eur. *Hipp.* 952-4: ...βιάκχευε πολλῶν γραμμιάτων τιμῶν καπνούς ('indulge in your rites, honouring to the smoky vapours of many writings'). The Derveni papyrus may be an example of such writings (which narrowly avoided going up in smoke): Most (1997).

<sup>10</sup> Burkert (1985) 297.

unusually rationalistic invocation of Zeus causes surprise to Menelaus. It would surely have reminded fifth-century Athenians of the intellectual tendencies of their own time:

EK. Ζεύς, εἴτ' ἀνάγκη φύσεος εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν,  
προσηυξάμην σε· πάντα γὰρ δι' ἀψόφου  
βαίνων κελεύθου κατὰ δίκην τὰ θνήτ' ἄγεις.

ME. τί δ' ἔστιν; εὐχὰς ὡς ἐκαίνισας θεῶν.<sup>11</sup>

HEC: Zeus, be you nature's law or mind of men,  
I invoke you; you move in mysterious ways  
to bring justice to mortals.

MEN: What's this? How strange and new are these prayers of yours!

The updating of religious forms is generally attended by overt reluctance and disapproval, and a respectable time-lag is invariably granted to allay superstitious concerns before potentially dangerous innovations are introduced. But equally, when a religion begins to appear too remote from the temper and techniques of the times, it risks losing its hold on the imagination, thus posing a different and potentially more wholesale danger, that of obsolescence, to the deities involved and to those responsible for their promotion and preservation. If religious traditions are not communicated in a way that relates meaningfully to the daily lives and experience of their adherents, they appear antiquated and cease to exercise the psychological compulsion on which they rely for their vitality and survival. Thus the process and prospect of innovation is always present in the background of a flourishing religious culture, co-existing in an uneasy tension with stern injunctions against meddling with divine matters.

---

<sup>11</sup> Eur. *Tr.* 886-9: Taplin (1996: 24) doubts that anachronism was intended in these lines, but its topical associations cannot be overlooked.



## II

*Rationalism and science*

Religious activity pervaded everyday life in the traditional culture of fifth-century Athens.<sup>12</sup> It may therefore be expected that the pursuit of innovation, so notable in other social and cultural spheres, would be reflected to some degree in the understanding and practice of religion. Secular attitudes, represented in their most sophisticated form by the rationalistic discourse of the Sophists but increasingly familiar in the wider social context to audiences of Aristophanes and Euripides, were bound to have an ambivalent effect on traditional structures of action and belief. One corollary of the humanism represented by Sophists such as Protagoras was a perceived growth of agnosticism and atheism, resulting in an increasingly alarmed popular reaction to seemingly hubristic expressions of religious non-conformity. This was most evident in 415 B.C. when the mutilation of the Herms led to an upsurge of anger and superstitious anxiety - a self-fulfilling omen, on Thucydides' account, for the disastrous outcome of the Sicilian expedition.<sup>13</sup>

Another observable tendency of the period, however, was the effective reinforcement of popular religiosity, through both the pursuit of new forms of religious experience and the introduction of new gods. Innovations of these kinds might be felt necessary to meet the complex spiritual and practical demands of Athenian individuals and society in a time of rapid social change:

Anxiety, anger, relief, fear, hope, ambition - whatever the dominant psychological drive underlying the introduction of a new deity, it provides a valuable commentary upon Athens' collective social consciousness, according to the principle that changes in the human situation brought corresponding changes in the superhuman.<sup>14</sup>

The neglect of a deity who could provide benefit or prevent danger might signal disaster. In Aristophanes' *Clouds*, the clouds, sun and moon complain that the Athenians neglect and insult them although they are the city's greatest

---

<sup>12</sup> Mikalson (1983)13 f.

<sup>13</sup> Thuc. 6.27.3.

<sup>14</sup> Garland (1992)171, 173.

benefactors.<sup>15</sup> The humorous treatment was hardly meant to promote a new style of formal religious practice such as that attributed to Socrates in the play, but it hints at the side of Athenian popular superstition which verged on pantheism. The notion of worshipping the heavenly bodies was not new and may have had a continuing appeal at some levels.<sup>16</sup> But it had no place in communal worship in the fifth century, and was more likely to be associated with barbarian practices:<sup>17</sup>

TP. ἡ γὰρ Σελήνη χῶ πανοῦργος Ἥλιος,  
 ὑμῖν ἐπιβουλεύοντε πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον,  
 τοῖς βαρβάροισι προδίδοτον τὴν Ἑλλάδα.

EP. ἵνα δὴ τί τοῦτο δράτον;

TP. ὅτι ἡ νῆ Δία  
 ἡμεῖς μὲν ὑμῖν θύομεν, τούτοις δὲ  
 οἱ βάρβαροι θύουσι. διὰ τοῦτ' εἰκότως  
 βούλονται ἄν ἡμᾶς πάντας ἐξολωλέναι  
 ἵνα τὰς τελετὰς λάβοιεν αὐτοὶ τῶν θεῶν.

EP. ταῦτ' ἄρα πάλαι τῶν ἡμερῶν παρεκλεπτέτην,  
 καὶ τοῦ κύκλου παρέτρωγον ὑφ' ἀρματαωλίας.<sup>18</sup>

Tr: The Moon and the delinquent Sun

have long been plotting against you,  
 and now are betraying Greece to the barbarians.

Her: Why are they doing this?

Tr: Because, by Zeus,  
 we sacrifice to you, but the barbarians  
 sacrifice to *them*. So naturally  
 they would like all of us to go to hell,  
 so that they might get the gods' rites for themselves.

Her: So that's why back then they filched a bit off the days  
 and dented their orbs through reckless driving!

<sup>15</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 575 f., 607 f.

<sup>16</sup> There is some evidence for worship of sun and moon (but not clouds): Hes. *Op.* 339, Pl. *Leg.* 10.887e; Burkert (1985) 175-6.

<sup>17</sup> Herodotus (1.131) noted it as a Persian practice: θύουσι δὲ ἡλίῳ τε καὶ σελήνῃ.

<sup>18</sup> Ar. *Pax* 406-415.

The reference to the erratic orbit of the heavenly bodies is generally taken to refer to the numerous eclipses which preceded the war.<sup>19</sup> They also suggest an allusion to Meton's recent alteration of the calendar to a cycle of nineteen years. Despite its practical benefits, the explanation for this change (and perhaps for Meton's other inventions as well) may have been perceived as dangerous moonshine.<sup>20</sup> When Meton appears in *Birds* directly after the grasping oracle-monger, Peisthetaerus uncharitably exclaims:

ἕτερον αὖ τουτὶ κακόν.

τί δ' αὖ σὺ δράσων; τίς δ' ἰδέα βουλευμάτων;<sup>21</sup>

Here comes another disaster.

So what are you going to do? What shape will your plan take?

Aristophanes could strike a chord with Athenian discomfort about the application of modern 'scientific' discoveries which seemed in practice to tamper with nature's laws. At least moonlight allowed Athenians to save money on oil for their torches:

ἄλλα τ' εὖ δρᾶν φησιν, ὑμᾶς δ' οὐκ ἄγειν τὰς ἡμέρας  
οὐδὲν ὀρθῶς, ἀλλ' ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω κυδοιδοπᾶν.<sup>22</sup>

In other ways as well she says that she benefits you. But you don't mark the days right at all, but jumble them up completely.

The sustained application of reason to matters of religious significance was exciting and might even be beneficial in practical ways. But given the inextricable association of social life with religious practices, innovations which appeared to subvert communal traditions and to expose popular beliefs as irrational might eventually come to seem as dangerous as the disavowal of divinity. In 423 B.C. Aristophanes could praise his own literary innovations by identifying them with Sophistic novelties: αἰὲν καινὰς ἰδέας εἰσφέρων σοφίζομαι.<sup>23</sup> As if in response,

<sup>19</sup> Thuc. 1.23.

<sup>20</sup> Refs. in *OCD* s.v. Meton.

<sup>21</sup> Ar. Av. 992-3.

<sup>22</sup> Ar. Nub. 615-616.

<sup>23</sup> Ar. Nub. 547; see Ch. 3 Sect. 1.

Teiresias in Euripides' *Bacchae* cautioned against just such innovation: οὐδὲν σοφίζομεσθα τοῖσι δαίμοσιν.<sup>24</sup> Sophistic thinkers might rationalise the gods out of existence altogether, by suggesting that they were no more than the invention of men for social purposes:

ἔπειτ' ἐπειδὴ τὰμφανῆ μὲν οἱ νόμοι  
 ἀπεῖργον αὐτοὺς ἔργα μὴ πράσσειν βία,  
 λάθρα δ' ἔπρασσον, τηνικαῦτα μοι δοκεῖ  
 <πρῶτον> πυκνός τις καὶ σοφὸς γνώμην ἀνὴρ  
 δέος <θεῶν> θνητοῖσιν ἐξευρεῖν, ὅπως  
 εἴη τι δεῖμα τοῖς κακοῖσι, κἄν λάθρα  
 πράσσωσιν ἢ λέγωσιν ἢ φρονῶσί <τι>.  
 ἐντεῦθεν οὖν τὸ θεῖον εἰσηγήσατο.<sup>25</sup>

Then, when the laws forbade men to  
 commit open acts of violence,  
 and they began to do them in secret, it seems to me  
 that a wise and cunning man  
 invented for men fear of the gods  
 as a way of instilling fear into the wicked, if  
 they should do (even in secret) or say or think something bad.  
 Hence he introduced religion.

### III

#### *Piety and pragmatism*

The characteristic openness of Greek polytheism led to a continual and productive interaction with external traditions and new influences.<sup>26</sup> In the course of the fifth century, this acceptance of innovation began to conflict with a more conservative attitude to established religion. This is exemplified by the decree of Diopieithes in the 430s, allegedly aimed at Pericles through his association with Anaxagoras,

<sup>24</sup> Eur. *Ba.* 200. Cf. Pentheus' warning to Dionysos (which ironically subverts straightforward categories by aligning the god with sophisms): δίκην σε δοῦναι δεῖ σοφισμάτων κακῶν (489).

<sup>25</sup> Crit. fr. 24 DK. Dihle (1977) has argued for Euripidean authorship of this passage, but not all scholars are persuaded: refs. in Burkert (1985) 467 n. 22.

<sup>26</sup> Burkert (1985) 176-9.

which made *asebeia* a crime: an *eisangelia* might be lodged against ‘those not paying customary respect to the divine or teaching doctrines about celestial phenomena’.<sup>27</sup> But the fullest statement of such conservatism appears in the fourth century, when Isocrates contrasted the imagined piety of an earlier Athenians with the perceived religious laxity of his own era:

καὶ πρῶτον μὲν τὰ περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς, ἐντεῦθεν γὰρ ἄρχεσθαι δίκαιον, οὐκ ἄνωμάλως οὐδ’ ἀτάκτως οὔτ’ ἐθεράπευον οὔτ’ ὠργίαζον...ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖνο μόνον ἐτήρουν, ὅπως μηδὲν μήτε τῶν πατρίων καταλύσουσι μήτ’ ἔξω τῶν νομιζομένων προσθήσουσιν· οὐ γὰρ ἐν ταῖς πολυτελείαις ἐνόμιζον εἶναι τὴν εὐσέβειαν, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ μηδὲν κινεῖν ὧν αὐτοῖς οἱ πρόγονοι παρέδοσαν. καὶ γὰρ τοι καὶ τὰ παρὰ τῶν θεῶν οὐκ ἐμπλήκτως οὐδὲ ταραχωδῶς αὐτοῖς συνέβαινε, ἀλλ’ εὐκαίρως καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἐργασίαν τῆς χώρας καὶ πρὸς τὴν συγκομιδὴν τῶν καρπῶν.<sup>28</sup>

First, in religion - the right place to begin - they were not erratic or inconsistent in their worship or ritual...Their sole concern was not to undermine traditional observances and not to add anything unsanctioned by custom. They understood reverence, not as extravagant expenditure, but as making no change in what their ancestors had handed down, and in turn the gods bestowed on them their favour, not in fits and starts, but in opportune fashion to help them cultivate the land and gather its fruits.

The impulse to innovate in traditional religion could thus be curtailed both by appeal to immemorial custom and by indicating the purely practical advantages of custom. This might also raise the question, in the uncertain context of war and plague, whether traditional observances were in fact producing the most practical benefit, and whether there might be new and alternative methods of ensuring success. Under such conditions, a degree of religious innovation might be accepted without undue opposition and anxiety, if it offered the possibility of new confidence while superficially conforming to familiar patterns.

Although Isocrates might credit the success of the earlier generation to their unswerving piety, the Athenians of Isocrates’ youth had paid a heavy price for

<sup>27</sup> εἰσαγγέλλεσθαι τοὺς τὰ θεῖα μὴ νομίζοντας ἢ λόγους περὶ τῶν μεταρσίων διδάσκοντας, Plut. *Per.*32.2; Ostwald (1986) 196-8.

<sup>28</sup> Isoc. *Areop.*29-30.

their overconfidence, a price keenly felt after the failure of the Sicilian expedition and during the later years of the Peloponnesian War. Political turbulence could be attributed to the actions of unprincipled individuals, but natural disaster and unaccountable military failure brought to mind the working of divine vengeance. The personification of Nemesis attracted early and consistent worship in Greece.<sup>29</sup> The religious conservative was bound to point to failures to worship correctly and consistently, but in a climate of innovation the sense of widespread disillusion and anxiety might also provide the stimulus for some to look beyond traditional religious beliefs for new ones that could offer the prospect of more regular and gratifying results.

Pragmatic considerations for embarking on a new form of worship were bound to become the object of satire. In Aristophanes' *Wealth* of 388, Chremylus is delighted to welcome the blind Plutus into his home:

σὺ δ' ὦ κράτιστε Πλοῦτε πάντων δαιμόνων,  
 εἴσω μετ' ἐμοῦ δεῦρ' εἴσιθ' ἢ γὰρ οἰκία  
 αὕτη ἔστιν ἣν δεῖ χρημάτων σε τήμερον  
 μεστήν ποιῆσαι καὶ δικαίως κἀδίκως.

But you, Wealth, mightiest of all gods,  
 come inside with me. Now this here is the very house  
 which you must fill up with wealth today,  
 whether it's just or not to do so.

A less cynical expression of Greek piety was the attempt to avoid disfavour by propitiating the deities and welcoming their presence in the home. The gods of the Homeric pantheon, who had survived the strictures of moralising critics such as Xenophanes, were no less to be worshipped because their favours were elusive. The ubiquitous local and household cults constituted not so much a system of belief as a function of social and familial cohesion, a source of emotional comfort and pleasure in their seasonal and daily observance.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The sixth-century shrine to Nemesis at Rhamnus was expanded in the fifth century: *BCH* 108 (1984), 751. In inscriptions of the fourth and third centuries (*IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.3109, 4638) Nemesis is linked to the worship of Themis ('Just Order').

<sup>30</sup> Nilsson (1948) 6 f.

The mysterious divinities who embodied the rich projections of the Greeks' psyche were not expected to 'work' with any particular consistency, though it was gratifying that they occasionally did so. On one occasion, Xenophon ran short of funds towards the end of his long march north, and mentioned this to a seer:

συνεβούλευσεν οὖν αὐτῷ θύεσθαι καθὰ εἰώθει, καὶ ἔφη συνοίσειν ἐπὶ τὸ βέλτιον. τῇ δὲ ὑστεραία Ξενοφῶν προσελθὼν εἰς Ὀφρύνιον ἐθύετο...καὶ ταύτῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἀφικνεῖται Βίων καὶ Ναυσικλείδης χρήματα δώσοντες τῷ στρατεύματι.<sup>31</sup>

He advised that if he sacrificed in the usual way things would get better. Next day Xenophon sacrificed...and on that very day Bion and Nausicleides arrived with money to give to the troops.

However, Xenophon was also impressed by the practical measures taken by Spartans along with their god-fearing behaviour:

ὅπου γὰρ ἄνδρες θεοὺς μὲν σέβουσιν, τὰ δὲ πολεμικὰ ἀσκοῦσιν, πειθαρχεῖν δὲ μελετῶσιν, πῶς οὐκ εἰκὸς ἐνταῦθα πάντα μεστὰ ἐλπίδων ἀγαθῶν εἶναι;<sup>32</sup>

When men honour the gods, perform military exercises, and practise obedience to authority, how can high hopes not abound?

The devout Xenophon saw that only practical effort and discipline, combined with the psychological impact of public piety, might guarantee military success: the gods helped those who helped themselves.<sup>33</sup> In this observation might lie an acceptable impulse for private initiative in religious matters.

The occasions on which the gods appeared to contribute to the favourable outcome of earthly events demanded celebration and commemoration. Private dedications celebrating the answer to prayers, such as for recovery from illness, a journey safely accomplished, or a successful military encounter, abounded in shrines and temples to the relevant deities.<sup>34</sup> The recognition of divine

<sup>31</sup> Xen. *Anab.* 7.8.5-6.

<sup>32</sup> Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.18.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Xen. *Oec.* 2.7-8, Dem. *Olynth.* 2.23.

<sup>34</sup> Van Straten (1981).

responsiveness, while not a prerequisite for worship, also served to encourage new forms of public religion. Herodotus tells of the founding of a shrine to Boreas in 480, after the Persian fleet anchored above Thermopylae was all but destroyed by a storm:

ἄμα δὲ ὄρθρω ἐξ αἰθρίης τε καὶ νηνεμίας τῆς θαλάσσης ζεσάσης ἐπέπεσέ σφι χειμών τε μέγας καὶ πολλὸς ἄνεμος ἀπηλιώτης, τὸν δὴ Ἑλλησποντίνην καλέουσι οἱ περὶ ταῦτα τὰ χωρία οἰκημένοι.<sup>35</sup>

At daybreak the calm clear weather suddenly changed, and the fleet was caught in a heavy storm from the east which stirred the sea into turbulence: the locals call it 'the Hellespontine Wind'.

Such an eventuality cannot have been wholly unforeseen, given that the destructive gale was a familiar enough phenomenon to warrant a name. But rather than rely on chance, the Greeks had prayed to the winds for divine assistance, mindful of an earlier occasion when Mardonios' fleet was wrecked in 492 B.C.<sup>36</sup> The outcome was celebrated by the foundation of a shrine to Boreas. Prayers so spectacularly answered make a strong impression, but for piety to go unheeded was the more familiar expectation of the worshipper. Solon's famous dictum summed up the religious perception that 'the gods are grudging of human happiness and inclined to cause trouble' (τὸ θεῖον πᾶν φθονερόν τε καὶ ταραχῶδες).<sup>37</sup> The alarming alternative, in marked contrast to traditional piety, was to deny with Protagoras that human beings could have any knowledge of the gods' agency:

περὶ μὲν θεῶν οὐκ ἔχω εἰδέναι, οὐθ' ὡς εἰσὶν οὔθ' ὡς οὐκ εἰσὶν οὔθ' ὅποιοί τινες ἰδέαν.<sup>38</sup>

About the gods, I have no way of knowing whether they exist or whether they do not, nor what form they take.

<sup>35</sup> Hdt. 7.188.2.

<sup>36</sup> Hdt. 6.44.2. Before Artemisium the Delphic oracle also advised the Greeks to pray to the winds (Hdt. 7.178.1).

<sup>37</sup> Hdt. 1.32.1.

<sup>38</sup> Prot. fr. 4 DK.



Boreas is an example of a cult introduced into Athenian communal worship from the long pre-existing catalogue of Greek mythological figures and potential deities. Athenians could draw on a vast reservoir of such divinities of greater or lesser pedigree who, given a suitable opportunity, might be publicly fleshed out. The elevation of a minor cult by raising a shrine or instituting a festival was a common mechanism of religious innovation throughout the fifth century. Its operation is observable in the founding of such institutions as the pan-Attic games for Heracles, the δημοθουρία (public feast) in honour of Artemis Agrotera, and new temples such as those to Poseidon at Sunium, to Nemesis at Rhamnus, and to Athena Nike and Hephaestus in Athens.<sup>39</sup>

Such developments contributed to the changing pattern of Athenian ritual by adopting divine elements already embedded in traditional belief rather than making new additions. Such worship might be initiated through a divine epiphany, as when Pheidippides' encounter with Pan during his historic run from Marathon led to the god's cult being introduced to Attica from its Arcadian home. The Attic incarnation of Pan was conveniently grafted on to a pre-existing worship of Nymphs, who shared his habitat.<sup>40</sup> Opportunities might also arise to extend to Athens the worship of Greek cult figures honoured outside Attica. Late in the sixth century, for instance, the Athenians had followed the advice of the Delphic oracle to introduce a shrine of the Aeginetan hero Aeacus to their agora, with the aim of using the hero's power to their advantage, or neutralising it, in their war with Aegina.<sup>41</sup> A similar motive has been detected in the elevation of the cult of the Spartan heroes Castor and Polydeuces (the Anakes) at Piraeus in the 430s.<sup>42</sup> Religious and military aims could not be sharply divided:

War is the activity where human and divine interests most closely coincide, since the welfare of the gods is intimately bound up with the fortunes of the worshipping community.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Parker (1996) 154. On the connection of Hephaestus' temple with artistic τέχναι see Ch.4 Sect. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Hdt. 6.105; Parker (1996) 165-6.

<sup>41</sup> Hdt. 5.89.

<sup>42</sup> Plut. *Thes.* 32-3, *IG*<sup>3</sup>.133; Garland (1992) 111.

<sup>43</sup> Garland (1992)17.

