# 1 The Art of Transformation

## 1. Art and Society

We all expect that is it possible to recognize the age to which a work of art belongs. We expect those who know anything about painting to be able to tell the difference between a seventeenth-century portrait and an eighteenth-century portrait, between Victorian painting and painting executed in the 1920s. We expect them to do this not on the basis of the fashions worn by any people who are depicted, or of other items of period material culture, but because of something intrinsic to the painting. So we also expect them to be able to recognize the place of origin or of the work of an artist, to be able to distinguish the French postimpressionist work of Vuillard from the English postimpressionist work of Sickert.

If we ask what are the differences between one portrait and another, or one landscape painting and another, the answer normally given is about the way they are painted. Different painters use a different range of colors, different strokes with different brushes. They also have different compositional preferences. We might even acknowledge that people brought up in one country see the world in different ways from those brought up in another, and that different things catch the eye of different painters.

When it comes to the study of the painted pottery produced in Athens in the sixth and fifth centuries BC, the difference between the painted pottery of one generation and that of the succeeding generation has been accounted for almost entirely in terms of the graphic practices and preferences of different painters (**1.1**, **1.2**), associating these graphic practices either with those on other pots signed by a painter—as here with pots signed by Phintias and Euphronios—or on other pots after which a particular artist's hand has been named. That was the way in which Sir John Beazley told his classic tale of *The Development of Attic Black-Figure* (1951), and it has remained the way the story of both black-figure and red-figure pottery has been told (see chapter 2, section 1).

This way of describing differences between art of different periods is not limited to painting. The same is true of sculpture. It was by close attention to the ways in which the same parts of the body were differently presented that Gisela Richter sought to distinguish from one another archaic *kouroi* (naked youths; 1.13–1.14) and *korai* (maidens; 1.11 and 1.12). The fullest modern study of the whole history of Greek sculpture organizes itself in

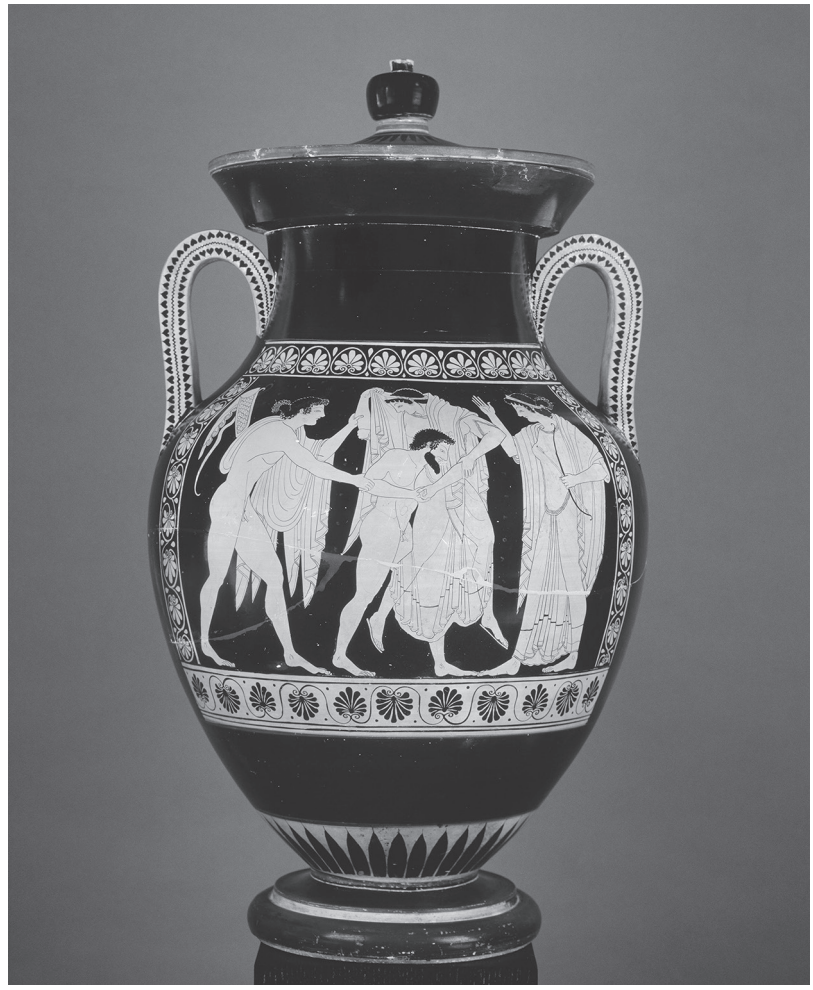

**Figure 1.1**. Red-figure type A amphora, height 0.60 m without lid, attributed to Phintias, ca. 510–500 (for the reverse see 3.5). Found at Vulci. *ARV* 23.1. Louvre G42. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Les frères Chuzeville.

**Figure 1.2**. Red-figure calyx krater, height 0.348 m, attributed to Euphronios, ca. 510–500 (for the reverse see 3.6). Found at Capua. *ARV* 13.1. Berlin 2180. © bpk / Antikensammlung , Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Johannes Laurentius.

successive volumes dealing with *The Archaic Style*, *The Severe Style*, *Fifth-Century Styles*, and so forth.[1] More importantly, it is in terms of stylistic change that the "Greek revolution" in sculpture has been described, the revolution that saw the formal and frontal *kouros*, who holds his body to attention, disappear from the sculptor's repertoire after 150 years to be replaced by supple bodies that refuse frontality and engage in definitive action, or at least gesture toward it.