Boreas is an example of a cult introduced into Athenian communal worship from the long pre-existing catalogue of Greek mythological figures and potential deities. Athenians could draw on a vast reservoir of such divinities of greater or lesser pedigree who, given a suitable opportunity, might be publicly fleshed out. The elevation of a minor cult by raising a shrine or instituting a festival was a common mechanism of religious innovation throughout the fifth century. Its operation is observable in the founding of such institutions as the pan-Attic games for Heracles, the δημοθουρία (public feast) in honour of Artemis Agrotera, and new temples such as those to Poseidon at Sunium, to Nemesis at Rhamnus, and to Athena Nike and Hephaestus in Athens.<sup>39</sup>

Such developments contributed to the changing pattern of Athenian ritual by adopting divine elements already embedded in traditional belief rather than making new additions. Such worship might be initiated through a divine epiphany, as when Pheidippides' encounter with Pan during his historic run from Marathon led to the god's cult being introduced to Attica from its Arcadian home. The Attic incarnation of Pan was conveniently grafted on to a pre-existing worship of Nymphs, who shared his habitat.<sup>40</sup> Opportunities might also arise to extend to Athens the worship of Greek cult figures honoured outside Attica. Late in the sixth century, for instance, the Athenians had followed the advice of the Delphic oracle to introduce a shrine of the Aeginetan hero Aeacus to their agora, with the aim of using the hero's power to their advantage, or neutralising it, in their war with Aegina.<sup>41</sup> A similar motive has been detected in the elevation of the cult of the Spartan heroes Castor and Polydeuces (the Anakes) at Piraeus in the 430s.<sup>42</sup> Religious and military aims could not be sharply divided:

War is the activity where human and divine interests most closely coincide, since the welfare of the gods is intimately bound up with the fortunes of the worshipping community.<sup>43</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> Parker (1996) 154. On the connection of Hephaestus' temple with artistic τέχναι see Ch.4 Sect. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Hdt. 6.105; Parker (1996) 165-6.

<sup>41</sup> Hdt. 5.89.

<sup>42</sup> Plut. *Thes.* 32-3, *IG*<sup>3</sup>.133; Garland (1992) 111.

<sup>43</sup> Garland (1992)17.

In 476/5 B.C., the recovery of Theseus' bones from Skyros by Kimon was both religiously motivated and politically expedient. Kimon may have had personal interests: members of the Phytalid *genos* of his deme Lakiadai were the traditional keepers of Theseus' hitherto insignificant cult, and this opportunity for them to increase their influence has been connected to Kimon's patronage of his fellow-demesmen.<sup>44</sup> The mixture of motives was a feature of the Athenians' inclusive mode of religious consciousness. Their willing receptiveness of such kinds of 'religious innovation' helped to ensure the popularity and prominence of new cults throughout the fifth century.

#### IV

##### *Introducing new gods*

While the religious innovations of the earlier fifth century show a conjunction of opportunism and genuine belief, the introduction of Asclepius into Athens appears to combine both features in a new way. The god was brought to Athens in 420 B.C., a few years after the end of the plague, which lingered until the winter of 426/5.<sup>45</sup> Aristophanes' *Wasps* shows that there was already an Asklepeion in Aegina in 422 B.C.;<sup>46</sup> and a separate foundation of the cult was established in Zea, east of Piraeus, shortly before it came to Athens.<sup>47</sup> The resumption of peaceful interchange with Epidaurus after the Peace of Nicias in 421/0 was an appropriate time to extend the cult to the city. In the aftermath of the plague, it may have been hoped that the new hero-deity would be more powerful and effective than traditional healing figures such as Apollo Paion, Herakles Alexikakos, and Athena in her manifestations as Hygieia or Paionia.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Parker (1996) 169-70.

<sup>45</sup> Thuc. 2.47.3, 3.87.1-3. Evidence for increased attention to cults of Apollo (*IG* 1<sup>3</sup>.130, 131, 137, 138) may date to this time, and have been connected with the recurrence of plague in 426 and the oracle urging the purification of Delos (Lewis in *CAH* 5<sup>2</sup>, 412).

<sup>46</sup> Ar. *Vesp.* 122 f. Cf. *IG* 4<sup>2</sup>.126.4.

<sup>47</sup> Garland (1987) 115-16.

<sup>48</sup> Apollo Paion: *IG* 1<sup>3</sup>.383.163-4; Alexikakos: Paus. 1.3.4. On Herakles cf. Woodford (1976). Athena Hygieia: *IG* 1<sup>3</sup>.506 etc., Paionia: Paus. 1.2.5 etc.

The reasons for the introduction of most new cults in the fifth century can usually be traced to the celebration of triumph sustained or crisis overcome. The elevation of Asclepius as a response to the plague suggests the latter rationale, but an unusual element that emerges from archaeological evidence is the contribution of private initiative in the promotion of the new cult. A stone monument ascribes the building and adornment of the shrine, apparently to local opposition by the priestly *genos* of the Kerykes, to an individual called Telemachus.<sup>49</sup> A fragment from the first year of the inscriptional record, 420/19, credits Telemachus with ‘summoning a [snake] from home’. In the restoration of the inscription, ΔΙΑ[.....] has generally been emended to produce ΔΠΑ[KONTA]: snakes were associated, symbolically and perhaps in origin theriomorphically, with Asclepius.<sup>50</sup> However, ΔΙΑ[KONON] is preferable from an epigraphic point of view, though it seems less satisfactory to think of an ‘attendant’ being brought in on the wagon than the god’s own epiphany. The reading ΔΙΑ[ΚΤΟΡΑ] (‘hero-deity’) might better satisfy both sense and epigraphy; but it is not certain whether the traditional title of Hermes could be used of an epiphany of Asclepius.<sup>51</sup> The implications of οἰκοθεῖν are also disputed. If it refers to Telemachus rather than the snake, it suggests that Telemachus was himself an Epidaurian, and not a native of Attica; this would be the first known instance of a ξένοσ initiating a new cult in this way.<sup>52</sup>

Asclepius’ cult evidently received influential official support. It was embraced by the existing priesthood of Eleusis, and a recently-published fragment proves the surprising participation of Epidaurian officials in the Athenian cult.<sup>53</sup> It seems that effort and expense on the part of one individual, perhaps himself a foreigner, spearheaded the formal establishment of a cult at Athens that was to become one of the most widespread and successful in the ancient world. Telemachus’ action was reflected in the continuing tradition of grateful individuals

<sup>49</sup> IG 2<sup>2</sup>.4960 (SEG 25.226, 32.266). Opposition by the Kerykes seems to have been on legal rather than religious grounds: Parker (1996)177.

<sup>50</sup> Garland (1992) 121-2 (the reference to the plague at Rome should read 292 B.C.).

<sup>51</sup> I suggest this supplement without particular conviction. Διάκτορος is used in Homer (*Il.* 2.103 etc.) and in later poetry the epithet is applied to other deities such as Athena and Iris (LSJ, s.v.). The form διάκτωρ (*nomen agentis* of διάγω) is glossed by Hesychius as ἡγεμῶν.

<sup>52</sup> Parker (1996) 178. He has usually been identified as the grandfather of Telemachus of Acharnae: Osborne (1985) 5.

<sup>53</sup> Clinton (1994).

introducing Asclepius into their own communities.<sup>54</sup> By the 380s the practices of the cult were sufficiently widely known to attract Aristophanes' famous lampoon in *Wealth*.<sup>55</sup> By the mid fourth century, when the priest of Asclepius at Athens presided over two festivals, the Asklepieia and Epidauria, the cult attracted a regular income and sizeable donations.<sup>56</sup>

The cult of Asclepius represents an instance of a religious innovation that was deliberately promoted at an opportune moment, and warmly embraced by a receptive Athens. Sophocles was said to have 'received Asclepius in his house and founded an altar', for which pious act the Athenians built a hero-shrine for him after his death, naming him Dexion, 'receiver'.<sup>57</sup> Sophocles was already a priest in a minor healing cult, that of Amynos (or Halon).<sup>58</sup> For him, at least, the induction of the Epidaurian god may have seemed less of a religious novelty than a grateful acknowledgement of the power of traditional healing-heroes such as those who were already objects of his piety.

Early representations of Asclepius range from a sacred baby-deity being suckled by wild animals to the mature doctor-hero of the Telemachus monument. Later iconography, which consistently depicts Asclepius as a serene bearded figure holding a staff, may owe something to conflation with the image of Hippocrates. Whatever the exact perception of the god at Athens, the time seems to have been ripe for a more definite religious expression of the power of healing than had been available hitherto. A connection with the diffusion of Hippocratic methods and ideas seems undeniable. The impression given is that the possibilities of healing and cure exhibited and articulated by practitioners of the *ἰατρικὴ τέχνη* created the consciousness of a corresponding religious vacuum in the popular mind, into which

---

<sup>54</sup> E.g. Archias at Pergamum (Paus. 2.26.8): Garland (1992) 122.

<sup>55</sup> Ar. *Plut.* 659 f.

<sup>56</sup> Deubner (1932) 72-73. An inscription from 343/2 records the fee of 'a drachma for Asclepius': Lalonde et al., eds. (1991) P26.487-88. A certain Demon donated a property in return for the priesthood: *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.4969.

<sup>57</sup> *Etym. Magn.* 256.6 s.v. Δεξίων. The admittedly late source has been corroborated by two fourth-century decrees issued by an association of 'orgeones of Amynos and Asclepius and Dexion', *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>. 1252 and 1253.

<sup>58</sup> Halon: *Vit. Soph.* 11.

the image of Asclepius, a divine counterpart to the perception of a heroically ministering Hippocrates, fitted to perfection.<sup>59</sup>

The Greeks regularly expressed a consciousness of their ignorance of the innumerable names and manifestations of divinity.<sup>60</sup> The spectacular success of Asclepius suggests that, in view of that ignorance, an innovative form of worship could be gratefully accepted, so long as it accorded with some element of recognised practice or belief and fulfilled a significant function for the community as a whole. The reality of religious innovation is at variance with the image of violent irruption as depicted in Euripides' *Bacchae*. While Asclepius, a benign healing figure known from Homer, was readily accepted and venerated by all sections of the community, Euripides paints a frightening picture of the coming to Thebes of Dionysus, admittedly a more ambiguous divinity. To Pentheus, Dionysos is a stranger with seductive powers and subversive consequences; but the god was also Lyaos (the 'relaxer'), an eternally present force of nature worthy of worship and, incarnate in the vine, a source of pleasure to all.<sup>61</sup> These attributes offer scant solace to Pentheus' family, who attain σοφία only through violent death and dissolution. But the idea of the dangerous irruption of a νεωστὶ δαίμων into a settled community may largely be a creature of Euripides' imagination, bolstered by the mythico-historical motif of unwary resistance to unrecognised deities.<sup>62</sup> Insofar as it reflects an aspect of the Athenian psyche at the end of the fifth century, it recalls the reaction to the sort of 'kainotheism' that led to the trial and execution of Socrates.

---

<sup>59</sup> See Ch. 6, Sect. 5.

<sup>60</sup> The pious formula in prayers was 'by whatever name you wish to be called': Plat. *Crat.* 400c, *Phdr.* 273c, Aesch. *Ag.* 160 (with Fraenkel [1950] *ad loc.*).

<sup>61</sup> Eternal force: τό τ' ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ νόμιμον ἀεὶ φύσει τε πεφυκός: Eur. *Ba.* 894-6. Cf. 881, ὁ τι καλὸν φίλον ἀεὶ, where the last word is emphatic: Seaford (1996) *ad loc.*

<sup>62</sup> Cf. the alleged attempt by Archilochus recorded in the inscriptional *Vita* (Lasserre [1958] T.12) to introduce the worship of Dionysos to Paros. The Parians' resistance led to the men becoming sterile, until a consultation with Delphi forced them to 'honour Archilochus'. A similar story is reported by sch. Ar. *Vesp.* 243 concerning the introduction of Dionysos to Athens by Pegasos of Eleutherai.

## V

*The exotic and the antique*

κατέβην χθές εἰς Πειραιᾶ μετὰ Γλαύκωνος τοῦ Ἀρίστωνος προσευξόμενός τε τῇ θεῷ καὶ ἅμα τὴν ἑορτὴν βουλόμενος θεάσασθαι τίνα τρόπον ποιήσουσιν ἅτε νῦν πρῶτον ἄγοντες. καλὴ μὲν οὖν μοι καὶ ἡ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων πομπὴ ἔδοξεν εἶναι, οὐ μόντοι ἦττον ἐφαίνετο πρέπειν ἦν οἱ Θρακίκες ἔπεμπον.<sup>63</sup>

Yesterday I went down to Piraeus with Glaucon son of Ariston, because I wanted to pay my respects to the goddess and to see how they were conducting the festival since they were holding it for the first time. The procession of the local worshippers looked a fine spectacle to me, and that of the Thracian contingent no less splendid.

The famous opening of Plato's *Republic* presents the scene of what must have appeared to Athenians to be a conspicuously modern religious phenomenon. The goddess being celebrated at the time of the dialogue's dramatic date of c. 410 B.C. is Bendis, recently brought to Athens from Thrace. Other features of her festival are eagerly awaited, whose novelty Socrates innocently draws attention to as he questions his companions:

καὶ ὁ Ἀδείμαντος, Ἄρά γε, ἦ δ' ὄς, οὐδ' ἴστε ὅτι λαμπὰς ἔσται πρὸς ἑσπέραν ἀφ' ἵππων τῇ θεῷ; Ἀφ' ἵππων; ἦν δ' ἐγὼ καινόν γε τοῦτο. λαμπάδια ἔχοντες διαδώσουσιν ἀλλήλοις ἀμιλλώμενοι τοῖς ἵπποις; ἦ πῶς λέγεις; Οὕτως, ἔφη ὁ Πολέμαρχος, καὶ πρὸς γε παννυχίδα ποιήσουσιν, ἦν ἴξιον θεάσασθαι.<sup>64</sup>

And Adeimantus said 'Don't you know that there will be a torch-race on horseback in the evening in honour of the goddess?' 'On horseback?' I said, 'That's something new. Is this a horse-race where they pass the torches to each other in relay, or how do you mean?' 'That's right', said Polemarchus, 'and they are also putting on an all-night revel which should be worth watching.'

As well as the novel features of the festival, the unusually ecumenical nature of Bendis' worship is apparent from Socrates' reference to the Thracian contingent.

<sup>63</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 327a.

<sup>64</sup> Pl. *Rep.* 328a.

While adopted as an official Athenian festival, the community of Thracian ξένοι in the Piraeus had charge of her cult and were prominent in its celebrations, even being granted dispensation to lead their procession from the Prytaneion.<sup>65</sup>

The reasons for the admission of Bendis to Athens are obscure. In the late 430s the Athenians were making overtures to Sitalkes, king of the Thracian Odrysae, to support their military campaigns in the north: his son Sadokos was enrolled as an Athenian citizen in 431 B.C., perhaps the first barbarian to achieve this status.<sup>66</sup> But foreign diplomacy is unlikely to explain the popularisation of the cult and its adoption by Athenians, and the reasons for it may be sought on a more local level. The Thracian community in the Piraeus must have been important and wealthy enough for such a festival to be staged.<sup>67</sup> Their leaders sought, and were granted, permission to celebrate what they saw as a traditional festival in honour of their goddess. However, the rites of Bendis as performed in her festival at Athens may have borne little resemblance to their Thracian origins: the presentation of the festival in the *Republic* has a ring of 'modernity'. When forms of worship are transplanted, it is common for them to develop and change in line with local circumstances and expectations.

The Athenians may also have found the worship of Bendis familiar enough in certain respects, given its similarity to that of other foreign deities with longer pedigrees such as Cybele, the Phrygian μεγάλη μήτηρ already known to Pindar.<sup>68</sup> Cybele herself was identified with Hellenic counterparts such as Ge, Demeter and Rhea: 'syncretism was here a means of assimilating and domesticating the potentially frightening foreign power'.<sup>69</sup> Towards the end of the century she came to assume a less exotic role as the eponymous goddess of the building which housed the Athenian state archives, the Metroön, and she had a public priest and festival called the *Galaxia*. By this period, the orgiastic features of her worship may only have survived in private ceremonies.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> IG 2<sup>2</sup>.1283.

<sup>66</sup> Thuc. 2. 29.

<sup>67</sup> Parker (1996) 174.

<sup>68</sup> Pi. *Dith.* 2. 9 (fr. 70b M), *Pyth.* 3.77 f. etc.

<sup>69</sup> Parker (1992:189), who cites e.g. Soph. *Phil.* 391-402 (Ge), Eur. *Hel.* 1301-68 (Demeter) and *Ba.* 128 (Rhea).

<sup>70</sup> Parker (1996) 192-4.



Informal rites of the Great Mother (whose attendants were the Corybantes) and of other ξενικοί θεοί are casually attested to by Aristophanes. The earliest references to Corybantic rites and to Sabazius are in *Wasps* of 422 B.C.:

ΞΑ. ἀλλ' ἦ παραφρονεῖς ἔτεδὸν ἢ κορυβαντιζῖς;

ΣΩ. οὐκ, ἀλλ' ὕπνος μ' ἔχει τις ἐκ Σαβαζίου.<sup>71</sup>

Xan: Are you out of your mind or in a Corybantic trance?

Sos: No, but I'm drowsy from a draft of Sabazius.

In *Lysistrata* of 412, the *Proboulos* speaks with stern disapproval of womens' cult practices of this kind:

ἄρ' ἐξέλαμψε τῶν γυναικῶν ἡ τρυφή  
 χῶ τυμπανισμὸς χοῖ πυκινοὶ Σαβάζιοι,  
 ὃ τ' Ἀδωνιασμὸς οὗτος οὐπὶ τῶν τεγῶν  
 οὐ γώ ποτ' ὦν ἤκουον ἐν τήκκλησίᾳ; . . .  
 τοιαῦτ' ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἀκολαστάσματα.<sup>72</sup>

Has the women's self-indulgence flared up,  
 their timbrel-playing and constant Sabaziuses,  
 this Adonis-wailing of theirs on the rooftops  
 as I once heard at a meeting of the Assembly?  
 They just don't know how to restrain themselves.

The connection that is made with the activities of slaves and licentious behaviour of women suggests that these gods and their rites created a dubious impression. However, they were not perceived as threats to the religious *status quo* and seem to have achieved semi-official status, alongside more established women's practices such as the festival of Thesmophoria.

The 'foreign gods' may have provided a novel entertainment value that was felt to be lacking in established religious practices. The increased attention to mystery religions, which come in for large-scale parody in Aristophanes' *Clouds* and *Frogs*, points to a renewed appetite for irrationalism perhaps brought on by the

<sup>71</sup> Ar. *Vesp.* 8-9: see MacDowell (1971) *ad loc.*

<sup>72</sup> Ar. *Lys.* 387-90, 398.

stresses of war.<sup>73</sup> The enthusiasm for exotic cults seems to reflect the greater cosmopolitanism of Athenians as well: ‘the interest in cults of physically distant origins would then be a manifestation of spiritual escapism’.<sup>74</sup> But the general climate of innovation in the period may also have affected the choice, and an existing foreign god or goddess, especially if promoted by local devotees, was likely to be a much safer option for official religion than home-grown ‘new gods’ such as those satirised in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*.

By contrast, some of the older festivals which seemed at variance with the modern ethos came in for their own share of mockery. When Right in *Clouds* extols the noble simplicity of the good old days, Wrong replies:

ἀρχαῖά γε καὶ Διπολιώδη καὶ τεττίγων ἀνάμεστα  
καὶ Κηκείδου καὶ Βουφονίων.<sup>75</sup>

It’s all old-hat, like the musty old *Dipoleia*, redolent of grasshopper brooches and Ceceides and the *Bouphonia*.

These older religious practices co-existed with the new, but there was a sense that the multiplicity of religious and ritual practices was becoming unmanageable, a parallel to the situation of non-religious *nomoi*. The proliferation of contradictory laws appeared to undermine the basis of democracy, and the desire to rationalise legislation led to the introduction of the *graphê paranomôn*, first attested in 415. Similarly, in matters of state religion it should only be acceptable to propose new *nomoi* if they did not conflict with those already in force. Concern that the adoption of the new was leading to a dangerous loss of the old was behind the official commission to Nicomachus to draw up a new legal and religious calendar between 410 and 399 B.C., the year in which he was brought to trial for mishandling the task with which he had been entrusted.

<sup>73</sup> Dodds (1951) 190-5.

<sup>74</sup> Hornblower (1983) 179.

<sup>75</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 983-4.

## VI

*Novelty and impiety*

The trials held at Athens in 399 B.C. highlight the seriousness of the charge of impiety in the years following the end of the Peloponnesian War. First, in that year Andocides was indicted on a double charge of *asebeia*. It was alleged that he had returned illegally from exile to attend the Eleusinian mysteries, and that he had placed a suppliant's branch (*hiketêria*) in the Eleusinion.<sup>76</sup> His prosecutors, among whom was Meletus, probably the same man who accused Socrates, demanded the death penalty.<sup>77</sup> Secondly, the trial of Nicomachus, which is known only from the speech for the prosecution, throws an ironic light on the question of religious innovation. Nicomachus was prosecuted for being responsible, in his capacity as codifier of the Athenian sacrificial calendar (*ἀναγραφεὺς τῶν νόμων*), for improperly introducing some new sacrifices and for the neglect of traditional rites, and again the accuser demanded the death penalty.<sup>78</sup>

The circumstances of Nicomachus' trial would have been different from that of Socrates. It may have been held before a board of ten official 'examiners' (*logistai*) rather than the heliastic court of 501 citizens. It seems that the charges failed to carry conviction, as the new calendar was indeed eventually published and evidently formed the official basis, if not the actual practice, of religious observances in the fourth century.<sup>79</sup> However, the occurrence of both trials suggests that post-war Athens was prey to unusual alarm about religious innovation which sought expression in such terms, so that 'religious crisis' is perhaps not too extreme a description of the situation that existed at the turn of the century.<sup>80</sup> In framing the accusation against Nicomachus, the prosecutor appealed to the jurors in familiar terms:

---

<sup>76</sup> Andoc. 1.71, Lys. 6.9, 24.

<sup>77</sup> Meletus' identity: Ostwald (1988) 495 with refs.

<sup>78</sup> Lys. 30. The indictment did not include *asebeia*, of which Nicomachus accused his opponents (Lys. 30.17): Dover (1968b) 8.

<sup>79</sup> Dow (1961); Mikalson (1983) 114-15.

<sup>80</sup> Parker (1996) 210 f.; Burkert (1985) 311-17; Furley (1996).

καίτοι, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, περὶ εὐσεβείας οὐ παρὰ Νικομάχου χρήμανθάνειν, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῶν γεγενημένων σκοπεῖν. οἱ τοίνυν πρόγονοι τὰ ἐκ τῶν κύρβων θύοντες μεγίστην καὶ εὐδαιμονεστάτην τῶν Ἑλληνίδων τὴν πόλιν παρέδοσαν, ὥστε ἄξιον ἡμῖν τὰς αὐτὰς ἐκείνοις θυσίας ποιεῖσθαι, καὶ εἰ μηδὲν δι' ἄλλο, τῆς τύχης ἕνεκα τῆς ἐξ ἐκείνων τῶν ἱερῶν γεγενημένης.<sup>81</sup>

Now, men of the jury, it is not from Nicomachus that we should learn piety, but we should look to the lessons of the past. Our ancestors, by sacrificing in accordance with the terms of the law-codes, passed down to us the greatest and most prosperous city in Greece; so we would be well-advised to perform the same sacrifices as they did, if for no other reason than for the good fortune which resulted from their observances.

The appeal to a retrospective and tendentious view of Athenian glory is identical to that used by Isocrates nearly fifty years later (quoted above).

Nicomachus was alleged to have introduced into his codification new public sacrifices, at a cost to the city of more than six talents. As a result, traditional sacrifices to the tune of three talents had gone unobserved for lack of available funds.<sup>82</sup> While couched in terms of financial mismanagement, this points to an underlying theme concerning the impact of innovation. The introduction of the new entails a loss of the old, a feeling that may be projected as murderous anger against the individual seen responsible for the loss. Alternatively, such feelings may be repressed, leading to an unspecific anxiety or resentment.<sup>83</sup> The sense of loss may be experienced even when the value of what has been abandoned is questionable or obscure. Nicomachus' 'new rites' seem to have been no more than a confirmation of current practices. After the establishment of moderate democracy in 410 B.C., he had been charged with the eminently conservative task of publishing 'the laws of Solon'.<sup>84</sup> He was faced with a situation so complex that the four months initially allocated for the job was extended to six years.<sup>85</sup> After the

<sup>81</sup> Lys. 30.18.

<sup>82</sup> Lys. 30.20.

<sup>83</sup> Freud (1917) proposed that anger associated with loss, directed inwards, turns into depression ('melancholia').

<sup>84</sup> Lysias 30. 2.

<sup>85</sup> Ostwald (1968) 417 indicates the complexity: 'it was soon found necessary to integrate into Solon's code more recent legislation, such as the decree of Demophantus, which purported to be Solonian but was in fact new legislation based upon *patrioi nomoi*.' Nicomachus' task in his first term may also have included drafting new religious legislation: *IG* 1<sup>3</sup>. 99, 239-4, and the new fragment regarding the Epidauria in Clinton (1994).

restoration of democracy in October 403, he was reappointed to continue with the project, which was to culminate in the publication on stone of the new sacrificial calendar. Four years later he stood accused, on more or less flimsy grounds, on various counts of malfeasance.<sup>86</sup>

Despite the prosecutor's rhetoric, Nicomachus was no unprincipled innovator. In commissioning the recodification, the restored democracy had sought to re-establish a religious basis for its authority and legitimacy by reaffirming its sacred institutions. As in the sphere of civic law, the Athenians felt the need to determine the extent of their religious duties and obligations, after a confused period in which the observance of legal and religious *nomoi* was shown to be dangerously precarious and subservient to the whim of arbitrary political power. The case against Nicomachus points to a reactive anger at the recognition that new forms of worship were being officially endorsed. Athenians of the time were likely to feel that impiety was a prelude to political upheaval and national disaster.<sup>87</sup> Whatever the motives behind the the mutilation of the Herms and the profanation of the Mysteries in 415, they signified to Athenians that the intellectualisation of religion appeared to encourage and justify acts of *asebeia* that would formerly have seemed unthinkable.<sup>88</sup> The newly-restored power of the democratic laws might now be brought to bear to ensure that the baneful effects of religious innovation were checked and its perpetrators punished.

## VII

### *New gods for old*

While it is ultimately impossible to isolate the various strands which led to Socrates' indictment and execution, it may be instructive to ask how the jurymen's experience of novelty made the charge of religious innovation seem a sufficiently

---

<sup>86</sup> The accusation does not substantiate the innuendos that Nicomachus was not legally entitled to his office (Lys.30.2) or that his failure to render account (εὔθυνα) was unjustifiable (30.5); the claims that the work was restricted to selected laws and should have taken no more than 30 days (30. 4) are sufficiently vague and cursory to be accounted opinions rather than facts.

<sup>87</sup> Thuc. 6. 27-9, Andoc. 1.36.

<sup>88</sup> Ostwald (1968) 326 f.; Furley (1996).

serious crime to warrant the death penalty. In 399 B.C. there was a widespread sense that the damaged fabric of democratic institutions and religious practices needed careful repair, and it was in this context that the man depicted in Aristophanes' *Clouds* as the representative of all that was worst in new ways of thinking was indicted. The official charges that led to Socrates' execution were those of 'not acknowledging the city's gods, introducing new *daimonia*, and corrupting the young'.<sup>89</sup> Owing to the eloquence of Plato and Xenophon, the account has resonated down the centuries, with historians taking different views on the question of which element of the charge, social, political or religious, provides the best explanation of his execution.<sup>90</sup> But in view of the background of religious openness and the respectful welcome of new gods into Athens in the recently preceding decades, it is noteworthy that Socrates' accusers sought to include in their formulation of the charge an unprecedented reference to *καὶνὰ δαιμόνια*. The use of the word may be symbolic of the changed mood regarding τὸ καινόν itself: the notion was obviously intended to raise at least as much concern in the jurors' minds as the charge of corrupting the youth. Its rhetorical purpose may even have been to conjure up the climate of *kainotês* so convincingly portrayed by Aristophanes.

There were several areas of Athenian religious consciousness in which the charge of 'introducing *new* deities' was bound to have important resonances and implications for the verdict. These included concern about the sort of novelty that might constitute *asebeia*; the ambivalent attitude of Athenians to *ξενικοὶ θεοὶ* and new cults; and the perception that individualistic modes of belief like the Socratic *daimonion* were secretive and élitist, a potential threat to communal worship.<sup>91</sup> The charge of *asebeia* itself was far from new, if indeed it was introduced a generation earlier by Diopeithes' *psêphisma*.<sup>92</sup> It expressed the religious response

---

<sup>89</sup> Favorinus *ap.* D.L. 2.40: the indictment was allegedly preserved in the Metroön at Athens.

<sup>90</sup> Thus, for example, Finley (1977) stresses the socio-political aspects, Stone (1989) makes the case for a justifiable political motive, while Connor (1991) and Garland (1992) emphasise the religious considerations.

<sup>91</sup> Mikalson (1983) 91-105; Parker (1996) 158-163. Marianetti (1992) 41-75 draws out parallels between the élitist nature of mystery cults and Aristophanes' depiction of the Phrontisterion; cf. Bowie (1993) 112-124.

<sup>92</sup> The case against its authenticity is argued by Dover (1975); *contra* Ostwald (1968: 196-8). Socrates did not face trial under *eisangelia* but as the result of a *graphê* (Pl. *Euthyph.* 2a; D.L.

to the kind of materialist doctrines propounded by *phusikoi* like Anaxagoras. Just as a contemporary medical writer could rail against *καινά ὑποθέσεις*, the novel speculations which were perverting the empirical basis of traditional medical *τέχνη*, a religious traditionalist would have found equally threatening the implicit denial of traditional beliefs. The latter were also the basis of traditional ritual and divinatory *τέχναι*, practices regularly called upon to ratify innovations in matters of cult.<sup>93</sup> Attitudes to divination and to its practitioners varied widely during the period, but Socrates in the *Clouds* was depicted teaching doctrines that religious exegetes such as Diopeithes would have found impious and professionally harmful.<sup>94</sup> The Athenian public may have found the fictional Socrates uncomfortably dismissive of their superstitious beliefs and practices, and something of Aristophanes' portrayal was bound to adhere to the popular perception of the real Socrates.<sup>95</sup>

By 399, physical doctrines such as those of Anaxagoras were neither new nor likely to be taken seriously, as Socrates himself points out in Plato's *Apology*. There, in response to Socrates' cross-examination, Meletos is made to claim that his charge means 'you do not acknowledge gods at all' (*παράπαν οὐ νομίζεις θεούς*).<sup>96</sup> In fact, Plato and more especially Xenophon seem keen to present Socrates as a man of conventional and even exemplary piety.<sup>97</sup> But the doctrines of Socrates in *Clouds* suggest an ambivalent and dangerous religiosity:

---

2.40). Garland (1992: 139-40) suggests that Diopeithes' law may have been in abeyance in 403 and that the charge of *asebeia* was reclassified under Nicomachus' recodification.

<sup>93</sup> For medical novelty, see Ch. 6, Sect. 3. Divination as a *τέχνη*: Aesch. *PV* 484-6, Isoc. 19.5-6. Divination used to ratify innovations: Aesch. 3.130, Dem. 21.51-53, Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 54.6-8; a new priest: *IG* I2<sup>2</sup>.4969.

<sup>94</sup> Popular distrust of *manteis* and *chrêsmologoi* is suggested by Ar. *Pax* 1043-1126, *Av.* 959-991. After 413 seers may, understandably, have kept a low profile (Thuc. 8.1.1); but the seer Lampon seems to have enjoyed official support over a long period (Fontenrose [1978] 150), and in the early fourth century an itinerant *mantis* like Thrasyllos of Aegina could retire wealthy (Isoc. *Aegin.* 5-7).

<sup>95</sup> Marianetti (1992) 117-121.

<sup>96</sup> Pl. *Apol.* 26c-e.

<sup>97</sup> Plato's Socrates himself often talks respectfully of the gods, and acknowledges his respect for Delphi (Pl. *Apol.* 20c. etc.) But Xenophon's assertion *φανερὸς ἦν θεραπεύων τοὺς θεοὺς μάλιστα πάντων ἀνθρώπων* (*Mem.* 1.2.64) seems blatantly tendentious: Connor (1991: 53-6) detects unorthodoxy in Socrates' dismissive attitude to sacrifice suggested by e.g. Pl. *Euthyph.* 15a.

The strength of his reverence for the new gods does not excuse but underlines his turning away from the old; 'kainotheism' is not an alternative to atheism but the form it takes.<sup>98</sup>

Although Socrates is portrayed as worshipping gods, deities such as Δίος, Χάος and Ἄηρ were a parody of elements of traditional Greek pantheism.<sup>99</sup> The very names chosen by Aristophanes to represent the favoured 'new gods' indicate clearly enough the sense of turbulence, chaos, and abstraction that the *phusikoi* seemed to introduce into traditional religious notions.

The unconventionality of the *daimonion* spoken of by the real Socrates' may have been felt as similarly undermining to the canons of communal religion. The term *daimonion* itself may have attracted dubious connotations (like the English 'demon'): the dithyrambist Cinesias was said to have set up an ill-fated dining club entitled Κακοδαίμωνισταί to make fun of popular superstitions.<sup>100</sup> The story suggests conflicting perspectives on religious innovation:

It illustrates the sense of liberation - liberation from meaningless rules and irrational guilt-feelings - which the Sophists brought with them, and which made their teaching so attractive to the high-spirited and intelligent young. And it also shows how strong was the reaction against such rationalism in the breast of the average citizen: for Lysias evidently relies on the awful scandal of the dining-club to discredit Kinesias' testimony in a lawsuit.<sup>101</sup>

Plato makes a point of suggesting Socrates' readiness to be associated with forms of worship that by the fourth century were no less acceptable to the majority of Athenians for being recent introductions to their worship. Bendis' festival sets the scene for the *Republic*, and it is to Asclepius that Socrates instructs the dedication of a cock at the end of the *Phaedo*.<sup>102</sup> The choice of deities may indicate that

---

<sup>98</sup> Parker (1996) 204-5. Socrates' allusion in Plato's *Apology* (26cd) to popular belief in the divinity of the sun and moon (cf. n. 10 above) may also be an ironic demonstration that his accusers also worship 'gods' who have not been officially sanctioned in state worship: Garland (1992): 144, n. 7.

<sup>99</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 379, 627.

<sup>100</sup> Lysias *ap.* Athen. 551e. On Cinesias' 'topsy-turvy' music, see Ch. 5, Sect. 6.

<sup>101</sup> Dodds (1953) 189.

<sup>102</sup> *Rep.* 1.327a, *Phd.* 118a. On the puzzling nature of the Bendis cult, see Parker (1996) 170-175, who questions political explanations for her introduction into Athens.



Socrates, like Sophocles, was as enthusiastic about novel religious manifestations as were many other Athenians, perhaps at the cost of neglecting more traditional civic observances.<sup>103</sup> But the real threat to the symbolic order would have come from his being associated with the sort of beliefs that undermined the social nature of popular religion, rather than, as in the case of Asclepius and Bendis, to exemplify them.

Plato may have intended a subtle irony in mentioning these deities so prominently in his depiction of Socratic piety. The philosopher executed for, among other things, 'introducing new gods' was no more culpable in this respect than the majority of Athenians. It was left to Xenophon to make this point, with a characteristically greater directness verging on naiveté:

ὁ δ' οὐδὲν καινότερον εἰσέφερε τῶν ἄλλων, ὅσοι μαντικὴν νομίζοντες οἰωνοῖς τε χρῶνται καὶ φήμαις καὶ συμβόλοις καὶ θυσίαις.<sup>104</sup>

He was no more introducing something novel than are other believers in divination who employ augury, oracles, chance events and sacrifices.

## VIII

### *Conclusions*

The prominence of the different kinds of innovation in the religion of fifth-century Athens is striking, in view of the common perception of religion as logically antipathetic to novelty. The openness of Greek polytheism created a more favourable background to the idea of religious change than more exclusive religious systems would have allowed. But that openness depended heavily on concomitant social factors. What Athenians perceived as new in religious terms could not be easily separated from what they found to be novel in their intellectual and social life, and in the course of the century Athenian social and political

---

<sup>103</sup> Garland (1992:144) overstates the case when he concludes that Socrates 'was accused of neglecting to perform sacrifices and failing to participate in state festivals. . . his crime was the neglect of civic and approved gods'.

<sup>104</sup> Xen. *Mem.* 1.1.3.

structures, and their intellectual attitudes, were subjected to an unprecedented degree of change.

The acceptance by Athenians of new cults in the early part of the century, such as those of Pan, Boreas, and Theseus, was an expression of their readiness to build on existing mythical traditions, particularly in the wake of recurrent instances of successful military achievement. Such new cults were cemented by the performance of communal rituals, which might also symbolise a nexus of social and familial loyalties on local, state, and even Panhellenic levels. But the increased communication between different parts of the Greek world which resulted from the growth of the Athenian Empire also meant that more critical perspectives on religion were widely discussed by an educated elite.

One crucial intellectual shift was the opening up of Athens in the age of Pericles to the thoughts of Ionian *phusiologoi* and of their Sophistic successors, whose writings and oral presentations promoted a radically rationalistic perspective on matters of religion. The evidence of indictments for *asebeia* suggest that the radical questioning of the gods (in conjunction with notions of astronomical science) only started to be perceived as a religious and hence a social threat by conservative religious practitioners in the decade preceding the Peloponnesian War. But the events of 415 and the subsequent Sicilian disaster brought home to Athenians at large the apparent danger to the state of allowing individuals to give offence to traditional religion. Concerns about intellectualism and religious permissiveness, attitudes which could once be mocked by Aristophanes in *Clouds* and *Frogs*, hardened into something more like general paranoia about the purpose and effect of 'kainotheism'. The notion of *kaina daimonia* was thus a powerful rhetorical tool for persuading the Athenian jury of the advisability of condemning Socrates to death, even though 'new' gods were still part of Athens' flourishing religious scene.

A society devoted to novelty could not fail to consider possibilities of innovation, whether imported or home-grown, in a sphere as important and pervasive as that of the gods. The attempt to reconcile intellectual objections to traditional beliefs with continuing spiritual needs also provided the impetus to turn to new forms of religious practice, some of which are curiously reminiscent of

Judaism at that time in their emphasis on holy texts,<sup>105</sup> and which prefigure Christianity in stressing the importance of individual purity and salvation.<sup>106</sup> Concern with purification was already portrayed in tragedy as having affected heroes and characters of myth; but with the growth of mystery religions and the dissemination of Orphic writings, the opportunity arose for Athenians across a spectrum of class and wealth to be involved in new religious practices which might be seen as esoteric, élitist and individualistic by comparison with the traditional worship of the Olympians.

From the 430s onwards, new and traditional forms of religious practice were further complemented by the increasing reception of 'foreign' gods such as Bendis and Sabazius, Attis and Adonis, as part of Athenian public and private worship. If these were seen to offer new wine in old vessels, the introduction of Asclepius to Athens and elsewhere suggests a reversal of the metaphor, old wine in new vessels. The ending of the plague proved an opportune moment for the successful introduction of his Epidaurian cult. But the proliferation of gods made traditional religionists uneasy, causing them to seek a way of curtailing the addition of new religious practices, which evidently served to dilute the strength of traditional ones. The Old Oligarch observed that Athens already held more festivals than any other state in Greece:<sup>107</sup> how was it possible to do justice to all the new divinities who now demanded worship as well? The desire to 'rationalise' the excessive number of new *nomoi*, religious and secular, led to the official commission to Nicomachus. It was a poisoned chalice. To excise new rituals risked causing offence to divinities without whose goodwill there might be a repetition of disaster. But by admitting new rituals into the official religious calendar, he faced a capital charge for placing an unwarranted financial burden on Athens and causing the neglect of traditional rites.

By the beginning of the fourth century, a reaction against the idea of newness in religion appears to have taken firm hold. The urge to religious

---

<sup>105</sup> The consolidation of the written Judaic Law under Nehemiah and Ezra appears to have taken place during the reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424 B.C.); Noth (1960) 323-337, cf. *OCD* s.v. Artaxerxes (I). There appears to be no evidence for direct influence on Greek religious ideas.

<sup>106</sup> Parker (1983) 281-307.

<sup>107</sup> [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 3.2.

innovation appears to die down for a period, in which efforts at social and political reconstruction come to the fore. Nicomachus' written codification appears to have had the desired effect: conservative religious sentiments, such as those expressed by Isocrates and Xenophon, do not entertain the need for additional gods. Where new cults arise, they tend to be variations of the traditional Olympian gods like Zeus Soter and Athena Soteira. In due course, by the mid-fourth century, we find the elevation of personified abstractions like Peace, Democracy, and Good Fortune.<sup>108</sup> But after a ferment of novelty at Athens, the palm of religious innovation at the turn of the century is handed for a time to Sparta, in their promotion of the deification of living men.<sup>109</sup> The origins of Greek ruler-cults go back to Lysander and Agesilaus, and the strangely un-Greek practice was to be adopted by Athens only after the death of Alexander the Great.<sup>110</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> Parker (1996) 238-41, 227-232.

<sup>109</sup> Cartledge (1988), Flower (1988).

<sup>110</sup> Parker (1996) 256-264.

## 8. Case Study: the reform of the alphabet in 403 B.C.

There is nothing more difficult to plan, more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage than the creation of a new order of things.

Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

## I

*The Decree of Archinus*

In 403/2 BC Archinus of the Attic deme Koile proposed a *psêphisma* or decree calling for the reform of the Old Attic alphabet, as traditionally used almost exclusively on Athenian official documents, to conform with the Ionic usage which was becoming the standard alphabet of the Greek *oikoumenê*.<sup>1</sup> The main elements of the change involved the formal establishment of the character Η to denote *êta* instead of consonantal *h*, and the use of Ω as a long vowel in distinction to O.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the Ionian sigmatic compounds Ξ and Ψ were adopted in place of the traditional spelling which employed the digraphs ΧΣ and ΦΣ.<sup>3</sup> Elements of Ionic usage occur in private Attic inscriptions before 450 and prevail on *dipinti* (painted pottery) and incised ostraca by the 420s.<sup>4</sup> But Athenian public documents in stone largely resisted the Ionic forms until the last two decades of the century, when they become increasingly common on Attic inscriptions.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theopompus *FGrH* 115 F 155; schol. Vat. Dion. Thr. *ap.* Hilgard 1.3.183.16-20. See in general Buck (1933) 72. Threatte (1980) provides a comprehensive survey of the inscriptional evidence. Immerwahr (1990) gives details for *dipinti* and ostraca, and lists variant forms of individual letters. Athenian state decrees in Ionic script before 403/2 deal almost exclusively with foreign states or persons. An unusual case is the inscription concerning the Priestess of Athena Nike of 424-3 (ML 71): Ionic letters take over from Attic from the sixth line of text.

<sup>2</sup> Inconsistent usage of consonantal Η is found on Attic state inscriptions at least as late as 407-6 (ML 91). On a stele dated 409-7 (ML 89) it appears together with Η=*eta* and with occasional psilosis. Occurrences later than 403/2 appear to be archaisms: Threatte (1980) 24-5, 483-5. Ω, although frequently found from the late sixth century on, is very rare on Attic public documents before 403. However, 'adherence to Attic script appears to have been much less strict outside Athens itself' (Threatte [1980] 30), and *omega* occurs as early as c. 460 on a law of the deme of Sypalettos on which O is also used to represent the *omega*. On Attic ostraca, graffiti, and private inscriptions before 450 it is found commonly to represent instances of the phoneme *ou* as well (Immerwahr [1990] 179).

<sup>3</sup> ΚΣ and ΠΣ are almost never found: Threatte (1980) 20, 555).

<sup>4</sup> Immerwahr (1990) 177, Threatte (1980) 33.

<sup>5</sup> Threatte (1980) 27 f. Variant and inconsistent Attic letter-forms, such as the three-bar *sigma*, inverted *lambda* and tailed *rho*, had apparently already been unofficially discarded in favour of the Ionic forms around the middle of the fifth century (Immerwahr [1990] 177). However, the tailed *rho* appears on a marble stele commemorating the Athenian settlement of the colony at

The pivotal significance of Archinus' decree (henceforth 'the Decree') for Attic epigraphy has tended to overshadow the wider questions it raises, including the social and educational presuppositions it embodies and its bearing on Athens' political relations with Ionian and non-Ionian *poleis*. Modern parallels, to which I will return, suggest that a proposal of this kind might constitute an innovation with far-reaching socio-political ramifications and likely to occasion some degree of resistance or dissent.<sup>6</sup> But the evidence for Greek writing practices makes it clear that the Decree did not introduce a radical innovation to the practice of Athenian writing *per se*, but proposed simply the official adoption of a form of the Greek alphabet already widely used for some decades on inscriptions and perhaps standard since much earlier in literary manuscripts in Attica.<sup>7</sup> However, the use of a *psêphisma* to establish an alphabetic reform is unprecedented, and the questions it raises have not been systematically explored.<sup>8</sup> Why was it felt necessary or appropriate to legislate on the matter? What interests might have been served by the decision that the Ionic alphabet should after all become Athens' official system rather than the longstanding local script of Attica? What issues, symbolic and practical, were involved in the reform?