There are good reasons why the story of change has been told in this way. Virtually no extant Greek sculptures and only a small percentage of Greek pots bear an artist's signature (see 1.9, 2.1, 2.7, 3.3–4, 3.10, 4.5, 4.7 and plate 15, 4.9–11, 4.15, 4.20–21, 5.5–6 and plate 21, 9.1, 9.4–5); it is only through differences in the detailed presentation of the body, and in the case of pottery differences in graphic technique, that the works of different workshops in sculpture and even different individuals, in the case of painted pottery, can be distinguished with any confidence.[2]

But describing how the painting and sculpture of one period differs from that of a preceding or following period in this way should not be mistaken for offering an account of the change that has occurred. Not only do such descriptions not explain what makes the art of one period or place different from the art of another place or period or reveal why art changes over time, such descriptions frequently fail even to make the observations most relevant to an explanation.

When Michael Baxandall, writing in 1972 about the Italian Renaissance, coined the term "period eye," he analyzed its workings in terms of, among other things, "the body and its language," "figure patterns," "the value of colours," "volumes," "intervals and proportions," and "the moral eye."[3] Baxandall was concerned in his essay "to show how the *style* of pictures is proper material of social history." For Baxandall, "Social facts . . . lead to the development of distinctive visual skills and habits: and these visual skills and habits become identifiable elements in the painter's style," or, as he put it in the conclusion to the work, "the forms and styles of painting respond to social circumstances."[4] But in that conclusion, he insisted also that "the forms and styles of painting may sharpen our perception of the society."[5]

[1] Richter (1970; 1968); Ridgway (1970; 1977; 1981; 1997). The same organization according to stylistic change underlies even works that claim to take an innovative approach, including Osborne (1998a), Tanner (2006).

[2] For technical aspects of sculpture, see Adam (1966); for technical aspects of painted pottery, see Noble (1966), Cohen (2006); on artists' signatures, see Viviers (2006), Osborne (2010b), Hurwit (2015). In terms of the relative status of pots and sculpture it is somewhat paradoxical that it should be pottery that lends itself to discussion in terms of artists, while sculpture does not.

[3] Baxandall (1972), vii: these are some of the subheadings of chapter 2, "The Period Eye." Baxandall's "period eye" is heavily influenced by Riegl's notion of "Kunstwollen" or "cultural drive." "Kunstwollen" is an idea that, through Panofsky's *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, which he translated, adding a "postface" (Bourdieu [1967]), lies behind Bourdieu's widely influential concept of "habitus." Bourdieu translated Baxandall's "Period Eye" chapter for *Actes de la recherché en sciences sociales* (Baxandall [1981]) prefacing it with an essay, written with Yvette Desault, "Pour un sociologie de la perception" (Bourdieu and Desault [1981]). See further Langdale (1999).

[4] Baxandall (1972), v, 151.

[5] "For the discipline to elaborate some method and language for analyzing the historical signifi-

Baxandall effectively insists that art and experience are not separate things but intimately linked, but the mutual relationship between a society and its paintings that he conjures up has the initiative firmly with the society. Paintings may do things to us, "sharpen our perception of the society," but they seem not to do anything to society. Somehow, we can learn to see from looking at paintings, but contemporary viewers learned nothing from them.

T. J. Clark, writing in 1985, made the case for painting playing a very much more active role.[6] Certainly for Clark painting is "a way of discovering what the values and excitements of the world amount to, by finding in practice what it takes to make a painting of them—what kind of play between flatness and depth, what kind of stress on the picture's limits, what sorts of insistence, ellipsis, showmanship, restraint."[7] But Clark saw that painting was more than that, insisting that "when a painting recasts or restructures its own procedures—of visualizing, resemblance, address to the viewer, scale, touch, good drawing and modeling, articulate composition— . . . it puts pressure on not just social detail but social structure."[8]

If we acknowledge, with Baxandall, that how members of a culture see, indeed how members of a particular society see, is determined by many different factors, and that this visual experience affects what images those who draw or paint or sculpt in that culture or society will make, our description of those images, and of how those images change over time, needs to reflect this. In particular, the "period eye" affects choice of subject matter, choice of material, choice of color as well as affecting what features of the human body will be shown and in what ways. There will, of course, be particular generic constraints, but our histories of sculpture and of painting, including of painted pottery, need at least to attend to changes to the subject matter of images, not simply to changes to their form.

We need to do this because, unless we do, our account of the history of art, narrowly conceived, will be impoverished, disaggregating form and color from content when these different aspects of an image are in fact closely bound up with each other in visual experience. We also need to do this because unless we do we will never understand the relationship between a culture or society and the work of creative visual artists in that culture or society on which Clark rightly insists. But, equally, if we pay attention to only some aspects of images we will form a very partial view of the culture or society in which those images were created. We will never properly know "the values and excitements" of the world in which the artist lived unless we pay attention to every aspect of the image.

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cance of different visual stylings and effects" is reckoned by Bert Smith to be "an important future challenge for the discipline" (of classical archaeology): Smith (2002), 100.

[6] For Clark's criticisms of Baxandall's "period eye," see Langdale (1999).

[7] Clark (1999), xxi (preface to the revised ed.).

[8] Clark (1999), xxiv (preface to the revised ed.). I have recast Clark's statement, which he gives in the form "it is only when . . . that it puts." Clark has been drawn to the study of art at precisely moments of political revolution (e.g., Clark [1973a; 1973b; 2013]). Some modern commentators would take contemporary art to be too heavily implicated in the art market to be able to put independent pressure on society (cf. Stallabrass [2004]).

More is at stake here than simply properly exploiting a potentially rich source of knowledge about a past society. Images are never a transcript of the world, they do not merely reflect the visual experience of the artist, providing some mirror image of the world in which the artist lived. What artists do is to offer ways of organizing (visual) experiences, and in an important sense it is their (re)organization of visual experiences that makes the world.[9] The images created by artists, using the term at its broadest, are themselves part of the visual experience of those living in that world. And not a trivial part. The images that artists create play an active role in shaping experience, and not merely a passive role in reflecting it. Drawings, paintings, and sculpture may be conservative or subversive; they can never be neutral, never stand apart from politics and economics, or from other aspects of culture. We must always ask not merely about the role of social, economic, and political changes in changing visual experience, and hence changing what artists do, but about the role of what artists do in social, political, and economic changes. As Clark indicates, there are ways in which art can put pressure on social structure. And not just social structure.

This book is concerned with the way in which artists working in Athens changed their representational choices over a period of just under a century (**1.3–4** and plate 1, **1.5–6** and plate 2). It is concerned to give an account of those changes, not merely in the sense of describing them but of explaining why they may have taken place and how they helped other major social changes to take place. I take only a very limited selection of all the images produced in Athens at this time, focusing on a subset of scenes that relate more or less directly to activities that might be observed in Athens or by Athenians and look at how what is represented changes between around 520 and around 440. My question is: what is the relation to Athenian life of the choice of depicting—particularly but not exclusively on pots—this selection of scenes of athletes (or people having sexual relations, or soldiers, or whoever) rather than some other selection of scenes of athletes? How do these changes relate to what we know of the history of athletes (or soldiers or whoever) from historical documents? How do they relate to each other? What has changed in Athenian visual experience to account for the changes in the images? What I am trying to understand is the implications of representing actions of one sort, rather than another, in one way, rather than another, for how people expected to relate to one another in real life.

The thought that art and experience were closely related in classical Greece is not a new one. J. J. Pollitt's *Art and Experience in Classical Greece* was published in the same year as Baxandall's *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy*. But the approach to understanding change in the visual arts adopted here is not one that has been previously taken by those studying ancient Greek art or by those studying ancient Greek history.[10]

[9] Cf. Spivey (2005) and the BBC series of the same name, *How Art Made the World*.

[10] A partial exception to this claim is the work of Jan Bažant, who hid a discussion of the histori-

**Figure 1.3–4**. Exterior of red-figure cup, diameter 0.34 m, attributed to the Nikosthenes Painter, ca. 510–500 (for the interior see 7.13). *ARV* 124.3 Cambridge Fitzwilliam Museum GR.1.1927. © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

**Figure 1.5–6**. Exterior of red-figure cup, diameter 0.215 m, name vase of the Painter of Cambridge 72 (close to the Codrus Painter), ca. 430 (for the interior see 11.2). *ARV* 1273.2. Cambridge Fitzwilliam Museum G72 = GR 50.1864. © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

In the next chapter I shall explain why the study of Athenian pottery has shown so little interest in how scenes, other than scenes of mythology, change over time. But in this chapter I place my own work in the context of past histories of Greek art by looking at the models of artistic change that they have offered.

## 2. Were They Pushed or Did They Jump?

Histories of Greek art variously invoke two factors to drive their story. On the one hand, individual artists themselves experiment as they come to terms with the world around them. On the other they become enchanted by others' technology, learning from visual artists who are outside their culture or their society or from the creative endeavors of those in their own society who compose not images but texts, or overwhelmed by current events that totally change their view of the world. These factors have been invoked both in the history of sculpture and in the history of painted pottery, but they have played out in different ways. I start with the history of painted pottery.

### *Supply and Demand*

When human figures begin once more to be represented on painted pottery after the relentless geometric decoration of the so-called Dark Age, they are "perfectly integrated with their geometric habitat" (**1.7**).[11] Their torsos are triangular, their arms at sharp angles, and artists display a preference for scenes in which many figures adopt the same posture. Yet scholars have insisted that "the development of a Geometric figure style was not internally generated."[12] The favored iconography is dominated by "the battlefield, the chariot file, the heroic death and its funerary celebration,"[13] but scholars have debated whether these reflect what the artists saw happening around them, or express "a mythic consciousness in which they lived and which impelled them to decorate objects at all."[14] They have asked whether "there is a willing separation from the direct experience of reality," suggesting that 'it is a medium for rejecting the world of direct sense and experience in favor of the constructed, the imagined, the interpreted."[15] The imagination invoked by scholars has traditionally been not the imagination of the artist, but of outsiders, of artists elsewhere or of poets—particular figure groups are held to have been borrowed from (for

cal interpretation of changing imagery on Athenian pottery in his short book (Bažant [1985]) and a summary article (Bažant [1987]).

[11] Langdon (2008), 1.

[12] Boardman (1998), 23.

[13] Langdon (2008), 3.

[14] Langdon (2008), 293, cites this as part of a question she attributes to Benson (1988), but which does not seem to appear in that paper.

[15] Langdon (2008), 1, 3.

example) the art of North Syria, and heroic scenes to have been inspired either by Homeric epic or by folktales.[16] Only in the most recent work has the possibility that geometric artists worked with and on the visual experience of the world in which they lived begun to be explored, as Susan Langdon has insisted "on the utility of Geometric art for ordering and unifying communities."[17]

Around 700 BC there was a revolution in painted pottery (**1.8**). Geometric patterns vanish and are replaced by curvilinear decoration that alludes strongly to the natural world. In Athenian art, human figures are portrayed on a larger scale and in a much greater variety of actions. Above all, incidents and monsters that feature in myth can be identified for the first time, as can representations of the Greek gods. What caused this revolution? The favored explanation has been exogenous: "a tide of Eastern imagery swept away the Geometric style in this period, and Eastern motifs and customs pervaded Greek society at every level," writes Richard Neer.[18]

That many of the motifs that dominate painted pottery in this period were learned from objects made in the Near East there is no doubt. But far from being overwhelmed by the arrival at the end of the eighth century of Eastern artifacts, Greeks had by 700 been long familiar with these exotic objects: "Oriental art was widely available and discreetly imitated throughout much of the Geometric period."[19] We are dealing with active and selective borrowing, not star-struck imitation. But even those who acknowledge this concentrate on form: "eastern forms are for the most part reinterpreted," "the Greek vase painter almost never copied an eastern metal vessel or its decoration directly, and the new forms were introduced piecemeal, assimilated, and rapidly adjusted to serve their new functions."[20] The question of why these forms were found attractive has hardly been asked, let alone answered.[21]

At the end of the seventh century, Athenian pottery underwent another revolution, adopting incision to replace outline drawing and soft-edged figures with silhouettes with sharp outlines and intricate internal detail (**1.9**). The story scholars tell is once more about technique and imagery being carried in from outside, both in terms of medium and in terms of place: "probably under the influence of imported eastern ivories and metal work with incised decoration," "acceptance of the black figure technique in Athens seemed to carry with it some of Corinth's obsession with" animal

[16] Cf. Langdon (2008), 4, 5, describing views to which she does not subscribe.