Archinus' conspicuous involvement in Athens' turbulent political situation in the last years of the fifth century raises the possibility that the Decree was influenced, if not actually inspired, by overt political considerations. What we know of his career, personality, and his social and intellectual milieu may help to throw some light on its political background and purpose. 403/2, the year of Eucleides' archonship, marked Athens' attempt to put an end to civil strife and to start afresh with the compilation of a newly-revised if traditionally-minded 'ancestral constitution'.<sup>9</sup> It was a year for renovation rather than innovation, or at

---

Brea in 445 (ML 49), and the inverted *lambda* as late as 407 (though it is just a one-off, appearing alongside the Ionic  $\Lambda$ ) on the stele ratifying Athens' treaty with Selymbria (ML 87).

<sup>6</sup> The latest example is the scheme for the German orthographic reform recently completed (see Timothy Buck in *TLS*, Oct 10, 1997, p. 14). Agreed by Germany, Austria and Switzerland and due to be implemented on 1st August, 1998, it is currently being challenged by a complaint lodged with Germany's Federal Constitutional Court, alleging that the reform is an infringement of the Constitution.

<sup>7</sup> Goold (1960), Knox (1985), Heubeck (1979).

<sup>8</sup> The unusual content of this *psêphisma* appears to exclude it from Hansen's 8-part classification of the 220-odd *psêphismata* known to have been passed by the *ecclesia* in the period 403/2-322/1: Hansen (1983) 187 n. 16.

<sup>9</sup> Fuks (1953), Finley (1986b).

least for innovation in the guise of restoration.<sup>10</sup> Athens had survived both military defeat by Sparta and the murderous depredations of the Thirty, and its restored democracy had begun the task of re-establishing its legal and constitutional structures. The archon Eucleides himself will have been involved with, if not directly responsible for, proposals whereby the new democratic order sought to deal with the problem of the potentially disruptive highly-placed minority who had supported the oligarchic revolution of the previous year. According to the Aristotelian *Athenaiôn Politeia*, the attempt at reconciliation was handled with political skill and sensitivity. It allowed for the departure to Eleusis of those whose sympathies lay with the oligarchic party, so long as they registered their decision within ten days. At the same time, a general amnesty was decreed for all except those directly involved in the previous regime, and for the latter as well if they were willing to render account of their actions to the democratic authorities.<sup>11</sup>

Credit for the decisive handling of the terms for reconciliation is explicitly accorded to Archinus, one of Eucleides' most prominent political colleagues. The *Athenaiôn Politeia* gives a notably favourable account of his career.<sup>12</sup> He first appears, along with Anytus (later to be one of Socrates' accusers) and Cleitophon (active in the democratic restoration of 411), as a member of the 'moderate' party of upper-class Athenians under the leadership of Theramenes which, after Athens' defeat at Aegospotami in 405 sought a return to the *πάτριος πολιτεία*.<sup>13</sup> However, Archinus did not join the Thirty in the oligarchic coup of 404, unlike Theramenes himself, who also nominated ten of its members.<sup>14</sup> Instead, he accompanied the populist leader Thrasybulus to Phyle, where the exiled democrats regrouped before proceeding to victory over the oligarchic forces at Munychia.<sup>15</sup> In the lively

---

<sup>10</sup> Hansen makes a strong case that the politicians of 403/2, under a shield of relative anonymity, instituted a remarkably radical agenda in changing traditional legislative procedures and restructuring the system of bouleutic representation of the demes: Hansen (1983) 179-205 and (1989) 73-84.

<sup>11</sup> *A.P.* 39.1, 4, 6.

<sup>12</sup> The *A.P.* explicitly commends the 'moderates' at 28.5, 33.2, and 40.2. Rhodes (1981) 474 believes the author to be 'repeating with his own agreement praise which he found in his source, rather than commenting spontaneously on what he found presented as bare fact'.

<sup>13</sup> *A.P.* 34.3.

<sup>14</sup> *Xen. Hell.* 2.3.2; *Dem. In Tim.* 135, *Aeschin. Ctes.* 187, 195, *Lys.* 12.76. Theramenes' membership of the Thirty (of which neither Anytus nor Cleitophon became members) is not mentioned by the *A.P.*

<sup>15</sup> *A.P.* 37.1, 38.1.

subsequent narrative, Archinus emerges as an Athenian patriot and a champion of political consensus. Thrasybulus apparently sought to grant citizenship to all those who had joined the army at Piraeus which had defeated the Thirty, 'even though some of them were notoriously slaves'.<sup>16</sup> Archinus opposed the motion on grounds of unconstitutionality, but successfully carried a less radical counter-proposal to reward the democratic supporters.<sup>17</sup> Subsequently, he demonstrated his determination to uphold the amnesty, in the face of attempts to subvert it by more radical factions, by calling for the summary execution *pour encourager les autres* of an individual who sought to violate its terms.<sup>18</sup> The absence of a practicable legal recourse in this critical period may have compelled him to urge the Boule to take such action (later, in 401/0, he is said to have instituted a new procedure of *paragraphê* for those who claimed that their rights under the amnesty were being violated).<sup>19</sup> In the uncertain atmosphere of 403, he had exercised similar pragmatism to prevent a mass exodus of upper-class Athenians from the city to Eleusis, by curtailing the time allowed for registration 'so that many were compelled to stay, much against their will, at least until they regained courage.'<sup>20</sup>

Why, then, did Archinus consider it desirable at this critical time to tackle alphabetic reform, an issue of practical concern to few apart from Attic stonemasons and schoolteachers? The sources which recounted the political activities portrayed in the *Athenaiôn Politeia* seem to be distinct from those which mentioned his moving of the Decree, leaving historians with the task of integrating the disparate evidence.<sup>21</sup> The only possible reference to his activities between 411 and 405/4 offers little help. It arises from an allusion in Aristophanes' *Frogs* of 405 to the kind of character of whom the poet disapproves:

ἢ τοὺς μισθοὺς τῶν ποιητῶν ῥήτωρ ὢν εἶτ' ἀποτρώγει

<sup>16</sup> A.P. 40.2; Rhodes (1981) *ad loc.* considers conflicting accounts in the sources.

<sup>17</sup> Archinus proposed the award of an olive crown and a sum of money for dedications to more than fifty citizens who ἐπὶ Φυλῆ ἐπολιορκήθησαν ὅτε Λακεδαιμόνιοι καὶ οἱ τριάκοντα προσέβαλλον, Aeschines 3.187-90; Raubitschek (1941). Among those denied citizenship by Archinus' stance was the orator Lysias ([Plut.] *Vit.X.Orat.* 835f, 836a).

<sup>18</sup> A.P. 40.2; Rhodes (1981) 477.

<sup>19</sup> Isaeus 18.1-3, sch. Aesch.1.163; Rhodes (1981) 473.

<sup>20</sup> Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 40.1.

<sup>21</sup> The useful article by Judeich in *RE* s.v. Archinos offers little clue to the context of the Decree.



κωμωδηθεὶς ἐν ταῖς πατρίοις τελεταῖς ταῖς τοῦ Διονύσου.<sup>22</sup>  
 ...or a politician who takes a chunk out of poets' pay  
 when he's been made fun of in Dionysos' ancestral rites.

The scholiast on line 367 recorded that Archinus had carried a proposal to reduce the honoraria to comic poets competing at Dionysiac festivals.<sup>23</sup> Wartime pressures may have urged the proposal, which could hardly have avoided being viewed unfavourably by Aristophanes.<sup>24</sup> It is a reminder of how the legal agenda of politicians embraced and affected matters of culture, but it gives no pointers to the background of the Decree. For these we are largely dependent on incidental notices drawn from the fourth-century authors Andron, Theopompus, Ephorus, and Theophrastus.

## II

### *The technical background*

The only explicit testimonies to the Decree are preserved in a scholium on the grammarian Dionysius Thrax and, located in a fuller but frustratingly unelaborated context, in the lexica of Photius and the Suda. The lexicographers' point of departure was a quotation from Aristophanes' early comedy *Babylonians*, which was produced by Callistratus in 426:

Σαμίων ὁ δῆμος ἐστίν· ὡς πολυγράμματος.  
 'Tis the demos of the Samians: how multi-lettered.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 367-8.

<sup>23</sup> Sch. Ar. *Ran.* 367 mentions Archinus 'and possibly also Agyrrhius' (sch. *Eccl.* 102 refers only to Agyrrhius, later a consistent butt of Aristophanes' jibes, which may account for the scholiast's suggestion). Sommerstein (1996) 189 argues that 'only one man can have moved the decree, and Archinus is the more likely'. If it can be argued (admittedly *ex silentio*) that he died 'shortly after 403' (Strauss [1986] 97), his numerous generalships (Dem. 24. 135) must have taken place before that date, so that, unlike Agyrrhius, he was already a significant political figure in 405.

<sup>24</sup> κωμωδηθεὶς (*Ran.* 367) suggests that Archinus, if he is the politician in question, had been the target of comic barbs and was seeking to retaliate against comic poets.

<sup>25</sup> *PCG* 3.2, fr. 71. For the punctuation of the line, which renders the verse complete as it stands, cf. Ar. *Av.* 284: Καλλίας ἄρ' οὗτος οὔρνις ἐστίν· ὡς πτερορρυεῖ.

The verse was said to have been occasioned by the sight of the στίγματα with which the chorus of Babylonian mill-slaves appeared in Aristophanes' play. Their condition was said to recall how the Samians had been subjected to the punishment of branding, or more probably tattooing, on some unspecified occasion, so that they could be humorously identified with the Babylonians as presented on stage.<sup>26</sup>

A fuller explanation of the line was given with reference to the fourth-century Ionian historians Andron of Ephesus and Theopompus of Chios:

Σαμίων ὁ δῆμος ὡς πολυγράμματος (ὡς π. *om. Sud.*)

... ὅτι παρὰ Σαμίους εὐρέθη πρώτοις τὰ κδ' γράμματα ὑπὸ Καλλιστράτου, ὡς Ἄνδρων ἐν Τρίποδι· τοὺς δὲ Ἀθηναίους ἔπεισε χρῆσθαι τοῖς τῶν Ἰόνων γράμμασιν Ἀρχίνος (*ita Bernhardy; Ἀρχίνου δ' Ἀθηναίου Sud., ἄρχειν οἱ δ' Ἀθηναίους Phot.*) ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Εὐκλείδου. τοὺς δὲ Βαβυλωνίους ἐδίδαξε διὰ Καλλιστράτου Ἀριστοφάνης ἔτεσι πρὸ τοῦ Εὐκλείδου κε' (καὶ *codd., corr. Bouhier, κδ' alii*), ἐπὶ Εὐκλέους. περὶ δὲ τοῦ πείσαντος ἱστορεῖ Θεόπομπος.<sup>27</sup>

'The demos of the Samians how multi-lettered'...Because it was at Samos that the 24 letters were first discovered by Callistratus, according to Andron in *Tripod*. The Athenians were persuaded to use the Ionian letters by Archinus in the archonship of Eucleides. Aristophanes' *Babylonians* was produced by Callistratus twenty-five [*or* twenty-four] years earlier in the archonship of Eucles [427/6]. Theopompus records Archinus' decree.

Aristophanes' line was thus taken by the commentators to refer to the so-called Milesian alphabet of twenty-four letters, shortly to become the standard Greek alphabet: it used three additional symbols unfamiliar to the Attic (Ξ, Ψ and Ω: Attic used Η for *h*). It is difficult not to infer that in Callistratus' production of *Babylonians* at the City Dionysia, the markings prominently displayed on the masks of the twenty-four members of the chorus corresponded to the twenty-four Ionic letters. This interpretation gains additional support from a scholiast on Homer (H 185):

<sup>26</sup> Various historical episodes are suggested by the Suda: cf. Hesych. σ 150, Plut. *Per.* 26.4. Ostwald connects this scene with Cleon's charge against Aristophanes for maligning Athens in the presence of foreigners (Ar. fr. 64, 88, 97; Ostwald [1986] 222). For στίζειν used here of tattooing rather than branding, see Jones (1987) 149-50.

<sup>27</sup> *FGrH* 115 F 155 (Phot. p. 498,15 = *Sud.* σ 77).

Καλλίστρατος δὲ Σάμιος ἐπὶ τῶν Πελοποννησιακῶν μετήνεγκε τὴν γραμματικὴν καὶ παρέδωκεν Ἀθηναίοις ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Εὐκλείδου (-ήτου cod.), ὡς φησιν Ἔφορος.

According to Ephoros, Callistratus of Samos brought over the lettering at the time of the Peloponnesian War and handed it on to Athenians in the archonship of Eucleides [or Eucles].

If Callistratus the *didaskalos* came from Samos (or was an Athenian of Samian descent), Aristophanes' verse may have been partly intended as a humorous reference to the man who produced *Babylonians*.<sup>28</sup> His action in presenting examples of the Ionic alphabet to Athenians and *xenoi* present at the City Dionysia in 427/6 might also have been represented by historians as his having 'handed on Ionic lettering to Athens in the archonship of Eucles'.

Archinus' official championing of the Ionic alphabet after the end of the Peloponnesian War would have recalled the earlier, less formal initiative of Callistratus. The Suda appears to have tried to combine both men's contributions in an awkward sentence, which may thus be restored to its original form:

ὅτι παρὰ Σαμίους εὐρέθη πρώτοις τὰ κδ' γράμματα ὑπὸ Καλλιστράτου, ὡς ἄνδρων ἐν Τρίποδι· τοὺς δὲ Ἀθηναίους ἔπεισε χρῆσθαι τοῖς τῶν Ἰόνων γράμμασιν, Ἀρχίνου δ' Ἀθηναίου [sc. πείσαντος] ἐπὶ ἄρχοντος Εὐκλείδου.

Because it was at Samos that the 24 letters were first devised by Callistratus, according to Andron in *Tripod*; and he persuaded the Athenians to use the Ionian letters, as did Archinus of Athens in the archonship of Eucleides.

The Samians were 'multi-lettered' because their script used and was seen as the origin of the letters lacking in the Old Attic alphabet.<sup>29</sup> The epithet *polugrammatos*

<sup>28</sup> The testimony of this scholiast and the Suda to Callistratus being Samian is generally ignored in discussions of his role (refs. in *OCD*<sup>3</sup> s.v.). The possibility seems to be ruled out by his activities as a διδάσκαλος at Athens, but a Samian connection might explain why Cleon is alleged to have brought a γραφή ξενίας in connection with *Knights* (*Eq. hyp.* 2).

<sup>29</sup> So Hesych.: πολυγράμματον ἔφη δῆμον, ἐπειδὴ Ἑλλήνων Σάμιοι πολυγράμματοι ἐγένοντο πρώτοι καὶ χρησάμενοι καὶ διαδόντες (διδ- *cod.*, *corr.* Meineke) εἰς τοὺς ἄλλους Ἑλληνας τὴν διὰ τῶν κδ' στοιχείων χρῆσιν. The difference was particularly in the use of Ξ, Ψ, and Ω: the Attic alphabet included H = h, and *digamma* (though not *koppa* or *sampi*) 'was a

favours this interpretation over that of the reference to branding or tattooing. In the context of the play both implications may have been evident.

The question of alphabetic origins had a continuing topicality at Athens. Herodotus, who traced the Hellenic alphabet to Ionians in Boiotia and ultimately to Cadmus of Phoenicia, points to the nature of such speculation in an earlier decade: it may have had particular relevance in contemporary discussions about the appropriate script for offshoots of imperial Athens.<sup>30</sup> Herodotus had participated in the foundation of the South Italian colony of Thurii in 443, the official script of which may have been thought determined by the fact that the colony's leaders, Lampon and Xenocritus, were Athenians. The foundational decree, like that of the Athenian colony at Brea, would undoubtedly have been inscribed in Attic.<sup>31</sup> But the notable involvement in the enterprise of such Ionians as Hippodamus of Miletus, Protagoras of Abdera, and Euthydemus and Dionysodorus of Chios would have made Ionic a more likely choice for its script than that of its official mother-city.<sup>32</sup> In coming to such a decision, a degree of linguistic or historical speculation would seem unavoidable. Recurrent interest in the story of Palamedes, the legendary inventor of the alphabet, indicates that speculation about origins persisted throughout the period.<sup>33</sup>

It is puzzling that Andron appears to have credited Callistratus with 'discovering' the Ionic alphabet. However, the sentence may mean that Callistratus championed the particular *form* of the letters which were eventually adopted by Athens. Andron's *Tripod*, cited by the Suda, referred to the tripod offered as the prize for wisest of the Greeks. The book gave an account of the achievements of the Seven Sages, and an extant fragment tells of the travels in Syria and Babylon of Pythagoras of Samos.<sup>34</sup> Andron may plausibly have referred to Pythagoras as one

---

regular element in the Attic alphabet well into the second half of the fifth century' (Immerwahr [1990] 140).

<sup>30</sup> Hdt. 5.58.2; Grassl (1972).

<sup>31</sup> Founding decree for Brea, c. 445 B.C.: ML 49.

<sup>32</sup> Coinage shows Ionic, e.g. the stater with ΘΟΥΠΙΩΝ illustrated in *CAH* 5<sup>2</sup>, p. 142, Fig. 4(e), and coins of Sybaris IV use a four-bar sigma. The use of Ionic script at Thurii would be in accord with that of other cities of Magna Graecia; for example, cf. the epitaph on the Rhegine envoy Silenos, *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>. 5220 (cf. ML p. 175).

<sup>33</sup> Eup. fr. 385.6 KA, Gorg. fr. 11A30 DK, Ar. *Ran.* 1451. Euripides' *Palamedes*, produced in 415, is parodied in Ar. *Thesm.* 768 ff. Alcidas' *Odysseus contra Palamedes* (fr. 2.24 Avezzi) cites a verse crediting Orpheus as the inventor of γράμματα.

<sup>34</sup> *FHG* 2, 347-8; this suggests another connection with Aristophanes' *Babylonians*.

of the ‘discoverers’ of the alphabet, or perhaps the ‘inventor’ of the supplemental letters. A candidate from the same era credited with the invention of Ξ and Ψ (as well as Η and Ω) was the poet Simonides.<sup>35</sup> The legendary sage of Samos was a likely figure to be credited with the introduction of *phoinikêia grammata* from the East and with the invention of the additional symbols. But a text ascribed to one Apollonius of Messene suggested a specific role for Pythagoras:

Πυθαγόρας αὐτῶν τοῦ κάλλους ἐπεμελήθη, ἐκ τῆς κατὰ γεωμετρίαν γραμμῆς ῥυθμήσας αὐτὰ γωνίαις καὶ περιφερείαις καὶ εὐθείαις.<sup>36</sup>

Pythagoras concerned himself with their appearance, creating well-proportioned shapes by drawing their angles, arcs and lines according to geometrical principles

In manifesting a similar aesthetic concern with the Ionic letters, Callistratus may have been cited by Andron as following in the footsteps of Pythagoras.

The involvement of Pythagoras with these alphabetic symbols is further indicated by an important and curious testimony to the background of the Decree, an account by Theophrastus cited by Syrianus in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*.<sup>37</sup> Aristotle was not impressed by Pythagorean number-lore, and Syrianus records Theophrastus’ agreement with his dismissal of the Pythagorean doctrine equating the three sigmatic compound letters with the three musical concords (Z=fourth, Ξ=fifth and Ψ=octave):

λέγει δὲ καὶ περὶ τῶν διπλῶν συμφώνων ὅτι οὐ διὰ τοῦτο τρία, ἐπειδὴ τρεῖς αἱ συμφωνίαι. καὶ εὖ λέγει· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἔστιν ἕκαστον αὐτῶν ἀνάγειν εἰς ἑκάστην τῶν συμφωνιῶν, οἷον τὸ Ζ εἰς τὴν διὰ τεττάρων ἢ τὸ Ξ εἰς τὴν δι’ ὀξειᾶν ἢ τὸ Ψ εἰς τὴν διὰ πασῶν. ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον, φησὶν, ἐπειδὴ οἱ τόποι [Usener; codd. τρόποι] τρεῖς τῆς ἐκφωνήσεως, διὰ τοῦτο ἐφ’ ἑκάστου ἔν ἀποτελεῖται. ταύτη δὲ τῇ ἀποδόσει καὶ Ἀρχίνος ἐχρήτο, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Θεόφραστος· ἔλεγε γὰρ ὁ Ἀρχίνος ἢ ἔξω τι παρὰ τὴν μύσιν τῶν χειλῶν ἐκφωνεῖσθαι ὡσπερ τὸ Π, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὸ Ψ πρὸς τῷ ἄκρῳ γεννᾶσθαι τῆς γλώττης ὡς ἐκ τοῦ Π Σ συγκείμενον, ἢ τῷ πλάτει τῆς γλώττης παρὰ τοὺς

<sup>35</sup> Sch. Dion. Thrax 185, Suda s.v. Σιμωνίδης (α’).

<sup>36</sup> Schol. Vat. Dion. Thr. Hilgard 1.183.31-184.2.

<sup>37</sup> Theophr. *ap. Syr. ad Arist. Met.* 1093a20, *Comm. Arist. Gr.*, 6.1.191.29 f. Usener (1870: 590-92) was the first to note the significance of this passage.

ὀδόντας ὡσπερ τὸ Δ, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὸ Ζ κατὰ ταύτην γεννᾶσθαι τὴν χώραν, ἢ τῷ κυρτῷ καὶ πιεζομένῳ ἐκ τοῦ ἐσχάτου ὡσπερ τὸ Κ, ὅθεν τὸ Ξ προίεναι.

[Aristotle] also says, concerning the double consonants, that the reason there are three is not on account of there being three concords [fourth, fifth, octave]. He is right. It is untenable to relate each letter to each of the concords, such as Z to the fourth, Ξ to the fifth, or Ψ to the octave. But rather, he says, the areas involved in the production of sound are just three, and it is on this account that a single letter serves in each case. This was the explanation used by Archinus, according to Theophrastus. Archinus proceeded to say that sound is produced either 1) at the outer end where the lips meet, as in the case of *p*; and accordingly Ψ arises at the tip of the tongue, being *p* and *s* combined; or 2) at the flat part of the tongue where it meets the teeth, as in the case of *d*; hence Z too occurs at this location; or 3) at the base of the tongue, squeezed from the back, as in *k*; whence Ξ is produced.