[17] Langdon (2008), 296.

[18] Neer (2012), 94; cf. Sparkes (1996), 10, "the potters and painters at Athens were dazzled for a few generations by the ferment of new ideas created by the influence from the east"; Hall (2007), 260, "one of the features that defines what we call Greek culture in the Archaic period is its tendency to borrow techniques and styles from the east."

[19] Langdon (2008), 9; cf. her reference on the same page to "the now untenable view that Geometric art flourished in cultural isolation, before Eastern naturalism began to seduce Greek tastes and artistic ambitions." See more generally Gunter (2009).

[20] Boardman (1998), 84.

[21] Osborne (1998a), 43, offers an answer in part in the chapter title, "Reflections in an Eastern Mirror."

**Figure 1.7**. Late Geometric II pitcher, height 0.4318 m, attributed to the Workshop of the Painter of Athens 897. British Museum 1912,0522.1. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

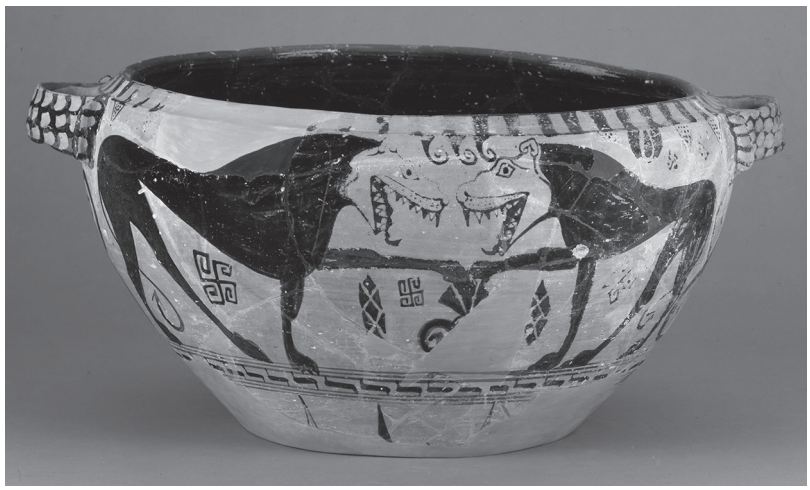


**Figure 1.8**. Proto-Attic "Burgon Lebes," height 0.25 m, early seventh century BC, from Athens. British Museum 1842,0728.827. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

**Figure 1.9**. Black-figure dinos and stand, height 0.71 m, signed by Sophilos as painter, ca. 580. British Museum 1971,1101.1. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

friezes, writes Boardman.[22] Neer converts this description in abstract terms into a claim about people. He writes that "Corinthian immigrants, perhaps invited by the statesman Solon, gave the industry a powerful boost."[23]

The most influential of all students of Greek pottery, J. D. Beazley, put the emphasis differently. For him the marked change in Attic vase painting at the end of the seventh century is not so much the adoption of a particular technique as the adoption of a particular way of seeing: "the typical and traditional element, indeed, now becomes very strong and remains so throughout the history of black-figure. . . . The elusive multiplicity of the visible world has been condensed into a few well-pondered, crystalline forms, which are adequate to express the main activities and attitudes of man and beast."[24] Beazley too notes that "Athens did not take the lead; a greater part was played by seventh-century Corinth," but for him the model is derivation, not influence: motifs "are derived from Corinthian originals."[25]

Despite calling his Sather Lectures *The Development of Attic Black-Figure*, Beazley devotes very little attention to *why* black-figure vase paint-

[22] Boardman (1974), 9, 14. A more elaborate view of influence from metalwork has been argued by Vickers and Gill (1994), 137–41.

[23] Neer (2012), 141. Needless to say, there is no evidence for Solon's involvement, and talk of "the industry" at this time is anachronistic.

[24] Beazley (1951), 13.

[25] Ibid., 13.

ing developed as it did. The reason for this becomes apparent from his justification of his subject matter at the start of his book:

> Greek vases are important to us, not only because they are often beautiful, and because they shed all manner of light on the beliefs and customs of the Greeks in the springtime and summer of their civilisation, but also because, in an incomparable series, they enable us to trace the steps whereby a simpler and even primitive kind of drawing gradually became freer, bolder, and more subtle—the rise, one might say of Western drawing.[26]

While Beazley was prepared to believe that the scenes painted on pots had some relationship with "the beliefs and customs of the Greeks," he attributes to drawing a life course of its own—it simply "became" subtler. His account is designed to enable the reader to see the increasing freedom, boldness, and subtlety, but he is not concerned to account for it. Nor has anyone since tried to do so.[27] Although there have been some pioneering investigations of the ways in which iconographic preferences changed over time, these have focused on narrow periods or a narrow range of subject.[28]

Not surprisingly, when, in the last quarter of the sixth century, there is a further major revolution in the technique of Athenian pottery, and the black-figure technique is replaced by red-figure (**1.10**), one story that scholars have told is internalist. Red-figure is seen as one of a number of experimental techniques for which late sixth-century pots provide evidence, and is distinguished from those other experiments primarily by the fact that it comes to prevail. Here too, however, some scholars have looked for outside influence—whether from relief sculpture or from gold appliqué figures on silver vessels or from textiles.[29]

What scholars have not done is take any serious interest in the significant change in subject matter that accompanies the change from black-figure to red-figure. One reason for this is the way in which several early exponents of the red-figure technique paint "bilingual" pots on which the same subject is explored on one side through the red-figure and on the other through the black-figure technique. But the fact that artists were interested in the way in which the new technique transformed the representation of old themes does not mean that their interest in the new technique was not inspired by the possibility of showing new themes. Martin Robertson emphasized the severe limitations imposed by the black-figure

[26] Ibid., 2.

[27] Boardman (1974) is equally without any narrative of development and equally organized on a painter-by-painter basis. Accounts of particular painters treat their development in ways similarly focused on graphic style—cf. von Bothmer (1985), 39–40, on the Amasis Painter: "From the Heidelberg Painter he took little more than the love of stately processions and elegant garments with fringes, as well as some conventions for the anatomical incisions."

[28] Two examples are Shapiro (1990) and Schnapp (1997), chap. 6.

[29] Boardman (1974), 14–15 (promoting relief sculpture); Williams (1991), 104–6 (himself preferring an internalist account, for which cf. Robertson [1992], 8–9); Vickers and Gill (1994), 129–36 (gold on silver).

**Figure 1.10**. Red-figure oinochoe, height 0.205 m, attributed to the Goluchow Painter, from Athens, ca.520. *ARV* 10.3. Cambridge Fitzwilliam Museum G163 = GR 126.1864. © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

technique, and there is good reason to think that that technique both encouraged some sorts of scenes—in particular the spectator scenes studied by Stansbury-O'Donnell—and ruled out other scenes.[30] Because of the close connection between technique and imagery, I consider in detail in this book only changes in imagery in red-figure pottery, but from time to time I shall remark on comparisons and contrasts with the imagery of black-figure.

## *The Lure of Naturalism*

The history of Greek sculpture has also been told with an emphasis on outside influence early in the story, but whether this influence was merely the catalyst of a then seamless evolution or whether outside factors, and indeed world history, continued to impact on the history of sculpture has been subject to dispute.[31]

The earliest Greek sculpture after the "Dark Ages" takes the form of statuettes of bronze, largely recovered from the sanctuaries in which they were dedicated. Bronze statuettes survive in very large numbers from the

[30] Robertson (1992), 7; Stansbury-O'Donnell (2006). Because of the importance of the change of technique, I am skeptical about Stansbury-O'Donnell's attempt to link the disappearance of spectators to Athenian political history (2006), 232–33.

[31] For the reason why this is so, see Donohue (2005).

eighth century, but more frequently represent animals (horses, sheep, cows, birds) than humans. Animal statuettes are normally isolated individuals, although there are some groups of mother and offspring. Some human figures, even if represented alone, are represented as engaged in some sort of action—the playing of a musical instrument, engaging in battle—and one salient feature of these representations is the concentration on how human limbs shape themselves for action. Regional styles can be distinguished, and there is reason to posit competition between the craftsmen producing these small bronzes, but as far as scholars can detect they respond largely to each other, and no doubt to customer reaction, rather than to outside influences. For what comes next, however, scholars have been adamant that "real headway . . . lay not in softening up the Geometric but in declaring open house to influence from quite another quarter: the Near East."[32]

From the end of the eighth century, and again from temples and sanctuaries, freestanding statues survive on a larger scale. Three hammered-bronze figures from the temple of Apollo at Dreros may be cult statues, representing Apollo himself, Artemis, and Leto. From around the middle of the seventh century near-life-sized stone figures and much smaller scale freestanding human figures, including the earliest *korai* (**1.11**), share a distinctive style, which has become known as "Daedalic," with triangular, flat-topped, head and wig-style hair.[33] Exogenous factors in the form of the technology of mold-made figurines, which Cretans learned from Syria, have been held to account for both the style and its spread.[34] Use of molds enabled rapid production of identical figures, and their place in cult may have increased their prestige and influence. The magnification of these figures into stone figures, some of which were close to life size, has been widely held to have been inspired by experience of large-scale stone sculpture in Egypt,[35] although a more detailed debt of large stone sculpture to the east, and particularly to Egypt, claimed even by Greek sources (Diodoros 1.98.5–9), cannot be substantiated.[36] Iconographically, Eastern influence has also been suspected in the naked or part-naked female figurines from Crete—an iconography that notably is not adopted elsewhere in Greece.[37]

*Kouroi* and *korai* appear first in sanctuaries, in particular on the sacred island of Delos; subsequently, but rather selectively, they appear in cemeteries.[38] Both *kouroi* and *korai* take heavily standardized forms. Both are shown standing and isolated, not engaged with other figures. *Korai* are clothed, have feet together, one arm by the side and the other either

[32] Stewart (1990), 104.

[33] The classic study is Jenkyns (1936). See also Morris (1994), chap. 9.

[34] Boardman (1978), 13–14.

[35] Cf., e.g., Carpenter (1960), 5–19.

[36] Boardman (1978), 15. For a demonstration that no *kouros* accords with the second Egyptian Canon, see Carter and Steinberg (2010).

[37] Boardman (1978), 13, 14.

[38] The classic catalogs are provided by Richter (1968; 1970); for *korai* an up-to-date list is provided by Karakasi (2000). See also Fehr (1996). For tendentious studies, see Keesling (2003), Stieber (2004).

**Figure 1.11**. *Kore* of Nikandre, height 1.75 m, from Delos, ca. 650. Athens National Museum 1. National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Photographic Archives (Photographer: V. von Eickstedt). © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports / Archaeological Receipts Fund.