The Pythagorean equivalences are not elaborated on: Aristotle and Theophrastus probably assumed the correspondences to be quite arbitrary. However, the significance of the specific attribution of letters to intervals following alphabetical order has not previously been noted. It cannot be purely coincidental that the number of στοιχεῖα between the single phonemes and their sigmatic equivalents precisely corresponds to the intervals comprised by the concords, as follows:

Α	Β	Γ	<u>Δ</u>	<u>Ε</u>	<u>Ζ</u>	Η	Θ	Ι	<u>Κ</u>	<u>Λ</u>	<u>Μ</u>	<u>Ν</u>	<u>Ξ</u>	Ο	<u>Π</u>	<u>Ρ</u>	<u>Σ</u>	<u>Τ</u>	<u>Υ</u>	<u>Φ</u>	<u>Χ</u>	<u>Ψ</u>	Ω
			‘fourth’						‘fifth’						‘octave’								

The customary position of the letters in the Ionic alphabet may have seemed to the Pythagoreans to present a providential correspondence with the prime musical concords. This equation of letter-order with musical intervals will have appealed to the same kind of understanding of φύσις which they held regarding the immanence of numbers in the world.<sup>38</sup>

Such an apparently arbitrary doctrine, however, was no more likely to appeal to Archinus than to Aristotle, nor could it have provided a ‘natural’ basis for Athenians to accept the use of supplementary letters which were not part of

<sup>38</sup> Burkert (1972) 465-482.

their own alphabetic νόμος.<sup>39</sup> The appeal to nature is frequently a key element of the rhetoric of innovation, a counterpart to the ‘rhetoric of reaction’ in which progressive reform is regularly characterised as perverse and arbitrary.<sup>40</sup> The arguments adduced by Archinus (whether informally or in a pamphlet) were more scientific, in keeping with the rationalistic temper of the late fifth century.<sup>41</sup> This was an age in which philosophers, physicians, and orators sought to establish the validity of νόμος by appealing to their new understandings of φύσις. Such thinkers had even achieved a degree of consensus concerning the explanation for how sound is produced. Anaxagoras had explained it as the movement of air;<sup>42</sup> his pupil Archelaus stated that it originated in the pulsation of air;<sup>43</sup> while Democritus held that sound was created by the compression of air and its emergence under pressure.<sup>44</sup> These ideas were sufficiently well-known to warrant parodying in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, where Socrates is described as explaining the buzzing of a gnat on the principle of the reverberation of air in a trumpet:

ἔφασκεν εἶναι τούντερον τῆς ἐμπίδος  
 στενόν· διὰ λεπτοῦ δ’ ὄντος αὐτοῦ τὴν πνοὴν  
 βία βαδίζειν εὐθὺ τούρροπυγίου·  
 ἔπειτα κοῖλον πρὸς στένω προσκείμενον  
 τὸν προκτὸν ἡχεῖν ὑπο βίας τοῦ πνεύματος.<sup>45</sup>  
 He explained that the stomach of the gnat  
 is narrow. Through this thin passage the air  
 proceeds with force directly through to the rump.  
 Then the hollow chamber adjoining the narrow tube,  
 the rectum, reverberates under the pressure of the wind.

<sup>39</sup> Since Attic script consistently represents the sounds of ξ and ψ as the *aspirated* plosives χ and φ combined with the sibilant (cf. n. 3 above), the alphabetical intervals between these respective elements would be at variance with those adduced by the Pythagoreans.

<sup>40</sup> For a succinct statement of the latter see Hirschmann (1991), who specifies the elements of reactive rhetoric as the ascription of futility, perversity, and jeopardy.

<sup>41</sup> Usener assumed that Archinus published the arguments in written form, but Theophrastus’ testimony (ἐχρήτο, ἔλεγε) may point to oral presentations as well.

<sup>42</sup> Anaxag. 59A106 DK: τὴν φωνὴν γίνεσθαι πνεύματος ἀντιπεσόντος στερεμνίῳ ἀέρι, τῇ δ’ ὑποστροφῇ τῆς πλήξεως μέχρι τῶν ἀκοῶν προσενεχθέντος.

<sup>43</sup> Archel. 60A1 DK = D.L. 2.17: πρῶτος δὲ εἶπε φωνῆς γένεσιν τὴν τοῦ ἀέρος πλήξιν.

<sup>44</sup> Democr. 68A135. 55 DK: τὴν φωνὴν εἶναι πυκνουμένου τοῦ ἀέρος καὶ μετὰ βίας εἰσιόντος.

<sup>45</sup> Ar. *Nub.*160-4, which has a verbal echo of Democritus (see preceding note). A parody of Sophistic discussions of sight and hearing also occurs at the start of *Thesmophoriazusae* (5-22).

Archinus similarly sought to propose a scientific analysis of the sigmatic compounds in his arguments for their official adoption. Physiological facts were adduced to support the appropriateness of using Ψ and Ξ by analogy with the existing use of Ζ. The wording of Theophrastus' report suggests a degree of detailed observation. For instance, the description ἔξω τι παρὰ τὴν μύσιν τῶν χειλῶν may indicate a subtle distinction between the location of the utterance of *p* and of the corresponding *ps*. Since the sibilant brings the tongue into play, *ps* is located a little further back behind the lips: πρὸς τῷ ἄκρῳ τῆς γλώττης.

The details of Theophrastus' schema may go back to Archinus himself. However, Attic speakers would not have thought of Ξ as representing ΚΣ but ΧΣ: Ψ similarly was not ΠΣ but ΦΣ, and Ζ was [sd] rather than [ds].<sup>46</sup> We may conclude, therefore, that what Theophrastus testifies are the general principles of Archinus' phonological system, approved by Aristotle in the passage of *Metaphysics* in question, whereby ἄκρὸν, πλάτος, and κυρτόν are used as quasi-technical terms for different areas of the tongue (i.e. tip, middle and back).<sup>47</sup> This analysis of the areas involved in the articulation of human speech could offer a rationale for accepting the use, not just of one, but of all three Ionic compound letters (and more in principle, e.g. single letters to represent σφ, σθ etc.). For it indicated that *all* Greek consonants fell into three classes which could be designated by the area of the tongue on or near which they originated:<sup>48</sup>

	<u>τὸ ἄκρὸν</u>	<u>τὸ πλάτος</u>	<u>τὸ κυρτόν</u>
[plosives]	Β, Π, Φ	Δ, Θ, Τ	Γ, Κ, Χ
[compounds]	Ψ	Ζ	Ξ
[others]	Μ	Λ, Ν, Ρ [Σ] <sup>50</sup>	[ϝ] <sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Allen (1974) 55-6. In some dialects, where ζ was occasionally replaced by δδ, it may have sounded more like [ds]: Buck (1955) 71, Threatte (1980) 546-7.

<sup>47</sup> τὸ κυρτόν literally denotes the 'swelling' or 'convex' portion of the back part of the tongue. The visually accurate description shows familiarity with the appearance of the tongue, which was regularly extracted from the mouths of sacrificial animals; Ar. *Pax* 1060, *Av.* 1705.

<sup>48</sup> In the case of the plosives these three classes correspond to the modern phonetic categories of labials, dentals and gutturals.

<sup>49</sup> The fact that Archinus does not seem to have argued for the retention of this Attic guttural form may suggest a degree of inconsistency in his argument from analogy. To allow practicality to override consistency is a feature we have already noted in Archinus' character.



The φύσις of speech itself might thus be used to validate the adoption of the Ionic νόμος-custom of using three sigmatic letters, and hence the proposed Attic νόμος-law as well. At a time of renovation and revalidation of νόμοι, such an argument may have offered some confirmation to Athenian intellectuals of the appropriateness of formally instituting their hitherto *de facto* adoption of these elements of Ionic script.

### III

#### *Attic vs. Ionic script*

Although no explicit evidence survives, a similar rationale may have been proposed in support of the formal adoption of Ionic η and ω. But while educated Athenians may have been impressed by the sort of arguments Archinus adduced to promote the validity of the Ionic compound letters ξ and ψ, a different type of argument would have been needed to persuade the largely unlettered, if politically aware, Athenian *dêmos*.<sup>51</sup> In proposing that the Athenians should officially adopt a script so closely identified with Samos, Archinus cannot have ignored the recent history of Athens' relations with the Aegean island-*polis*. The Samian democrats had played an important role in the latter part of the Peloponnesian War, crushing an oligarchic uprising and receiving their autonomy from a grateful Athens in 412.<sup>52</sup> Samos remained the launching point for the Athenian fleet until the end of the war: in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* of 411, the chorus of old men invoke the help of 'the generals in Samos'.<sup>53</sup> The Samian democrats did not desert Athens even after the defeat at Aegospotami in 405. A decree was moved in that year, honouring them for their conspicuous loyalty. It was destroyed, probably in 404 by the short-lived regime of the Thirty, but a copy was re-inscribed in 403/2, detailing the honours accorded the Samians and their representatives, together with two subsequent

---

<sup>50</sup> I append the sigma for the sake of completeness. It may have been considered common to all classes, depending on where associated phonemes were thought to arise.

<sup>51</sup> I do not propose to press the meaning of ἔπεισε in the sources, which may mean no more than 'carried successfully'. However, it draws attention to the fact that the Ecclesia appear to have registered no opposition to his potentially controversial proposal.

<sup>52</sup> Thuc. 8. 2, *IG* 1<sup>2</sup>.101.

<sup>53</sup> Ar. *Lys.* 313.

decrees recording further privileges.<sup>54</sup> The text is in Ionic script, and it is likely that the original decree of 405 also appeared thus: there are no epigraphic irregularities such as might have been detected if the copy were based on an Attic original.<sup>55</sup> In inscribing a decree honouring the Samians, it was both practical and courteous for Athens to do so in the script appropriate to the honorands, a practice to which numerous precedents testify.<sup>56</sup> The wholesale adoption of their script by formal decree would appear as a yet firmer pledge of friendship.

This indication of such a symbolic motive for the adoption of Ionic script provides a corrective to the tendency to view the Athenian alphabetic reform solely in the light of the eventual homogenisation of Greek alphabetic usage. The Ionic alphabet had already made headway throughout the Greek world, and was shortly to supersede other epichoric varieties almost entirely.<sup>57</sup> But there may be a danger of *post hoc* reasoning in assuming that the purpose of Archinus' initiative was primarily that of simplification or standardisation. These terms to some degree beg the question why the official adoption of non-Attic letter forms and usages should have been thought a simpler option than adhering to the traditionally sanctioned Attic system, or why it should have been thought more convenient to regularise the Ionic practice by decree rather than insist by this means on the Old Attic standard. The latter script was after all that in which the vast majority of public inscriptions relating to internal matters had hitherto been inscribed, not least the archaic laws of Athens, whose authoritative status was the subject of particular emphasis during the final decade of the fifth century. Inscriptions still functioned largely as a visual and tangible record of democratic or other political activity.<sup>58</sup>

This essential symbolism inherent in the choice of the official script of the *polis* may have been the main element in the Athenian *dêmos*' continuing adherence to the local alphabet in official documents. In public documents relating

---

<sup>54</sup> ML 94.

<sup>55</sup> E.g. as in *IG* 1<sup>3</sup>.21, where the irregularities have been shown to result from the fact that the Attic text of c. 450 was based on an original Ionic document: Braddon and McGregor (1973) 24-70.

<sup>56</sup> E.g. the proxeny decree in Ionic for Heracleides of Clazomenae (424-3?, ML 70) and the Athenian treaty with the Clazomenians at Daphnus (407, ML 88); cf. the decree regarding Thasos (411-409?, ML 83), written in the Parian alphabet.

<sup>57</sup> Threatte (1980) 27.

<sup>58</sup> Thomas (1992) 140.

to foreigners, the regular use of Ionic script was a practical and diplomatic concession to Athens' wider Hellenic connections. But the continued use of the Attic script on official documents in the later fifth century, when the influence of Ionic becomes increasingly marked in private documents, may indicate a degree of defiance in the *dêmos*' assertion of its Athenian identity. In pursuing the stated aim of reviving the ancestral constitution after the defeat of the oligarchic revolution of 411, the radical leaders of Athens' democrats are unlikely to have missed the symbolism of the fact that the Solonic *axones* and *kurbeis* stood for all to see, in the Stoa Basileios on the north-west corner of the Agora, inscribed in Attic letters.<sup>59</sup> And it may have been partly for just such symbolic reasons that, in 409/8, Draco's law of homicide was republished not in Ionic but in a developed form of Attic script.<sup>60</sup>

However, Athenian's symbolic identification with Attic script was far from straightforward. By the 410s, written documents were far from unfamiliar to the majority of Athenians. The increasing urbanisation occasioned by the war and the practical requirements for at least a limited kind of alphabetic literacy had changed Athenian perceptions of script from the context in which they might accept the cheerful nonsense-letters still found on early fifth-century vases.<sup>61</sup> The Sausage-seller in Aristophanes' *Knights* (188-9) claims to be ignorant of μουσική, but at least he knows his γράμματα, even if only sketchily. Athenians had outgrown the notion that a public epitaph might literally address a passer-by.<sup>62</sup> Written texts were to be read, and if necessary studied in silence, by an Athenian citizen body who frequented the Monument to the Heroes to comply with military call-ups and to post legal notices such as legislative proposals and public charge-sheets.<sup>63</sup> Books were also more widely available, even commanding a corner of the Agora;<sup>64</sup> but while Athenians employed Ionic script in private documents, stone inscriptions, and

<sup>59</sup> Arist. *A.P.* 7.1 with Rhodes (1981) *ad loc.*

<sup>60</sup> ML 86: the script regularly omits the aspirate. Later revisions of the law appear in Ionic script, notwithstanding the traditionalistic requirement of the decree of Teisamenos in 403 χρήσθαι τοῖς Δράκοντος θεσμοῖς οἷσπερ ἐχρώμεθα ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν χρόνῳ (Andoc. 1.83).

<sup>61</sup> Immerwahr (1990) 44.

<sup>62</sup> E.g. *IG* 1<sup>2</sup>. 976 (560-50 B.C.), *IG* 1<sup>2</sup>. 971 (c. 540 B.C.), ML 24 (480 B.C.); Simonides fr. 119. The tone of these may be contrasted with the epitaph for the Rhegine Silenos (n. 32 above).

<sup>63</sup> Call-ups: Ar. *Pax* 1180-4 with scholia. Legal proposals: Dem. 20.94, 21.103. Silent reading: see Gavrilov (1997).

<sup>64</sup> οὐ τὰ βιβλί' ὄνια, Eup. fr. 327 KA.

*dipinti* from the 450s, there is no reliable evidence concerning the style or appearance of book-script. Representations of books on fifth-century vases suggest that Attic script may have been used, but their evidential value is controversial.<sup>65</sup> The fact that book-rolls are often depicted on vases as *stoichêdon* and using Attic script may simply show that the painters chose to depict them as having the appearance of public documents on stone, either because they found this to be more pictorially appropriate or because inscriptions in this form were more familiar to them than books.<sup>66</sup>

Old-fashioned literary culture, with its emphasis on Homer and its penchant for poets like Simonides, was steeped in Ionian models and traditions (even when these sought to incorporate a literary Doric dialect).<sup>67</sup> The Athenians looked back to their common ancestry with the Ionians (Hdt. 1.146.2) and those who imbibed the traditions of the philosophical prose-writers, the λόγοι of Herodotus, Sophistic *epideixeis*, or the treatises of Hippocratic physicians, were likely to have felt as much at home with the Ionian dialect and script as with Attic.<sup>68</sup> After the Persian Wars, home-grown Athenian literary production had flourished with the work of dramatists such as Aeschylus, Phrynichus and Sophocles. These authors may have followed traditional Attic writing practice, but given the still predominantly oral nature of Athens in the mid fifth century such Athenian literary products would not have been irrevocably linked to a particular style of script. Even by the latter half of the century, when the ubiquitous influence of Ionic script suggests that it was by then universally used for book-hand, written texts were still not sufficiently widespread or regularised for variations in the style of book-script to have been considered of much consequence.<sup>69</sup>

However, Aristophanes' *Clouds* shows that by the 420s there was a generation of Athenian intellectuals impressed by the efforts of foreigners like Prodicus and Protagoras to draw fine distinctions about the form and use of words,

---

<sup>65</sup> Threatte (1980) 34.

<sup>66</sup> Immerwahr (1964) argues that early books were actually written *stoichêdon*.

<sup>67</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 1353 f. Buck (1955) 14-15.

<sup>68</sup> Although Hippocrates was from Dorian Cos, the Hippocratic treatises are all in the Ionic dialect and were undoubtedly written, like Herodotus' *Histories*, in the Ionian alphabet.

<sup>69</sup> One might compare Shakespeare's indifference to orthographic variation, even in the case of his own name.

ὀρθότης ὀνομάτων.<sup>70</sup> Educated young Athenians also sought to follow the latest literary and musical vogue, represented *par excellence* by musicians like Timotheus of Miletus and modernising poets like Euripides. The striving after a sophisticated, cosmopolitan and self-consciously modern style will not easily have co-existed with the retention of a local script. Devoid of the alphabetic forms which both offered phonetic ἀκρίβεια and characterized the written products of Greek musico-literary culture, Attic lettering was primarily associated with official public inscriptions.<sup>71</sup> When Euripides composed his *Theseus*, he disregarded historical verisimilitude and the traditionalistic sensibilities of a section of his Athenian audience when he put into an illiterate shepherd's mouth a well-drawn description of the individual letters which depicted the spelling of the Attic hero's name. The second letter of ΘΗΣΕΥΣ unabashedly spelled an Ionic H rather than an Attic E:

τὸ δεύτερον δὲ πρῶτα μὲν γραμμαὶ δύο,  
ταύτας διείργει δ' ἐν μέσαις ἄλλη μία.<sup>72</sup>

The second mark consisted first of two uprights,  
and between them a single bar held them apart.

However, the kind of education that would have ensured a thoroughgoing familiarity with Ionic letters remained the preserve of the privileged few. The deliberate use of Attic as the favoured script of radical democrats vis-à-vis those of oligarchic sympathies emerges strikingly from epigraphic evidence. Most telling are the accounts of the Treasurers of Athena, which break a long tradition by using Ionic letters for the first time under the regime of the Four Hundred in 411: the records of the restored democracy of 410-9 revert to Attic.<sup>73</sup> Similarly it was in Attic script that the democrats honoured in 409 the assassins of the oligarch Phrynichus.<sup>74</sup> The script of Athenian proxeny-decrees (more than thirty survive from the fifth century) is regularly Ionic, which constituted a Panhellenic alphabet appropriate for honouring non-Athenians. But in contrast to an oligarchic proxeny-

<sup>70</sup> Guthrie (1971) 205.

<sup>71</sup> Contrast the Homeric texts, which were probably transmitted in Ionic, even if there were Attic recensions: Janko (1992) 34-6.

<sup>72</sup> Eur. fr. 385 Nauck.

<sup>73</sup> Ferguson (1932) 145-6.

<sup>74</sup> ML 84, 85.

decree of 411 found on the Acropolis, inscribed in Ionic script, a decree of 407-6, whereby Athens sought to honour Archelaos of Macedon, pointedly reverts to Attic.<sup>75</sup> Our only completely preserved proxeny-decree, dating from the same period, records the honours voted by Athens to Oiniades of Palaeskiathos in 408-7.<sup>76</sup> Being wholly in Ionic, it appears to constitute a counter-example to the observed trend. But it is intriguing and may be significant that the name of the *grammateus* in this instance should be Eucleides, perhaps the very same man under whose archonship in 403/2 the Ionicizing reform of the alphabet was to be decreed.

## IV

*The Eucleides connection*

The presence of Eucleides' name on the latter inscription might not merit further mention, were it not for a vexed passage of Aristotle's *Poetics* which also appears to refer to the archon for 403/2:

ὥστε οὐκ ὀρθῶς ψέγουσιν οἱ ἐπιτιμῶντες τῷ τοιούτῳ τρόπῳ τῆς διαλέκτου καὶ διακωμφοῦντες τὸν ποιητὴν, οἷον Εὐκλείδης ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ὡς ῥάδιον ὄν ποιεῖν εἴ τις δώσει ἐκτείνειν ἐφ' ὅσον βούλεται, ἰαμβοποιήσας ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ λέξει «Ἐπιχάρην εἶδον Μαραθῶνάδε βαδίζοντα» καὶ «οὐκ ἄγκεράμενος<sup>†</sup> τὸν ἐκείνου ἐλλέβορον».<sup>77</sup>

Consequently those who criticise this manner of speech [i.e. irregular poetic diction] and ridicule the bard are not correct in their censure. For instance, old Eucleides, seeking to show that it is easy to be a poet if one is permitted to lengthen syllables at will, caricatured [this effect] in his very versification, viz.

'I saw Êpichares pêrambûlating to Mârathon'

and

'not prêparing a brew of that man's hellêborê'.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> ML 91, ML 80.

<sup>76</sup> ML 90.

<sup>77</sup> Arist. *Poet.*1458b5-15. Janko (1987) *ad loc.* suggests the possible connection with the alphabetic reform.

<sup>78</sup> My translation attempts to suggest the extreme distortion of the syllables in the Greek hexameter verses.

Whilst the text is difficult and corrupt, the parodic intention behind the composition of the verses cited is clear. By lengthening of the first syllables of Ἐπιχάρην and βαδίζοντα, of the second syllable of † ἀγκεράμενος †, and the second and third of ἐλλέβορον, the verses may be read as two ungainly hexameter lines.<sup>79</sup> The specific target of the parody may have been the potential for ε and ο to be ‘lengthened at will’ to η and ω when reading Attic texts which, unlike Ionic, did not distinguish short from long vowels. The indiscriminate or unscrupulous application of this principle could result in such distorted and spuriously ‘Homeric-sounding’ verses.

The identification of Eucleides as the archon of that name seems to be indicated by the appearance of Epichares, a politician in the time of the Thirty and possibly the same man as Andocides’ adversary of that name.<sup>80</sup> A yet closer identification has been suggested by further emendation of the difficult text. Modern commentators, puzzled by the unlikely epithet ὁ ἀρχαῖος, ‘of olden time’, have suggested that it might be a corruption of an ethnic adjective.<sup>81</sup> Janko suggested that it might originally have read ὁ ἄρχων, or named Eucleides’ father, Εὐκλείδης ὁ Ἀρχίνου.<sup>82</sup> A more thoroughgoing re-evaluation of the suspect text might restore an explicit reference for the epithet to the ‘antique’ style of Attic orthography.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>79</sup> ἰαμβοποιήσας cannot be taken to refer to iambic *metre*. It is possible to force either verse, syllable by syllable, into an ‘iambic’ trimeter.:

1.    vvv | -- | -vv | -vv | v- | -v (‘scazon’)
2.    -- | -vv | -vv | -- | -- | vv

However, the result is too barbaric to be recognisable as iambs. The word must refer here solely to the ethos of verse invective: ἰαμβος can designate abusive lines in non-iambic metres (Dover [1963] 186). Aristotle will have heard the lines solely as exemplifying the prosodic excesses made possible by Homer’s own example in hexameter versification.