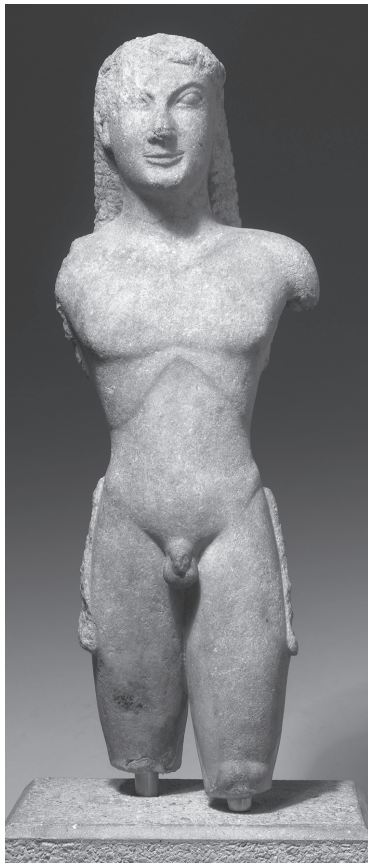
**Figure 1.12**. *Kore* of Phrasikleia, height 2.11 m, from Merenda, Attica, ca. 540. Athens National Museum 4889. National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Photographic Archives (Photographer: V. von Eickstedt). © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports / Archaeological Receipts Fund.

extended forward or folded across the breast. The hand of the extended or folded arm always contains some object, normally a flower, fruit, or bird.

The earliest *kore* bears an inscription naming not only the maiden herself but also her father, brother, and new ("now") husband (*CEG* 403). Nubility is fundamental to the *kore*, and clearly confirmed in the inscription accompanying a *kore* sited on a grave in Attica that declares itself to be the marker of Phrasikleia (**1.12**), who obtained the name *kore* "from the gods instead of marriage."[39] Being on the verge of manhood is equally important for *kouroi*, although that was not the age at which men married. *Kouroi* are normally naked; they put one foot forward, but both feet remain flat on the ground; they force their clenched hands down by their sides. Like *korai*, *kouroi* stare straight ahead.

Although the basic forms of freestanding male and female statues remained unchanging for a century and a half, the detailed execution varied considerably from region to region and from one statue to another. Very few statues have been recovered in an archaeological context that supplies a precise date, and the changes in style have become the basis on which surviving *kouroi* and *korai* are placed into a chronological sequence. Dis-

[39] *IG* i$^3$ 1261; on Phrasikleia's inscription, see Svenbro (1988).



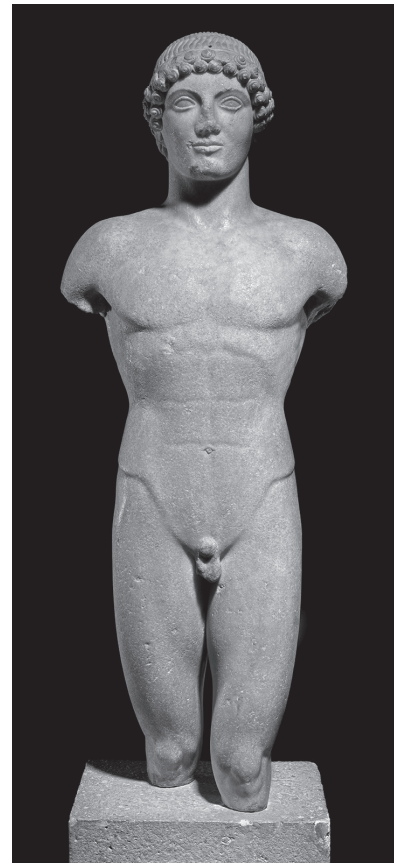


**Figure 1.13**. *Kouros*, height 0.77 m, of uncertain origin, perhaps from Boiotia, but links with north Ionia have also been suspected; ca. 560. British Museum 1878,0120.1 (B 474). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

**Figure 1.14**. *Kouros*, height 1.01 m, said to be from Anaphe, sometimes known as the Strangford Apollo, ca. 490. British Museum 1864,0220.1 (B 475). © The Trustees of the British Museum.

cussion of why the style changes has primarily concerned *kouroi* (**1.13**, **1.14**), where the absence of clothing reduces the number of variables in play. Most helpful have been sites with large numbers of *kouroi*, such as, in particular, the sanctuary of Apollo Ptoieus at Akraiphnion in Boiotia, where remains of more than a hundred different *kouroi* have been recovered.[40] Scholars concentrate on hairstyle (which moves over time from long to short), facial features (including the so-called archaic smile), and the presentation of anatomy. Scholars have created a sequence from schematic depictions of anatomy through careful representation of the display of the underlying bone structure on the body surface to presentation of bodies that give the impression of a particular age.

In broad terms, there is little doubt that the evolutionary sequence offered by scholars is correct. Comparison with architectural sculpture, where there is much better contextual (and in the case of the Siphnian Treasury at Delphi textual) evidence for dating, offers a more or less independent confirmation. But should we take the fact that the latest *kouroi* make more detailed reference to the forms of living men than the earlier to demonstrate that artistic change was motivated by striving after naturalism?

[40] Ducat (1971).

The most influential theorization of the development of Greek sculpture is that of the art historian Ernst Gombrich, published in a book subtitled "a study in the psychology of pictorial representation."[41] Gombrich believed that the "Greek revolution," the changes in Greek art that accompany the disappearance of the *kouros* type, marked the point at which a fundamentally conceptual art was replaced by one in which observation played the central role. He suggested that universally, "making came before matching," that is, that making objects that stood for other objects came before making objects that attempted to match the form of other objects. In his view, progress from making to matching was marked by "schema and correction"; that is, attempts to match were compared to the object matched, found wanting, and better matches were devised.[42] For Gombrich what happens in Greek art is that this process continues until a breakthrough is achieved, when the match between the body observed and the body depicted was sufficient to allow narrative. "The conquest of appearances, sufficiently convincing to allow the imaginative reconstruction of mythological or historical events, was the end of classical art in more than one meaning of the word."[43]

As is often the case, conceptual division, as here between making and matching, is sufficiently attractive in itself for its arbitrariness to be overlooked. There can be no matching that does not involve also making, no representation that does not select what it is that it represents because of what it wants to convey about the object represented. And there can be no making that does not also involve matching: even the most symbolic of representations must nevertheless do some matching to ensure successful allusion.