<sup>80</sup> Ἐπιχάρην is a likely emendation of the corrupt text. Andoc. 1.95 calls his adversary Epichares ὁ πάντων πονηρότατος and mentions that he was a Council-member under the Thirty. MacDowell (1962) *ad loc.* doubts, in view of Andocides’ silence on the matter, whether this can be the same Epichares who was one of the Ten who succeeded the Thirty in 403 (Lys. 12.55).

<sup>81</sup> E.g. Lucas (1972), who cites J. Sykutris, *Aristoteles Poetica* (Athens 1937).

<sup>82</sup> The silence of the sources about such a relationship speaks against its likelihood. Archinus named his own son Myronides (Dem. 24.135), and Judeich (*RE* s.v. Archinos) suggested that Archinus may have been the son of the famous general Myronides. However, Ehrenberg (*RE* s.v. Myronides) rejects this suggestion on the grounds of date: Myronides could have been born as early as 515, and Archinus is unlikely to have been born earlier than around 450.

<sup>83</sup> E.g. on the lines οἶον Εὐκλείδης, <τὸ> ὁ ἀρχαῖον ὡς ῥάδιον {ὄν} <οὐ> ποιεῖν εἴ τις δώσει ἐκτείνειν ἐφ’ ὅποσον βούλεται, ἰαμβοποιήσας ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ λέξει κτλ. i.e. ‘Such as Eucleides, who, given that it is easy to make the old-style ο a long ὄ if one is allowed to lengthen

Corruption notwithstanding, what emerges from the passage is the vestige of a picture of Eucleides, Archinus' contemporary and political colleague, commenting on a specific aspect of Greek phonology relevant to one of the main distinctions between Attic and Ionic usage. His parodic verses bring to mind two other instances dating from the same period which draw attention to matters of prosody in relation to the names of well-known individuals. A pentameter line survives whereby Sophocles drew attention to his adoption of a variant of 'Archelaus' to suit the metre of elegiacs: Ἀρχέλεως ἦν γὰρ σύμμετρον ὦδε λέγειν.<sup>84</sup> Yet more pertinent are the lines of another prominent and versatile figure, the oligarchic politician Critias, who found a way of including Alcibiades' name in his elegiacs by a humorous 'innovation', the insertion of an iambic line:

Καὶ νῦν Κλεινίου υἱὸν Ἀθηναῖον στεφανώσω  
 Ἀλκιβιάδην νέοισιν ὑμνήσας τρόποις.  
 οὐ γὰρ πως ἦν τοῦνομ' ἐφαρμόζειν ἐλεγείῳ·  
 νῦν δ' ἐν ἰαμβείῳ κείσεται οὐκ ἄμετρος.<sup>85</sup>

Even now I will crown Alcibiades of Athens, son of Cleinias,  
 eulogising him in a new style of verse.

For it was not possible to fit his name into elegiacs;  
 so now he will rest in iambs, doing no violence to the metre.

The epitaphic context - elegiac metre, κείσεται, and καὶ νῦν (implying 'even now, when he is dead') - suggests that these verses may have been composed after Alcibiades' death in 406, rather than (as has been assumed) on the occasion of his restoration to Athens in 407.<sup>86</sup> The first line plays on the ambiguous signification of στεφανώσω: a garland, customarily worn by revellers, symposiasts and orators (all familiar roles for Alcibiades), was also placed on the head of the deceased.<sup>87</sup>

---

vowels at will, caricatured [this effect] in his very versification' etc. Εὐκλείδης ὁ ἀρχαῖος would have been one obvious way for a scribe to make sense of ΕΥΚΛΕΙΔΗΣΟΑΡΧΑΙΟΝ.

<sup>84</sup> Hephaestion, *Encheiridion* 6. 'Archelaus' may refer to the Macedonian king publicly honoured by Athens in 407-6 (ML 91).

<sup>85</sup> Crit. fr. 4 DK (*ap.* Hephaestion).

<sup>86</sup> E.g. Freeman (1949) 409. In fr. 5 DK, Critias refers to the part he played in Alcibiades' return, but this could still be part of an *Elegy for Alcibiades*.

<sup>87</sup> These varying uses of στέφανος are all demonstrated by Aristophanes: *Pl.* 1041 (revel), *Thesm.* 380 (public speaking), *Eccl.* 538 (death). In *Lys.* 602 the mention of a wreath forms part of the *double entendre* about being prepared for marriage/death.



Alcibiades, who died in exile, may have been deprived of the opportunity to be honoured by this last rite. Here, he receives instead a punning accolade from the hands of an Athenian fellow-aristocrat. In his social and political life Alcibiades was not notable for his μετριότης, but in death he can be allowed, like his name, to lie οὐκ ἀμέτρως.<sup>88</sup>

Archinus had shown himself consistently μέτριος in the political sphere by neither supporting the Thirty nor being prepared to condone the excesses of radical democrats. His proposal for the adoption of the Ionic alphabet seems of a piece with this consensual political stance. In the case of his colleague Eucleides, if the Aristotelian evidence may be pressed, an attempt was made to highlight the result of ignoring the difference between long and short *e* and *o*, an inconsistency which it was possible to perpetuate in the Old Attic script whose alphabetic usage, unlike Ionic, made no distinction between *êta* and *epsilon*, *omikron* and *ômega*. Eucleides' practical demonstration of the problem may offer a clue to the kind of reasoning which appealed to educated Athenians in the decision to adopt the Ionic long vowels. But the political symbolism of the script's association with Samos would have offered a more powerful argument for Archinus when presenting the Decree to the *dêmos* in 403/2.

## V

### Conclusions

The picture that has emerged of the intellectual and political background to the Decree may be augmented by consideration of its educational and administrative implications, and by suggesting some general points of comparison with other alphabetic reforms in history. In an era of growing Athenian literacy, when Aristophanes could write (albeit with comic intent) βιβλίον τ' ἔχων ἕκαστος μανθάνει τὰ δέξια,<sup>89</sup> the repercussions of alphabetic reform on Athenian education

<sup>88</sup> That diverse judgements about Alcibiades' role constituted a common question in Athens at the time is shown by Ar. *Ran.* 1422-3, where the question to the contestants is 'What do you think about Alcibiades?'

<sup>89</sup> Ar. *Ran.* 1114. Commentators (Dover, Sommerstein et al.) stress that the comment should not be taken literally but 'reflects a culture in which possession of a book deserves remark' (Dover [1993] 34). The comment certainly confirms the popular association of bookishness with a new and suspect kind of δεξιότης.

may have merited some concern. This is perhaps indicated by the scholiast on Dionysius Thrax, whose brief report of the Decree reads:<sup>90</sup>

οἷς δὲ νυνὶ χρώμεθα εἰσὶν Ἴωνικοί, εἰσενέγκαντος Ἀρχίνου παρ' Ἀθηναίοις  
ψήφισμα τοὺς γραμματιστὰς παιδεύειν τὴν Ἴωνικὴν γραμματικὴν.

[The letter-forms] we use today are Ionic, since Archinus proposed a decree to the Athenians that school-teachers should teach the Ionic alphabet.

Although this may be no more than the scholiast's conjecture, the actual terms of the *psêphisma* are likely enough to have made reference to Athenian education. The prevalence of non-Athenians amongst teachers of Athenian boys at both primary and secondary level may have been one of the main reasons for the growing conformity to Ionian rather than archaic local models. The *grammatistai* who taught young Athenian boys to read and write were not always slaves, but invariably had a low status and, as in the case of the Sophists, many would have been Ionian metics.<sup>91</sup> Their presence was a fact of Athenian life. Although such 'foreign' influence may initially have been resisted by Attic diehards, by 403 some twenty years had passed since the Old Oligarch complained about the indistinguishability of slaves from citizens frequenting the Agora.<sup>92</sup> After two decades of war and social upheaval, a pressing question for post-war Athenian politicians would have been how best to promote educational, administrative and legal homogeneity in the newly democratic *polis*. A purist desire to insist on the older Attic forms might have been at variance with the moderates' perception of Athens' new social and political realities, and by defying a wide educational and literary consensus, could also have been viewed as impractical and reactionary.<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> Hilgard 1.3.183.16-20.

<sup>91</sup> Marrou (1956) 145-7. For the influx of foreign Sophists and their upper-class Athenian *clientèle* in the 420s see e.g. Ostwald in *CAH* 5<sup>2</sup>, 341-369.

<sup>92</sup> [Xen.] *Ath. Pol.* 1.10.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Browning (1969) regarding the Greek generals' insistence on *katharevousa*: 'In 1967 the military junta once again banned demotic completely from the schools. Now textbooks in *katharevousa* have to be written. And the Greek child on going to school is told that the way he and his family, and every one he has ever known speak, is wrong and must be 'corrected' by a continuous and unremitting effort - an effort which, he will be quick to observe, the schoolmaster does not make once he is out of the classroom'.

On the administrative front, a standardising reform was certainly in tune with the temper of the times. The internal political upheavals of the decade following the disastrous Sicilian expedition of 415-413 seem to have encouraged the institution of a number of legal and administrative innovations at Athens. By the institution of the *graphê paranomôn*, first attested in 415, an attempt was made to restrict the confusing proliferation of contradictory legislation.<sup>94</sup> The creation of the archon-list in around 404 suggests that historico-political research had given an impetus to the regularisation of Athenian chronology.<sup>95</sup> Nicomachus had been charged in 410 with the task of codifying Athenian laws, a commission renewed in 403.<sup>96</sup> And the establishment of a 'public archive' (δημόσιον) in the Metroön at Athens, which may have taken place at some time between 409 and 405, made public records centrally available for inspection.<sup>97</sup> The creation of an archive may itself have contributed to a perceived need for some kind of alphabetic standardisation, though there is scant evidence that the documents stored therein, whether on stelai, wood or papyrus, were consulted or cited, at least until well into the fourth century.<sup>98</sup> The proliferation of documents and the desire to record accurately the proceedings of Athens' constitutional structures may also have led to the earliest known proposal for a method of shorthand (or 'tachygraphy').<sup>99</sup> Some have seen in this attempt the hand of none other than Archinus himself, and have sought to reconstitute its details on the basis of the phonological insights demonstrated by Theophrastus' testimonium.<sup>100</sup>

Alphabetic reforms of later historical periods have generally been more dramatic in nature and effect than that of Archinus. However, even small adjustments to the alphabetic *status quo* tend to exhibit a similar mix of intellectual, political, symbolic and practical motives. A reform more or less commensurate in size with that of Archinus took place in Russia in 1918: after the overthrow of the

<sup>94</sup> Andoc. 1.17. Jones (1957), 123, follows earlier scholars (e.g. De Sanctis, Wade-Gery) in equating the procedure with the φυλακὴ τῆς πολιτείας transferred by Ephialtes from the Areopagus in 461 ([Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 25.2).

<sup>95</sup> ML 6. Hippias also produced his Olympic victor list around this time (Plut. *Num.* 1.6).

<sup>96</sup> Lys. 30.2-4.

<sup>97</sup> Boegehold (1972).

<sup>98</sup> Thomas (1992) 68-72.

<sup>99</sup> *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.2783. See *OCD*<sup>3</sup> s.v. tachygraphy.

<sup>100</sup> Details in Larfeld (1914) 281-88. We do not know if it was ever used in practice, but Xenophon is said to have used shorthand in writing his *Memorabilia* (D.L. *Vit. Xen.* 2.48).

Tsar and the installation of the Soviet regime, the Cyrillic alphabet was simplified by the removal of four redundant letters.<sup>101</sup> While taking into account the facts of changing Russian pronunciation, the reform also carried the symbolic significance of distinguishing imperial from revolutionary literature, with the evident implication that the latter was more 'democratic' in nature and appearance. The impetus for reform was partly inspired by the actions of the French revolutionaries of 1792, who introduced a new calendar and sought to reform French orthography in recognition of the 'new start' offered by the revolution.<sup>102</sup>

A broader reform was instituted in China the 1950s by the Communist leadership under Chairman Mao, in an attempt to reduce the influence of the mandarin class (prefiguring the Cultural Revolution of 1966) by promoting changes to facilitate more widespread literacy. In 1954 the Chinese character script was simplified, while in 1958 a new official standard for alphabetic Romanisation, *pin-yin*, was introduced by the People's Congress.<sup>103</sup> In this instance as in others, alphabetic reform, informed by ideological as well as narrowly practical considerations, tended to move in the direction of simplification, and the specific changes were made on the recommendation of committees of experts rather than by the politicians themselves. One of the most far-reaching of such reforms, involving the wholesale replacement of one alphabetic system with a different one, was that implemented in Turkey in 1928. The Turkish adoption of the Latin alphabet was promoted as a liberation in political and literary terms, symbolising a realignment of Turkish nationhood with the democratic and industrially developing countries of the West.<sup>104</sup> Orthographically, Latin letters were far better suited to the Turkish language than the former Arabic script, and the change helped to promote a large increase in literacy and expansion in vernacular literature.

Less dramatically, the simplification of Greek writing in recent times began, after the reactionary edict of the Greek colonels was abandoned, with the

---

<sup>101</sup> Kolni-Balozky (1938) 3-5.

<sup>102</sup> The floridly rhetorical reform proposal of the *Sans-Culottes* is reproduced in Coulmas (1996) 159.

<sup>103</sup> There were previous systems of Romanisation, but *pin-yin* is official and widely practised despite requiring an understanding of its peculiar (but systematic) phonetic rules (e.g. q = [tsh]). See Crystal (1987) 312-313.

<sup>104</sup> Similar symbolism attached to Kemal Atatürk's abolition of the honorific use of the term 'Bey' and the wearing of the fez.

dismantling of *katharevousa*. In 1982 a presidential decree moved the abolition of the traditional system of accents, replacing them uniformly with a single one, the μονοτονικό. The change reflected common usage amongst the majority of Greeks. A purist minority saw in the series of changes the abandonment of traditions that were felt to be a connecting thread to Greece's classical past. Others, including linguists and classical scholars such as J. T. Kakridis, viewed them as a pragmatic recognition of change. An attempt to retain the older style would have been unpopular and ultimately unsuccessful. It was thought better to bow to the inevitable by officially confirming the validity of popular practice than to perpetuate inconsistency, confusion, and misguided elitist assumptions.

In 403, the Ionic alphabet had the practical advantage of being already in wide use in Attica, and the symbolic advantage of possessing a Panhellenic rather than a purely local validity. Its promotion to Athens' official script suggests that the governing elements of the reconstructed Athenian democracy may have had some vision of making reparations for its loss of imperial power by reasserting its cultural hegemony. Its walls and fleet destroyed, and its actions closely monitored by a victorious Sparta, Athens could not triumph by force of arms. But this small gesture of cultural internationalism might have served to remind other Greek states both of Athens' literary pre-eminence and of its continuing desire to wield influence in Panhellenic affairs. If Athens were to regain its former position as champion of the Ionian cities against the common enemy of Hellas, it was in its interest to show herself officially identified with them, perhaps in deliberate distinction to the Dorian and barbarian spheres of influence.<sup>105</sup> Part of that identification involved officially adopting the Ionic script, as a gesture of solidarity with the Samian *dêmos*, perhaps a subtle riposte to Sparta, and a public precursor of the overt calls for Panhellenic unity of fourth-century Athenians like Isocrates.

The decrees of imperial Athens inscribed in Attic script were prone to be seen both by Athenian moderates and by Athens' former subjects as symbolic of the disastrous domination of the Athenian *dêmos*, the period of empire that some

---

<sup>105</sup> In the following decade the 'freedom of the Greeks of Asia' became a slogan: Seager and Tuplin (1980). But in 403 the Spartans might have sought to take credit for having liberated the Ionian *poleis* from the yoke of Athens.

Athenians would increasingly look back on, not as the glorious past, but as *passé*. In Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*, performed perhaps a decade later, Blepyrus plays on the word ἀρχή in just such terms:

περὶ μὲν τοίνυν τοῦ καινοτομεῖν μὴ δέεισης· τοῦτο γὰρ ἡμῖν  
 δρᾶν ἀντ' ἄλλης ἀρχῆς ἐστίν, τῶν δ' ἀρχαίων ἀμελήσαι.<sup>106</sup>  
 As to innovations, have no fear: they're something we prefer  
 to any other regime - we don't give a hoot about the old days.

While Athens in defeat might take pains to distance herself from its former image as a ruthless and controlling *hêgemôn*, it was not in its nature to present herself as a submissive and inward-looking *polis*, choosing like its erstwhile adversary Sparta to cling defiantly to local traditions out of fear or inertia. Such behaviour would have belied its genuinely innovative efforts to recreate its institutions, and to present herself as a forward-thinking *polis*, worthy of the heritage of such radical constitutional reformers as Solon and Cleisthenes and such far-sighted political leaders as Themistocles and Pericles. Symbolic of a new start, the 'new' alphabet was sufficiently familiar to be adopted without any real sense of discomfort. By this act, Athenians might pride themselves on their modernity without experiencing the anxiety occasioned by truly radical change.

Within the complex interplay of conservatism and innovation, political pragmatism and rational argumentation, and reassertion and reconciliation that characterise the mood of 403/2, wider symbolic considerations of this kind may well have appealed to Athens and its leaders. But a particular desire to ensure internal political consensus and an appreciation of the rational arguments for Ionic script coalesce in the personality and actions of Archinus. In this as in other areas of his activity, he showed himself to be skilled in the management of change. His efforts in promoting Ionic script seem to combine with the tenuous clues which may testify to his colleague Eucleides' inclination towards Ionic orthography. Their specific areas of concern, encapsulated in our scanty sources by the testimonies to Archinus' phonological rationalisation of the use of sigmatic compounds and to Eucleides' humorous demonstration of the literary dangers lurking in ambiguous

---

<sup>106</sup> Ar. *Eccl.* 586-7.

Attic vowels, seem to fit together like pieces of a puzzle in reconstructing the background to Athens' decision to adopt the Ionic alphabet as its official script.

## 9. Conclusions: the postmodern turn in Classical Athens.

*All history is contemporary history.*

Benedetto Croce

*The postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognising that the past, since it cannot fully be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be revisited; but with irony, not innocently.*

Umberto Eco

Every individual and every age discovers the new in their own way. The foregoing chapters have looked at many different manifestations and constructions of novelty and innovation in diverse areas of Athenian life at the end of the fifth century and the beginning of the fourth. The sources show that radical innovation was far from being an incidental or unacknowledged feature of post-Periclean Athens. It was deliberately pursued in many areas and that pursuit was encouraged and intensified by the unique combination of cultural pressures and material circumstances in the period. Athenians in the age of Aristophanes, confronted with a panorama of novelty unprecedented in previous history, invented, discovered, and articulated the idea of innovation. The development of *technê* and new possibilities of verbal articulation gave them a framework within which to generate novelty to a hitherto unimaginable level. The ability for citizens to make an individual contribution to the innovation of *nomoi* in the democratic *polis* provided an impetus and a symbolic parallel to the creation of new rules in different spheres, whether art or morality, rhetoric or commerce. *Poikilia*, the sheer variety that the world had to offer, was a constant reminder of the benefits and drawbacks of pursuing novelty, providing for some a stimulus to yet further innovation and for others a basis for the reaction against unrestrained *paranomia*.

The understanding of innovation as both a process and a perception begins in the fifth century, with the first securely attested use of the epithet *καινός* bearing a deliberately positive connotation. In the course of the century, the perspective on innovation at Athens seems to follow a broad pattern. Up to about 450 B.C. it is



presented as something that occurs naturally, accompanying the hegemony of Athens after the Persian Wars, the growth of the Athenian empire, and the gradual centralisation of law, finance and administration in the *polis*. Thereafter (450-30 B.C.) innovation is increasingly noted and articulated. The development of specialised *technai* and the production of technical writings on a variety of subjects are symptoms of that very novelty. In the heyday of Periclean Athens, innovation comes to be vaunted as a peculiar and special feature of the Athenian character and way of life.

Subsequently (430-410 B.C.) the pursuit of novelty is forthrightly promoted across the board in a way that suggests a radical break with tradition. The word *καινοτομεῖν* itself first occurs in Aristophanes' *Wasps* of 427 B.C., and the question of 'the new' itself comes under sustained comic scrutiny in *Clouds*. This is the age in which Gorgias and Hippias extol novelty in speech, medical authors vie to produce *kainai hupotheseis*, Timotheus boasts that his new music is better than the old, and Aristophanes claims that, like Sophists, orators, and demagogues, he always comes up with new ideas. It is a time of disorientation and re-orientation, of new beliefs, horizons, roles and identities. In their engagements with the latter, Herodotus and Thucydides give birth to Greek historiography,<sup>1</sup> the great Sophists expound a radical relativism, Athens' 'new politicians' make their mark in word and deed, and Athens seems to oscillate, in the 'hour of the son', between novelty and tradition, enlightenment and anxiety, progress and regress, reason and irrationalism, democracy and oligarchy, victory and defeat, *polis* and *archê*.

By the final decade of the fifth century, the idea of innovation has been tainted by the experience of war and social change, and where it is articulated it is by and large abjured. After 404 B.C. there is a clear reaction to the dangers of innovation, which spills over from the social sphere into the intellectual. Archinus' reform is presented as an emendation rather than an innovation, while other reforms are implemented in the guise of restoration. Nicomachus and Socrates come under attack, and the latter is executed, for their different brands of religious

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cartledge (1995).

'novelty'. The bold conceptual innovation of the early Sophists give way to the tamer dictates of rhetorical *heuresis*.

Subsequently, efforts at innovation appeared muted, but some were merely circumscribed by the logic of technical specialisation. Within the bounds of *technai* such as the visual arts, literature, drama, rhetoric and philosophy, Athenian innovation continued apace, to produce the flower of fourth-century art, literature, philosophy and *paideia*. But creativity was also channelled into destructive and self-destructive courses. Demosthenes pronounced the epitaph on Classical Athens when he described the art of warfare as being the most conspicuous manifestation of innovation in his time. The emphasis on new techniques of warfare foreshadowed the fall of the Classical *polis* to the professional armies of Alexander and the incorporation of Athens into the Hellenistic world-empire.

A number of specific themes have recurred throughout the discussions of the different arenas of innovation.<sup>2</sup> These combine to give the novelty of the late decades of the fifth century a character that differs from both the preceding and the subsequent half-centuries. These themes point to an increased tendency to critical and reflexive self-awareness, encouraged by the growth of rhetorical expertise and the use of writing; a loss of the grandeur and confidence that may be detected in the actions of imperial Athens at its zenith, perhaps up to the failure of the Sicilian expedition; a sense of the dispersal and disintegration of traditional communal values; a radical, relativistic, questioning of social, moral and religious norms; a pluralisation and cosmopolitanism in the social and intellectual fabric of the Athenian democracy; a secularisation of politics combined with an increasing interest in both esoteric and exotic religious activities; a new irony and ambivalence in portrayals of Athenian life by historians, orators and dramatists; a desire for greater control, accuracy and certainty through the medium of *technê*, resulting in expressions of both confidence and despair; and a sense of the unprecedented risks consequent on ignorance, change, failure, military defeat, *stasis*, impiety, unchecked rationalism and unquestioning irrationalism.

---

<sup>2</sup> See Index of Themes below, pp. 269-73.

This is a complex picture, and its very complexity adds up to something new in the history of Classical Athens, which is both rooted in the city's recent past and seems to mark a departure from any earlier age. The experience of innovation in ancient Athens affords striking analogies with what has been called the postmodern sensibility. Features of that sensibility include a critical, reflexive, and ironic view of knowledge, science, history, and rationality; the recognition of radical uncertainty and incalculable risk; the acknowledgment of pluralism and diversity; and the necessity to live with the continual paradoxes of hope and despair, control and chaos. A social theorist has proposed that the concept of postmodernity

purports to capture and articulate the novel experience of just one, but crucial social category of contemporary society: the intellectuals. Their novel experience - that is, their reassessment of their own position within society, their reorientation of the collectively performed function, and their new strategies... 'Postmodernity' proclaims the loss of something we were not aware of possessing until we learned of the loss. This view of past 'modernity' which the 'postmodernity' discourse generates is made entirely out of the present-day anxiety and uneasiness, as a model of a universe in which such anxiety and uneasiness could not arise.<sup>3</sup>

We can, and perhaps must, understand and reflect anew on innovation in ancient Athens from a perspective both nourished and distorted by the experience of innovation in our own time. But if our postmodern experience can be illuminatingly mapped onto their 'postmodern' experience, if the points of contact turn out to be more apt than might at first have seemed plausible, it may be that aspects of our 'postmodern turn' have been prefigured by the experience of Classical Athens. While the term proposes to encapsulate unprecedented novelty, ironically it seems that there may be nothing new under the sun.

Traditional yet radical, down-to-earth yet elusive, comic and serious, the supreme representative and articulator of Athens' postmodern turn is Aristophanes. His unique 'women's' plays, which simultaneously provoke and ironise misogyny, gender divisions, gender roles, and socially revolutionary

---

<sup>3</sup> Bauman (1994) 187-8.

sentiment are perhaps the key examples of his innovative postmodernism. In his plays, 'real life' and discourse are inextricably interwoven. The author of *Clouds* was both admired by the master-ironist Socrates himself, and was an unwitting contributor to the philosopher's execution at the hands of the Athenians. We have little choice but to see much of the age through Aristophanes' eyes. Perhaps that is the main reason why there appears to be a postmodern window in ancient Athens, a period when traditional ideas could be subverted, where words threatened to take over conventional beliefs, and where a critical stance was taken towards knowledge and scientific ideas. If so, this suggests a new, critical formulation of the notion that there is nothing new under the sun: what is new is what has yet to be said.

**Index of Themes**

Note: Numbers in **bold** refer to chapters or chapter sections.

The suffix **n** refers to the block of footnotes on the specified page.

Anxiety	66, 82, 212, 215, 228
Ambivalence	31, 53, 55, 66, 85, 169, 210, 231
Antiquatedness	19, 40, 42, 77, 209, 226, 255
Articulation, written	33, 42-3, <b>3.1</b> , <b>3.3</b> , 92, 103, 105, 149, 183, 186, 189, 204, 207, 235
Artificiality	35, 63, 91, 108
Boredom	54-5, 147, 170
Brightness	25-6
Change, social	10-11, 32, <b>2</b> , 66-7, 164, 168, 173, 207, 210, 218, 224, 234, 258, 261
Commercialism	37, 58, 66, 72, 78, 161-2, 168
Commodification	37, 47, 52, 61, 77
Competitiveness	29, 38-9, 65, 92, 103, 116, 124-6, 173, 199
Complexity	12, 20, 31, 107, 169
Conservatism	43, 115, 143, 208, 214, 228, 236
Constructionism	68, 71, 92
Control	34-5, 58-9, 66, 93, 95
Convention	19, 62, 119, 129
Cosmopolitanism	226
Creativity	32, 45
Crisis	38, 41, 48, 195, 220, 227, 240
Danger	30, 49, 95, 141, 155, 209, 212, 226, 231
Disorientation	32, 165, 212
Education	10, 53, 58, 81, 96, 129, 146, 151, 157, 257-8
Efficacy	176-7, 188, 194, 198, 219
Elaboration	102, 109, 120, 122, 137, 161, 169
Elitism	198, 230, 235, 253
Empiricism	107, <b>6.4</b> , 198

Entertainment	126, 140, 152, 165, 167, 172, 192, 200, 225
Escapism	103, 226
Excitement	10, 65, 93, 124, 212
Exoticism	181, 7.5
Experimentation	45, 69, 102, 115, 143, 155
Expertise	43, 57, 197, 204
Fashion	18, 146, 161, 253
Foreignness ~ ξενία	2.4, 90-1, 172-3, 178, 180-2, 6.2, 220, 235, 224, 243, 252
Foresight	58, 177, 217
Future	20, 58, 71, 95, 178
History	30, 89
Identity	11, 67
Imitation	123, 127, 139
Improvisation	147, 157, 170
Individualism	32, 61, 83, 145, 161, 172, 200, 208, 220, 230
Initiative, private	61, 129, 216, 220, 262
Intellectualism	71, 82, 107, 113, 138, 189, 208-9, 229, 234, 236
Inventions	34, 43, 88, 123, 127-8, 149, 166, 175-6, 183, 213, 244-5
Irony	28, 233, 227
Irrationalism	176, 225, 232
Jargon	105, 196
Leisure ~ σχολή	54, 55n
Literacy	75, 3.3, 88-9, 96, 205, 207-8, 251, 257
Loss	32, 88, 226, 228
Luxuries	50-1, 98,
Madness	49, 56, 200, 225
Materialism	36, 2.1, 64-5, 231
Memory	11, 86, 145
Modernism	20, 37, 51, 131, 143, 159, 164, 166, 205, 223-4, 262
Mourning	32
Neologism	73, 79, 197

Novelty, radical	19, 26, 89, 171, 206-7
Novelty, spurious	19, 73, 79, 92, 200-1
Obscurity	13n, 36, 176
Obsolescence	33, 86, 209
Openness	52, 84, 213, 233
Opportunism	201, 218-9, 235
Optimism	59, 98, 190-1, 199, 202
Originality	73-4, 89, 103-4, 140, 142, 169, 173, 200
Otherness	13, 19
Paradigm (shift)	20, 205
Persuasion ~ πειθώ	78, 90, 184, 199
Play	54-6, 85, 96
Postmodernity	20, 54, 102, 9
Power	35, 51
Practicality	74, 105, 108, 179-80, 194, 212, 228, 251, 7.3
Presentation	29-30, 71, 74, 91-3, 106, 178, 198, 200
Professionalism	43-4, 57, 135, 151, 159-61, 196
Progress	12-13, 91, 119, 190, 247
Proliferation	57, 62, 169, 188, 226, 235
Rationalism	28, 118, 176, 183, 202, 7.2, 234, 247
Reaction	67, 91, 96, 102, 247
Recombination	64, 87, 93, 141, 143
Reductionism	58, 185-7, 204
Reflexiveness	12, 28
Relativism	17, 33, 78, 92
Renewal	18, 32, 66-7, 229, 238
Repetition	86, 206-7
Revolution	100, 143
Rhetoric	19, 35, 3.5, 134, 184, 198, 200, 234
Science	104, 107, 118, 128, 151, 203, 248
Secularism	115, 122, 126, 193, 210, 217, 232

Self-consciousness	10, 27, 68-9, 105, 116, 118, 137, 149
Sophists	33, 36, 58, 60, 69, 78, 82-3, 92, 150n, 171, 198, 210, 212, 234
Specialisation	58, 136, 172, 181, 198
Speculation	178, 187-8
Standardisation	250, 259
Success	49, 52, 66, 78, 124, 131, 203, 214, 216, 220, 222, 228
Time	16, 69, 190
Tradition	8-9, 117, 122, 137, 158, 161, 191, 218, 231
Turbulence	15, 35, 45, 66-7, 212, 232
Unconventionality	132, 134, 147, 158-9, 232
Urbanisation	46, 251
Usefulness	88, 91
Variety	17, 50, 2.5, 88, 116, 157
Virtuosity	79, 163, 171
Women	41, 48, 100-1, 110, 112, 129n, 152, 225
Youth	48-9, 55-6, 80, 172, 230

**Greek words**

ἄγών	40-1, 70, 76, 80-1, 106n, 125, 126n
ἀκρίβεια	96, 4.7, 134-5
ἀνάγκη	38-9, 176, 181
ἀπραγμοσύνη	46, 172
ἄργός	54, 56, 70
ἄρχαῖος	19, 46, 63-4, 77, 87, 91, 120, 255, 262
ἀρχή	13, 64, 190, 262
ἀτοπία	70, 71, 77, 78, 197
αὔξεις	13n, 123



ἐπίδοσις	13n, 44, 95
εὐπορία	38, 52
θαῦμα	31, 35, 61, 69, 94, 121, 122
καινός	1.4, 61, 80, 94, 142, 170, 184, 209, 212, 223, 230
καινοτομία	36, 55, 63, 135, 262
καιρός	96, 107, 155, 166, 214
κινεῖν	11-12, 214
Κρόνος	143, 207
ληρεῖν	56, 78, 197
λόγος	2, 149, 157
μηχανή	42, 53
νέος	19, 1.4, 48-9, 55-6
νόμος	2.7, 118, 123, 136, 170, 226, 247
νῦν	20, 61, 162, 187
παλαιός	19, 62, 91, 141, 143, 148, 165
παρανομία	136, 165, 171
πάτριος	11, 46, 214, 239
ποικιλία	2.5, 126, 140, 161, 170
πράγματα	24n, 46
σοφία	10, 54, 78, 142, 150, 204, 222
στάσις	38, 45, 70
τέχνη	12, 25, 35, 2.6, 79, 95, 101, 105, 107, 112, 118, 127, 133, 135, 5.3, 204n
τόλμα	70, 136
τρυφή	55, 225
τυχή	35, 2.6, 188
ὑβρις	35, 60, 214
ὑπόθεσις	105, 185
φθόνος	39n, 60, 141-2
ψυχαγωγία	78, 94, 126

## Abbreviations &amp; Editions

- Avezzù      Avezzù, G. (1982) *Alcidamas: Orazioni e frammenti* (BIFG Supp. 6). Rome.  
 CAH 5<sup>2</sup>      D.M. Lewis et al. (1992) *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd edn., Vol. 5. *The Fifth Century B.C.* Cambridge.
- Chantraine    P. Chantraine (1968) *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*. Paris.  
 DK          H. Diels and W. Kranz, eds. (1952) *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. 6th edn. Berlin.
- FGrH        F. Jacoby, ed. (1954) *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Leiden.  
 FHG        C. Müller, ed. (1833-1938) *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*. 5 vols. Paris.  
 Hilgard     A. Hilgard, ed. (1883) *Grammatici Graeci*. Leipzig. Reprinted 1965, Hildesheim.  
 HCT        A.W. Gomme, A. Andrewes, and K.J. Dover (1945-81) *A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*. Oxford.
- IG          *Inscriptiones Graecae*.  
 KA        R. Kassel and C.F. Austin, eds. (1983-) *Poetae Comici Graeci*. Berlin and New York.
- KF        J.-H. Kühn and U. Fleischer (1986-9) *Index Hippocraticus*. Göttingen.  
 M        H. Maehler, ed. (1989) *Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis*. Vol.2. Leipzig.  
 ML        R. Meiggs and D. Lewis, eds. (1969) *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions*. Oxford.
- Nauck      A. Nauck (1889) *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*. Leipzig.  
 OCD<sup>3</sup>      S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, eds. (1997) *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd edn. Oxford.
- OED        *Oxford English Dictionary*  
 PMG        D.L. Page, ed. (1962) *Poetae Melici Graeci*. Oxford.  
 RE        *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Stuttgart, 1893-1970; Munich, 1972- .
- SM        B. Snell and H. Maehler, eds. (1970) *Bacchylidis Carmina cum Fragmentis*. Leipzig.
- Wehrli     F. Wehrli, ed. (1957) *Die Schule des Aristoteles*. Basle.  
 West      M.L. West, ed. (1989) *Iambi et Elegi Graeci*. 2nd edition. Oxford.

## Works Cited

- Ackrill, J.L. (1981). *Aristotle the Philosopher*. Oxford.
- Allen, P.M. (1989) 'Modelling innovation and change'. In van der Leeuw and Torrence, eds. (1989) 258-280.
- Allen, W.S. (1974) *Vox Graeca*. 2nd edn. Cambridge.
- Barber, E.W. (1994) *Women's Work: The First 20,000 Years: Women, Cloth and Society in Early Times*. New York and London.
- Barker, A.D. (1984) *Greek Musical Writings*. Vol. 1: *The Musician and His Art*. Cambridge.
- Barnett, H.G. (1953) *Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change*. New York.
- Barthes, R. (1957) 'The World of Wrestling'. In *Mythologies*, a selection of essays translated from the French by A. Lavers (1972). London.
- Baudrillard, J. (1990) *Revenge of the Crystal*. London and Concord, Mass.
- Bauman, Z. (1994) 'Is there a Post-Modern Sociology?' In Seidman, ed. (1994) 187-204.
- Benjamin, A., ed. (1988) *Post-Structuralist Classics*. London and New York.
- Bertens, H. (1995) *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History*. London and New York.
- Billig, M. (1996) *Arguing and Thinking*. 2nd edn. Cambridge.
- Boegehold, A. (1972) 'The Establishment of a Central Archive at Athens'. *AJA* 76 (1972) 23-30.  
 (1996) 'Resistance to Change in the Law at Athens'. In Ober and Hedrick, eds. (1996) 203-214.
- Boisacq, E. (1923) *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*. 2nd edn. Heidelberg and Paris.
- Bowie, A.M. (1993) *Aristophanes: Myth, Ritual and Comedy*. Cambridge.
- Bradeen, D.W. and M.F. McGregor (1973) *Studies in Fifth-century Attic Epigraphy*. Oklahoma.
- Brancacci, A. (1988) 'Alcidamante e PHibeh 13 "De Musica"'. In Brancacci et al., *Aristoxenica, Menandrea, Fragmenta Philosophica* (Accad. Toscana, Studi xci) 61-84. Florence.

- Breasted, J.H. (1930) *The Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus*, Vol. I. Chicago.
- Browning, R. (1969) *Medieval and Modern Greek*. London.
- Buck, C.D. (1933) *Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*. Chicago.  
(1955) *The Greek Dialects*. Chicago.
- Burian, P. (1997) 'Myth into *muthos*: the shaping of tragic plot'. In Easterling, ed. (1997) 178-208.
- Burkert, W. (1972) *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*. Tr. E. Minar. Cambridge, Mass.  
(1983) *Homo Necans*. Tr. P. Bing. Berkeley and Los Angeles.  
(1985) *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*. Tr. J. Raffan. Oxford.  
(1992) *The Orientalizing Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass.
- Burr, V. (1995) *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London and New York.
- Bury, J.B. (1932) *The Idea of Progress*. London.
- Buttmann, P. (1846). *Lexilogus*. Tr. and ed. J.R. Fishlake. 3rd edn. London.
- Buxton, R.G.A. (1982) *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy. A Study of Peitho*. Cambridge.
- Carter, L.B. (1986) *The Quiet Athenian*. Oxford.
- Cartledge, P. (1988) 'Yes, Spartan Kings were Heroized'. *LCM* 13.3 (1988) 43-5.  
(1990a) *Aristophanes and his Theatre of the Absurd*. Bristol.  
(1990b) 'Fowl play: a curious lawsuit in classical Athens'. In Cartledge, Millett and Todd, eds. (1990).  
(1993) *The Greeks. A Portrait of Self and Others*. Oxford.  
(1995) "'We are all Greeks"? Ancient (especially Herodotean) and Modern Contestations of Hellenism'. *BICS* 40 (1995) 75-82.  
(1997) "'Deep plays": theatre as process in Greek civic life'. In Easterling, ed. (1997) 3-35.
- Cartledge, P., P. Millett and S. Todd, eds. (1990) *Nomos: Essays in Athenian Law, Politics and Society*. Cambridge.
- Carey, C. (1994) 'Comic Ridicule and Democracy'. In Hornblower and Osborne, eds. (1994) 69-83.
- Clinton, K. (1994) 'The Epidauria and the arrival of Asclepius in Athens'. In Hägg, ed. (1994) 17-34.
- Cole, T. (1991) *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece*. Baltimore.
- Connor, W.R. (1971) *The New Politicians of Fifth-Century Athens*. Princeton.  
(1977) 'A post-modernist Thucydides'. *CJ* 72 (1977) 289-98.  
(1991) 'The Other 399: Religion and the Trial of Socrates'. *BICS Suppl.* 58 (1991) 49-56.
- Conrad, L.I. et al. (1995). *The Western Medical Tradition, 800 B.C.-A.D.1800*. Cambridge.
- Cooper, F.A. (1968) 'The Temple of Apollo at Bassae: new observations on its plan and orientation'. *AJA* 72 (1968) 103-111.
- Coulmas, F. (1996) *Writing Systems*. Oxford.
- Crystal, D. (1987) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge.
- Cunliffe, R.J. (1963) *A Lexicon of the Homeric Dialect*. 2nd edn. Oklahoma.
- D'Angour, A.J. (1997) 'How the Dithyramb got its shape'. *CQ* 47 (1997) 331-351.  
(1998) 'Ad Unguem'. *AJP* (forthcoming).
- Davidson, J. (1997) *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens*. London.
- Davies, J.K. (1978) *Democracy and Classical Greece*. London.
- Davison, J.A. (1958) 'Notes on the Panathenaea'. *JHS* 78 (1958) 23-41.
- De Romilly, J. (1992) *The Great Sophists in Periclean Athens*. Tr. J. Lloyd. Oxford.
- Dean-Jones, L.A. (1995) *Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science*. Oxford.
- Delattre, D. (1989) 'Philodème: *De la Musique* livre IV colonnes 40\* à 109\*'. *Cron. Erc.* 19 (1989) 49 -143.
- Den Boer, W.G. (1977) *Progress in the Greece of Thucydides*. Amsterdam.
- Denniston, J.D. (1927) 'Technical Terms in Aristophanes'. *CQ* 21 (1927) 113-120.
- Deubner, L. (1932) *Attische Feste*. Berlin.
- Devine, A.M. and L.D. Stephens (1993) 'Evidence from Experimental Psychology for the Rhythm and Metre of Greek Verse'. *TAPA* 123 (1993) 379-403.  
(1994) *The Prosody of Greek Speech*. New York and Oxford.
- Dihle, A. (1977) 'Das Satyrspiel "Sisyphos"'. *Hermes* 105 (1977) 28-42.
- Dodds, E.R. (1951) *The Greeks and the Irrational*. Berkeley and Los Angeles.  
(1959) *Plato: Gorgias*. Oxford.  
(1973) *The Ancient Concept of Progress and other Essays*. Oxford.