Gombrich's implication that appearances have to be conquered to a particular degree before mythological or historical events can be imaginatively reconstructed is revealed as nonsense by the very history of Greek art. There can be no doubt that viewers of the scenes of the laying out of the corpse on Athenian geometric pots were able on that basis imaginatively to reconstruct the historical event; likewise, even the earliest of *korai* enabled worshippers in sanctuaries to see the real-life exchange of women in marriage that was figured by these nubile maidens holding out their offerings. There was no magic point at which narrative became possible—different sorts of narratives became possible at different stages.

Gombrich's talk of imaginative reconstruction, is, however, extremely helpful. Imaginative reconstruction is what every viewer does with any object that they know or assume to be representational. But what can be imaginatively reconstructed—a person, a person of a particular sex, a person engaged in a particular action, a person of a particular age, a person of a particular sexual orientation, a particular identifiable individual—will depend on what reference the representational object makes to objects outside itself, whether persons or other representations, as well as to the

[41] Gombrich (1960).
[42] Ibid., 99. For a critique of the theoretical basis of Gombrich's view, see Bryson (1983).
[43] Gombrich (1960), 123

force of cultural symbols. The earliest *korai* allow imaginative reconstruction of a woman, perhaps of a young woman, and of an action, the action of offering, but they allow little else. Subsequent *korai*, precisely because belonging to a series of similar representations, direct imaginative reconstruction toward women dressed in particular, elaborate ways, and so more strongly toward ceremonial offering and the displaying alike of personal charms and family wealth and status.

That imaginative reconstruction depends on the fundamental link between form and context is clear from the rest of Attica.[44] The series of Acropolis *korai* certainly explore a wide range of ways in which the nubile woman might be presented, but they are all more like each other than they are like the two complete *korai* from the countryside of Attica, which we know or are reasonably confident marked graves—the so-called Berlin Standing Goddess and Phrasikleia. Not only do the *korai* grave markers hold their different offerings differently, they share carved neck jewelry (Acropolis *korai* have jewelry painted or added in metal) and both also wear something (crown, *polos*) on their head, as the Acropolis *korai* mostly do not. Although we are not in a position to reconstruct in any detail what a sixth-century visitor to the cemetery might have imaginatively constructed on viewing these two *korai*, he or she was being offered a distinct set of prompts.

Concentration on what makes one *kore* or one *kouros* different from another obscures what they share. What they share is the frontal gaze. As Jaś Elsner has stressed in his "Reflections on the 'Greek Revolution' in Art," the frontal gaze constitutes a direct address to the viewer, a direct challenge to the viewer to assess the sculpted figure, and indeed in some respect or another to compare the sculpted viewer to himself and to other figures whom he might address.[45] The striking change that comes about when the *kouros* and the *kore* types are given up in 480 is the abandonment of that direct address to the viewer (**1.15**). The viewer ceases to be the second party in an exchange and becomes the third party, an observer rather than a participant. Whatever we make of any particular evolutionary model, no evolutionary model of change is going satisfactorily to explain this revolution.

Elsner himself is reticent about causation. He draws attention to the parallel between what happens in art and what happens in the theater, where the arrival of the second actor changes what happens from direct address to the audience to the playing out of a drama in front of an audience. He further notes other parallels that can be observed in other areas of Athenian culture and that "these changes had a politics and were interrelated."[46] But he insists that "politics and social life seem to follow the forms of aesthetic representation rather than cause them."[47] But while

[44] On Attic funerary *korai*, see also D'Onofrio (1982).

[45] Elsner (2006), building on Osborne (1988). For the theological implications of this in the context of temple sculpture, see Osborne (2009), and cf. Marconi (2007), 214–22.

[46] Elsner (2006), 91.

[47] Contrast Zanker (1988), 335: "Only the great ages of transition at the end of the Greek Archaic

Elsner suggests that we need to think in terms of a situation where artists conditioned by viewers' expectations precipitate particular forms of viewer response, he does not offer any clear account of what, historically speaking, is the crucial question: why artists and viewers should have mutually encouraged each other in this direction at this moment.[48]

It is a weakness of both Gombrich's and Elsner's stories that by hardly extending their gaze beyond the *kouros* and the *kore* they ignore the fact that these are far from comprising the totality of archaic sculpture.[49] While *kouroi* may not tell stories, the reliefs of archaic architectural sculpture certainly do. Metopes present episodes of hostile encounter easily identifiable with particular myths (for example, Herakles and the Kerkopes); friezes present moments of decision or complex engagements—Achilles's fate weighed against Memnon's on one face of the Siphnian treasury at Delphi, the battle of gods and giants on another face. And while archaic architectural sculpture makes more use of the frontal face than later sculptures, there is no doubt at all that in these scenes we are spectators. And so we are too in the reliefs on the bases of stelai and *kouroi* found in Athens that show playing ball games (**1.16**), gymnastic activities (see 9.3), or setting cocks to fight. Taking a wider view of Greek sculpture does not invalidate Gombrich's and Elsner's interpretations, but it certainly qualifies them—their revolutions turn out to be effectively restricted to freestanding sculpture.

A quite different aspect of the stylistic changes that saw the end of the *kouros* and *kore* has been emphasized by Andrew Stewart in recent work. Stewart comes at change from the other end—starting from the features of the new "classical" style. For him the change takes place suddenly, and the crucial characteristics of the successors of the *kouroi* are "simplicity, strength, vigor, rationality and intelligence."[50] Stewart suggests that the circumstances of the change also reveal the cause: the Persian Wars. "Sternly repudiating both their elitist archaic past and the defeated and humbled 'barbarian' world . . . the Greeks simply reinvented themselves." Although he sees this as the culmination of certain trends visible in earlier art, for Stewart this is a revolution with leaders—Kritios, Nesiotes, and Pythagoras of Rhegion.[51]

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Age and in the Early Hellenistic are comparable in the scale and depth of change [to the revolution of the *saeculum augustum*]. In these two earlier periods as well, new forms of artistic and visual expression had arisen in the wake of political change."