- (1973a) 'The Ancient Concept of Progress'. Ch. 1 in Dodds (1973) 1-25.  
 (1973b) 'The *Prometheus Vincetus* and the Progress of Scholarship'. Ch. 2 in Dodds (1973) 26-44.
- Donohue, A.A. (1988) *Xoana and the origins of Greek Sculpture*. Atlanta.
- Dover, K.J. (1963) 'The poetry of Archilochus'. In *Archiloque: Entretiens Fondation Hardt* 10 (1963) 181-212. Geneva.  
 (1968a) *Aristophanes: Clouds*. Oxford.  
 (1968b) *Lysias and the Corpus Lysiacum*. Berkeley.  
 (1974) *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle*. Oxford.  
 (1975) 'The Freedom of the Intellectual in Greek Society'. *Talanta* 7 (1975) 24-54.  
 (1993) *Aristophanes: Frogs*. Oxford.  
 (1997) *The Evolution of Greek Prose Style*. Oxford.
- Dow, S. (1961) 'The Walls Inscribed with Nikomakhos' Law Code'. *Hesp.* 30 (1961) 58-73.
- Dru, A., ed. (1938). *The Journals of Søren Kierkegaard. A Selection*. Oxford.
- Easterling, P.E., ed. (1997) *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*. Cambridge.  
 (1997a) 'From repertoire to canon'. In Easterling, ed. (1997) 211-227.
- Easterling, P.E. and B.M.W. Knox, eds. (1985) *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*. Cambridge.
- Edelstein, L. (1967) *The Idea of Progress in Classical Antiquity*. Baltimore.
- Edelstein, E.J and E.L Edelstein (1945) *Asclepius*. Vols. I and II. Baltimore.
- Edwards, S. (1996) *News and Society in the Greek Polis*. London.
- Ehrenberg, V. (1951) *The People of Aristophanes*. Oxford.
- Eliade, M. (1971) *The Myth of the Eternal Return*. Princeton.
- Elsner, J., ed. (1996) *Art and Text in Roman Culture*. Cambridge.
- Engelmann, H. (1987) "'Wie nie Euphronios" (Euthymides Amphora München 2307)'. *ZPE* 68 (1987) 129-33.
- Farr, R.M. and S. Moscovici, eds. (1984) *Social Representations*. Cambridge.
- Farrar, C. (1988). *The Origins of Democratic Thinking: The Invention of Politics in Classical Athens*. Cambridge.
- Ferguson, W.S. (1932) *The Treasurers of Athena*. Cambridge, Mass.
- Ferrill, A. (1985) *The Origins of War from the Stone Age to Alexander the Great*. London
- Finley, M.I. (1977) 'Socrates and Athens'. In *Aspects of Antiquity* (2nd edn.). London.  
 (1983) *Economy and Society in Ancient Greece*. London.  
 (1986a) *The Use and Abuse of History*. 2nd edn. London.  
 (1986b) 'The Ancestral Constitution'. In (1986a) 34-59.
- Flower, M. (1988) 'Agesilaus of Sparta and the Origins of the Ruler Cult'. *CQ* 38 (1988) 123-34.
- Fontenrose, J. (1978) *The Delphic Oracle*. Berkeley.
- Forrest, W.G. (1975) 'An Athenian Generation Gap'. *YCIS* 24 (1975) 37-52.
- Foucault, M. (1967) *Madness and Civilization*. Tr. R. Howard. New York and Toronto.  
 (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Tr. A. Sheridan Smith. London.
- Fraenkel, E. (1950) *Aeschylus: Agamemnon*. 3 vols. Oxford.
- Frame, D.M., ed. and tr. (1948) *Montaigne: Complete Works*. London.
- Freeman, K. (1949) *The Pre-Socratic Philosophers*. Oxford.
- Freud, S. (1917). *Mourning and Melancholia*. Tr. J. Riviere. Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 11, 251-268. London.
- Frontisi-Ducroux, F. (1975) *Dédale: mythologie de l'artisan en Grèce ancienne*. Paris.
- Fuks, A. (1953) *The Ancestral Constitution*. London.
- Furley, W. (1996) *Andokides and the Herms: A Study of Crisis in fifth-century Athenian Religion*. (BICS, Suppl. 65). London
- Garland, R. (1985). *The Piraeus*. London.  
 (1992) *Introducing New Gods*. London.
- Garnsey, P., K. Hopkins and C.R. Whittaker (1983) *Trade in the Ancient Economy*. Berkeley and Los Angeles.
- Gavrilov, A (1997) 'Techniques of reading in classical antiquity'. *CQ* n.s. 47 (1997) 56-73.
- Giddens, A. (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge.
- Gingerich, O., ed. (1975) *The Nature of Scientific Discovery*. Washington.
- Goldhill, S. (1986) *Reading Greek Tragedy*. Cambridge.  
 (1997) 'Modern Critical Approaches to Greek Tragedy'. In Easterling, ed. (1997)

324-347.

- Gombrich, E.H. (1977). *Art and Illusion*. 5th edn. London.
- Goody, J. (1977) *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*. Cambridge.  
ed. (1968) *Literacy in Traditional Societies*. Cambridge.
- Goody, J. and I.P. Watt (1968). 'The Consequences of Literacy'. In Goody, ed. (1968) 27-68.
- Goold, G.P. (1960) 'Homer and the Alphabet'. *TAPA* 91 (1960) 272-91.
- Gordon, R.L., ed. (1981) *Myth, Religion and Society: Structuralist Essays by M. Detienne, L. Gernet, J.-P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Nacquet*. Cambridge and Paris.
- Gouldner, A.W. (1965) *Enter Plato: Classical Greece and the Origins of Social Theory*. New York.
- Grassl, H. (1972) 'Herodot und die griechische Schrift'. *Hermes* 100 (1972) 169-75.
- Griffiths, A.H. (1987) 'Democedes of Croton: a Greek Doctor at the Court of Darius'. In Sancisi-Weerdenburg and Kuhrt, eds. (1987) 37-51.  
(1995) 'Non-Aristocratic Elements in Archaic Poetry'. In Powell, ed. (1995) 85-103.
- van Groningen, B.A. (1953) *In the Grip of the Past*. Leiden.
- Grout, D.J. (1973) *A History of Western Music*. Rev. edn. London.
- Guthrie, W.K.C. (1965) *A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. II: The Presocratic Tradition from Parmenides to Democritus*. Cambridge.  
(1969) *A History of Greek Philosophy, Vol. III: The Greek Enlightenment*. Cambridge.
- Hägg, R., ed. (1994) *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphic Evidence*. Stockholm.
- Hall, M.B. et al. (1975) 'The Spirit of Innovation in the Sixteenth Century'. In Gingerich, ed. (1975) 309-334.
- Hallett, C.H. (1986) 'The origins of the classical style in sculpture'. *JHS* 106 (1986) 71-84.
- Hankinson, J.R. (1992) 'Doing without hypotheses: the nature of *Ancient Medicine*'. In López Férez, ed. (1992) 55-67.
- Hansen, M.H. (1983) *The Athenian Ecclesia (I). A Collection of Articles 1976-1983*. Copenhagen.  
(1987) *The Athenian Assembly in the Age of Demosthenes*. Oxford.  
(1989) *The Athenian Ecclesia (II). A Collection of Articles 1983-1989*. Copenhagen.  
(1991) *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes*. Tr. A.J. Crook. Oxford.
- Harvey, D. (1990) 'The sykophant and sykophancy: vexatious redefinition?'. In Cartledge, Millett and Todd, eds. (1990) 103-119.
- Havelock, C.M. (1995) *The Aphrodite of Knidos and her Successors*. Ann Arbor.
- Havelock, E.A. (1963) *Preface to Plato*. Cambridge, Mass.
- Haviland, W.A. (1990) *Cultural Anthropology*. Orlando.
- Hedrick, C.W., Jr. (1994) 'Writing, Reading, and Democracy'. In Hornblower and Osborne, eds. (1994) 157-174.
- Herzog, R. (1931) *Die Wunderheilungen von Epidauros*. *Philologus Suppl. Bd. 22*. Leipzig.
- Heubeck, A. (1979) *Schrift*. *Archaeologia Homerica* 3.10. Basle.
- Hexter, R. & D. Selden, eds. (1992) *Innovations of Antiquity*. London and New York.
- Hirschmann, A.O. (1991) *The Rhetoric of Reaction: Futility, Perversity, Jeopardy*. Cambridge, Mass.
- Hornblower, S. (1983) *The Greek World 479-323 B.C.* London and New York.  
(1987) *Thucydides*. London.  
(1991) *A Commentary on Thucydides*. Vol.1. Oxford.  
(1994) *Greek Historiography*. Oxford.  
(1996) *A Commentary on Thucydides*. Vol. 2. Oxford.
- Hornblower, S. and R. Osborne, eds. (1994) *Ritual, Finance, Politics: Democratic Accounts Rendered to D.M. Lewis*. Oxford.
- Hughes, R. (1980) *The Shock of the New*. London.
- Humphreys, S.C. (1978) *Anthropology and the Greeks*. London and Boston.
- Immerwahr, H.R. (1964) 'Book Rolls on Attic Vases' in C. Henderson Jr., ed., *Classical, Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Honour of B.L. Ullman* (Rome 1964) Vol. 1, 17-48.  
(1990) *Attic Script: A Survey*. Oxford.
- Janko, R. (1987) *Aristotle, Poetics*. Indianapolis.  
(1992) *The Iliad: A Commentary*. Vol. 4, Bks 13-16. Cambridge.  
(1997) 'The Physicist as Hierophant: Aristophanes, Socrates and the Authorship of the Derveni Papyrus'. *ZPE* 118 (1997) 61-94.
- Janssen, T.H. (1989) *Timotheus, Persae: A Commentary*. Amsterdam.
- Jex-Blake, K. and E. Sellers (1896) *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art*. London.

- Jones, A.H.M. (1957) *Athenian Democracy*. London.
- Jones, C.P. (1987) 'Stigma: tattooing and branding in Graeco-Roman antiquity'. *JRS* 77 (1987) 139-155.
- Jones, W.H.S. (1923-31). *Hippocrates*, Loeb edn., 4 vols. London  
(1947) *The Medical Writings of Anonymus Londinensis*. Cambridge.
- Jouanna, J. (1990) *De l'ancienne médecine*. Paris.  
(1992) *Hippocrate*. Paris.
- Kahn, C.H. (1979) *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*. Cambridge.
- Kennedy, G. (1963) *The Art of Persuasion in Greece*. Princeton.
- Kerferd, G.B. (1981) *The Sophistic Movement*. Cambridge.
- Kitto, H.D.F. (1966). *Greek Tragedy: A Literary Study*. 3rd edn. London.
- Klein, M. (1928) 'Early stages of the Oedipus conflict'. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, Vol. 10 (1928) 167-80.  
(1957) *Envy and Gratitude: A Study of Unconscious Sources*. London.
- Kleingünther, A. (1933) Πρώτος Εὐρητής. *Philologus*, Suppl. 26, 1. Leipzig.
- Knox, B.M.W. (1985) 'Books and readers in the Greek world'. Ch. 1 in Easterling and Knox, eds. (1985) Vol. 1, 1-16.
- Kolni-Balozky, J. (1938) *Progressive Russian Grammar*. London.
- Kuhn, T.S. (1970) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 2nd edn. Chicago.
- Lalonde, G.V. et al., eds. (1991) *The Athenian Agora XIX: Inscriptions: Horoi, Poletai Records, Leases of Public Lands*. Princeton.
- Larfeld, W. (1914) *Griechische Epigraphik*. 3rd. edn. Munich.
- Lasserre, F. (1958) *Archiloque*. Budé edn. Paris.
- van der Leeuw, S.E. and R. Torrence, eds. (1989) *What's New? A Closer Look at the Process of Innovation*. London.
- Lewis, D.M. (1955) 'Notes on Inscriptions 2. No. 23. Who was Lysistrata?'. *BSA* 50 (1955) 1-12.
- Lintott, A. (1982) *Violence, Civil Strife and Revolution in the Classical City, 750-330 B.C.* London.
- Littlewood, A.R., ed. (1995) *Originality in Byzantine Literature, Art, and Music*. Oxford.
- Littré, E. (1839-61). *Oeuvres complètes d'Hippocrate*. Paris.
- Llewelyn, J. (1988) 'On the saying that philosophy begins in *thaumazein*'. In Benjamin, ed. (1988) 173-191.
- Lloyd, G.E.R. (1966) *Polarity & Analogy*. Cambridge.  
(1968). *Aristotle: the Growth and Structure of his Thought*. Cambridge.  
(1979) *Reason, Magic and Experience*. Cambridge.  
(1987) *The Revolutions of Wisdom*. Berkeley.  
(1991) *Methods & Problems in Greek Science*. Cambridge.
- Lloyd-Jones, H. (1983) *The Justice of Zeus*. 2nd edn. Berkeley and Los Angeles.
- Longrigg, J. (1993) *Greek Rational Medicine*. London.
- López Férez, J.A., ed. (1992) *Tratados Hipocráticos (Estudios acerca de su contenido, forma e influencia)*. Acts of the 7th International Hippocratic Colloquium. Paris.
- Loraux, N. (1986) *The Invention of Athens*. Harvard.
- Lord, C. (1982) *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle*. Ithaca.
- Lucas, D.W. (1968) *Aristotle: Poetics*. Oxford.
- Lytard, J.-F. (1984) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis.
- MacDowell, D.M., ed. (1962) *Andokides: On the Mysteries*. Oxford.  
(1971) *Aristophanes: Wasps*. Oxford.
- Maehler, H. (1997) *Die Lieder des Bakchylides*. Leiden.
- Majno, G. (1991) *The Healing Hand: Man and Wound in the Ancient World*. Cambridge, Mass.
- Manetti, D. (1990) 'Doxographical Deformation of Medical Tradition in the Report of the Anonymus Londinensis on Philolaus'. *ZPE* 83 (1990) 219-233.
- Marianetti, M.C. (1992) *Religion and Politics in Aristophanes' Clouds*. Hildesheim.
- Marrou, H.I. (1956) *A History of Education in Antiquity*. London.
- McGlade, J. and J.M. McGlade (1989) 'Modelling the innovative component of social change'. In van der Leeuw and Torrence, eds. (1989) 281-299.
- Meier, C. (1990) *The Greek Discovery of Politics*. Tr. D. McLintock. Harvard.
- Métraux, G.P. (1995) *Sculptors and Physicians in Fifth-Century Greece: A Preliminary Study*. Montreal.
- Mikalson, J.D. (1983) *Greek Popular Religion*. Chapel Hill.

- Morales, H. (1996) 'The torturer's apprentice: Parrhasius and the limits of art'. In Elsner, ed. (1996) 182-209.
- Morris, S. (1991) *Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art*. Princeton.
- Moscovici, S. (1984) 'The phenomenon of social representations' in Farr and Moscovici, eds. (1984) 3-69.
- Most, G.W. (1997) 'The fire next time. Cosmology, allegoresis, and salvation in the Derveni Papyrus'. *JHS* 117 (1997) 117-135.
- Murray, O., ed. (1990) *Symptica*. Oxford.
- Newiger, H.-J. (1996) 'War and Peace in the Comedy of Aristophanes' in Segal, ed. (1996) 143-161.
- Nilsson, M.P. (1948) *Greek Piety*. Tr. H.J. Rose. Oxford.
- Noth, M. (1960) *The History of Israel*. 2nd edn. London.
- Nutton, V. (1995) 'Medicine in the Greek World, 800-50 B.C.'. In Conrad et al. (1995) 11-38.
- Ober, J. (1989) *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*. Princeton.
- Ober, J. and C. Hedrick, eds. (1996) *Dēmokratia: A Conversation on Democracies, Ancient and Modern*. Princeton.
- O'Connell, R.L. (1989) *Of Arms and Men: A History of War, Weapons and Aggression*. Oxford.
- O'Connor, B.B. (1995) *Healing Traditions: Alternative Medicine and the Health Professions*. Philadelphia.
- Osborne, R. (1985) *Demos: the Discovery of Classical Attika*. Cambridge.
- Ostwald, M.P. (1969) *Nomos and the Beginnings of the Athenian Democracy*. Oxford.  
(1986) *From Popular Sovereignty to the Sovereignty of Law: Law, Society and Politics in Fifth-Century Athens*. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London.
- O'Sullivan, N. (1992) *Alcidamas, Aristophanes, and the Beginnings of Greek Stylistic Theory*. Stuttgart.
- Padel, R. (1990) 'Making Space Speak'. In Winkler and Zeitlin, eds. (1990) 336-365.
- Parker, R.C.T. (1983) *Miasma*. Oxford.  
(1996) *Athenian Religion: A History*. Oxford.
- Parry, A.M. (1981) *Logos and Ergon in Thucydides*. (Diss. Harvard, 1957). New York.
- Pedley, J.G. (1992) *Greek Art and Archaeology*. London.
- Pfeiffer, R. (1968) *History of Classical Scholarship*. Vol. 1. Oxford.
- Phillips, E.D. 1987. *Aspects of Greek Medicine*, Philadelphia and London.
- Piaget, J. (1951) *Play, Dreams, and Imitation in Childhood*. New York.
- Pickard-Cambridge, A.W. (1962) *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy*. 2nd. edn., rev. T.B.L. Webster. Oxford.
- Pinault, J.R. (1992) *Hippocratic Lives and Legends*. Leiden.
- Pollitt, J.J. (1964) 'Professional Art Criticism in Ancient Greece'. *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 64 (1964) 317-30.  
(1972) *Art and Experience in Classical Greece*. Cambridge.  
(1974) *The Ancient View of Greek Art*. New Haven and London.  
(1990) *The Art of Greece: Sources and Documents*. Cambridge.
- Powell, A. (1995) *The Greek World*. London and New York.
- Privitera, G.A. (1965) *Laso di Ermione*. Rome.
- Rasmussen, T. and N. Spivey, eds. (1991) *Looking at Greek Vases*. Cambridge.
- Raubitschek, A.E. (1941) 'The Heroes of Phyle'. *Hesp.* 10 (1941) 284-95.
- Raven, J.E. (1951) 'Polyclitus and Pythagoreanism'. *CQ* 45 (1951) 147-52.
- Rhodes, P.J. (1981) *A Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenaion Politia*. Oxford.
- Robertson, C.M. (1981) *A Shorter History of Greek Art*. Cambridge.
- Rocco, C. (1997) *Tragedy and Enlightenment: Athenian Political Thought and the Dilemmas of Modernity*. Berkeley and Los Angeles.
- Rogers, E.M. (1995) *Diffusion of Innovations*. 4th edn. New York.
- Rogers, E.M. and F.F. Shoemaker (1971) *Communication and Innovations: A Cross-Cultural Approach*. New York.
- Rossi, L.E. (1971) 'I generi letterari e le loro leggi scritte e non scritte nelle letterature classiche'. *BICS* 18 (1971) 69-94.
- Ruffell, I. (1996) 'The World Turned Upside Down: Utopia and Utopianism in the Comic Fragments'. London Conference on Greek Comedy, July 1996. Publ. forthcoming.
- Saïd, S. (1996) 'The Assemblywomen: Women, Economy, and Politics'. In Segal, ed. (1996) 282-313.

- Sallares, R. (1991) *The Ecology of the Ancient Greek World*. Ithaca.
- Sancisi-Weerdenburg, H. and A. Kuhrt, eds. (1987) *Achaemenid History*. Vol 2. Leiden.
- Seaford, R.A. (1982) 'The date of Euripides' *Cyclops*'. *JHS* 102 (1982) 161-172.  
(1996) *Euripides: Bacchae*. Warminster.
- Seager, R.J. and C.J. Tuplin (1980) 'The Freedom of the Greeks of Asia'. *JHS* 100 (1980) 141-54.
- Segal, E., ed. (1996) *Oxford Readings in Aristophanes*. Oxford.
- Seidman, S. ed. (1994) *The Postmodern Turn*. Cambridge.
- Shanks, M. (1996) *Classical Archaeology of Greece*. London and New York.
- Sigerist, H.E. (1951-61) *A History of Medicine*. 2 vols. Oxford.
- Small, J.P. (1997) *Wax Tablets of the Mind*. London and New York.
- Snell, B. (1953) *The Discovery of the Mind*. Tr. T.G. Rosenmeyer. Oxford.
- Snooks, G.D. (1996) *The Dynamic Society: Exploring the Sources of Global Change*. London and New York.
- Solmsen, F. (1975). *Intellectual Experiments of the Greek Enlightenment*. Princeton.
- Sommerstein, A.H., ed.(1996) *Aristophanes: Frogs*. Warminster
- Spivey, N. (1995) *Understanding Greek Sculpture*. London.
- Spratt, D.A. (1989) 'Innovation theory made plain'. In van der Leeuw and Torrence, eds. (1989) 245-257.
- Ste. Croix, G.E.M. de (1972) *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*. London & Ithaca.  
(1981) *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World*. London & Ithaca.  
(1996) *The Political Outlook of Aristophanes*. Abridged from orig.,  
App. 29 in Ste. Croix (1972). In Segal, ed. (1996) 42-64.
- Stewart, A.F. (1978) 'The Canon of Polykleitos: a question of evidence'. *JHS* 98 (1978) 122-131.  
(1990) *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration*. New Haven.
- Stocks, J.L. (1936) 'Skhole'. *CQ* 30 (1936) 177-87.
- Stone, I.F. (1989) *The Trial of Socrates*. New York.
- van Straten, F.T. (1981) 'Gifts for the Gods'. In Versnel, ed. (1981) 65-151.
- Strauss, B.S. (1986) *Athens after the Peloponnesian War*. London.
- Svenbro, J. (1993) *Phrasikleia: An Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece*. Cornell.
- Taplin, O. (1993) *Comic Angels*. Oxford.  
(1996) 'Fifth-Century Tragedy and Comedy: a *Synkrisis*'. *JHS* 106 (1986) 163-74. In Segal, ed. (1996) 9-28.
- Thomas, R. (1989) *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens*. Cambridge.  
(1992) *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge.  
(1994) 'Law and the Lawgiver in the Athenian Democracy'. In Hornblower and Osborne, eds. (1994) 119-134.  
(1995) 'Written in Stone?'. *BICS* 40, n.s. 2 (1995) 59-74.
- Thivel, A. (1981) *Cnide et Cos?* Paris.
- Threatte, L. (1980) *The grammar of Attic inscriptions*, Vol. 1. Berlin and New York.
- Trendall, A.D. (1991) 'Farce and tragedy in South Italian vase-painting'. In Rasmussen and Spivey, eds. (1991) 151-82.
- Usener, H. (1870) 'Lectiones Graecae'. *Rh. Mus.* 25 (1870) 575-616.
- Vernant, J.-P. (1980) *Myth and Society in Ancient Greece*. New York.  
(1983) *Myth and Thought among the Greeks*. London.
- Versnel, H.S., ed. (1981) *Faith, Hope and Worship*. Leiden.
- Vidal-Nacquet, P. (1981) 'The Black Hunter and the origin of the Athenian *ephebeia*'. In Gordon, ed. (1981) 147-162.
- Walcot, P. (1978) *Envy and the Greeks: A Study of Human Behaviour*. Warminster.
- Waldrop, M.M. (1993) *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos*. London and New York.
- Webster, T.B.L. (1939) *Greek Art and Literature*. Oxford.
- West, M.L. (1966) *Hesiod: Theogony*. Oxford.  
(1980) 'Iambics in Simonides, Bacchylides and Pindar'. *ZPE* 37 (1980) 137-55.  
(1981) 'The Singing of Homer and the Modes of Early Greek Music'. *JHS* 101 (1981) 113-29.  
(1992) *Ancient Greek Music*. Oxford.
- Williams, R. (1961) *Culture and Society 1780-1950*. London.
- Winkler, J.J. and F.I. Zeitlin, eds. (1990) *Nothing to do with Dionysos?* Princeton.



- Winnington-Ingram, R.P. (1936) *Mode in Ancient Greek Music*. Cambridge.  
Wittgenstein, L. (1976) *Philosophical Investigations*. Tr. G.E.M. Anscombe. Oxford.  
Woodford, S. (1976) 'Herakles Alexikakos reviewed'. *AJA* 80 (1976) 291-94.  
Wycherley, R.E. (1962) *How the Greeks built Cities*. 2nd edn. London.  
(1978) *The Stones of Athens*. Princeton  
Zimmermann, B. (1992a) *Dithyrambos: Geschichte einer Gattung*. Göttingen.  
(1992b) 'Hippokratisches in den Komödien des Aristophanes'. In López Férez,  
ed. (1992) 513-525.