[48] There is a like reticence in Neer's similarly framed treatment of the invention of classical sculpture, though Neer wants to weight his account much more strongly toward evolution (n.b., "emergence" in his title) and toward an internalist account: "the history of fifth-century sculpture is . . . an ongoing adjustment of the relation between image and beholder, and an ongoing elaboration of that dialectic of presence and absence, which characterizes Greek statuary from earliest times" (2010), 102.

[49] Cf. Vout (2014). Elsner (2006), 77–79, extends his discussion to pedimental sculpture, but by doing so concentrates on the form of non-freestanding sculpture most inclined to privilege frontality; cf. Osborne (2009).

[50] Stewart (2008a), 60; cf. (2008b), 601–2.

[51] Stewart (2008a), 63, (2008b), 605–10, which is even more emphatic about the role of Kritios and Nesiotes. The emphasis on the importance of the Persian wars is shared with Pollitt (1972), for which Stewart (2008a) was conceived as a replacement.

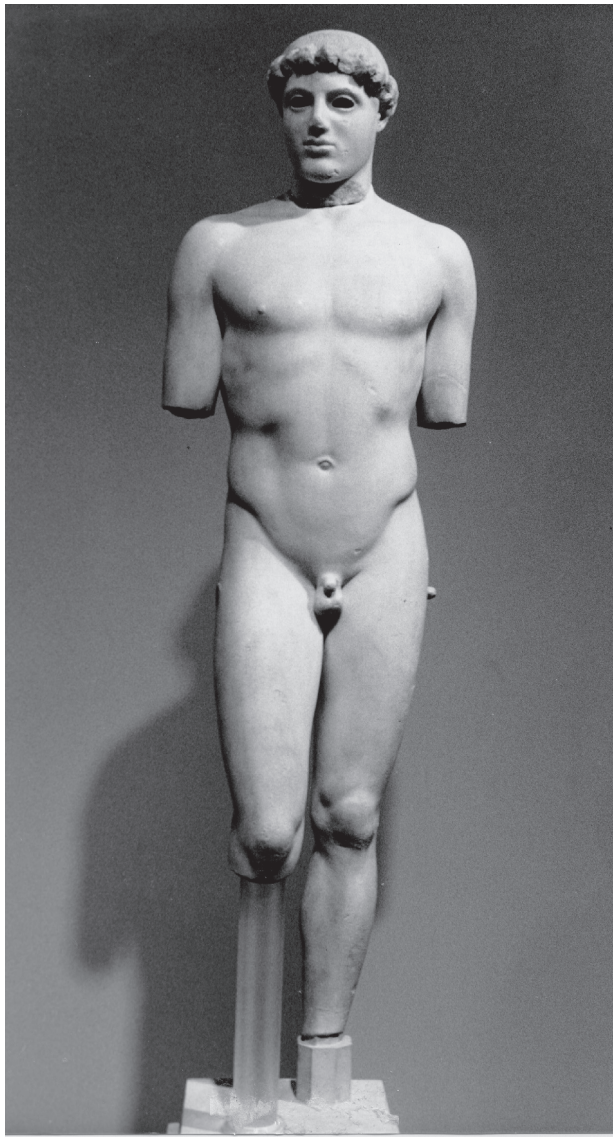

**Figure 1.15**. Kritios Boy, height 1.167 m. Athens Acropolis Museum 698. Photo by Jeffery Hurwit. © Jeffery Hurwit.

**Figure 1.16**. One side of a base for a *kouros* (for another side see 9.3), found in the Themistoklean Wall. Athens National Archaeological Museum 3476. © Hirmer Fotoarchiv Munich.

Whether they paint pictures of internal evolution, of a revolution in narrative or visuality, or claim a new mentality resulting from success in the Persian wars, what all these explanations share with one another, and with the explanations of change in painted pottery, is an exclusive concentration on form and style.[52] For all that in some cases they seek corroborating evidence from other areas of Greek culture, their explanations are not merely inappropriately monocausal, as if historical actors existed in merely one dimension, they systematically ignore a significant part of the visual evidence. It is the look of the sculpture or painting, the style of carving or drawing, that plays the central role in these arguments, not what sculptors or painters choose to represent. The subject represented is treated as just so much noise, to be eliminated so that the work of art can be seen more clearly.

There are indeed good reasons for eliminating subject matter from consideration. A list of all the subjects represented on sculpture and in painted pottery would be extremely long, and relatively few particular scenes are repeated. Indeed, as we will see, it is a feature of sculpture and pot painting, despite the repetitiousness of *kouroi* and *korai*, that there is very little precise duplication of scenes. But this does not mean that there are no patterns to what sort of scenes get shown when. It is the contention of this book that paying attention to those patterns will rewrite the history of art. It is also the contention of this book that paying attention to those patterns will rewrite history.

## 3. The Argument of This Book

The story of making and matching is a story that might be told of many societies. Indeed, for Gombrich the attraction of the model was precisely its potentially wide application: what happened in Greece illustrated a bigger truth about the psychology of art. Gombrich was concerned with why what he termed the "Greek revolution" took place in Greece and not in Egypt, but the explanation he gave looked only to storytelling, and within storytelling to the possible magic of Homer: the *kouros* was turned into the Kritios Boy by the drive to narrative. Not every society has a widely diffused tradition of epic tales, but storytelling was certainly not limited to the Greeks.[53]

Equally generalizable are the stories told of how one pot painter learns from and builds on the work of another. The particular tradition described may be peculiar to archaic Athens, but the pattern of craft apprenticeship, artistic education, and competition within the potters' quarter, fueled by the need to win and keep customers, is one that could potentially apply in

[52] This is equally true of discussions that focus on "naturalism as a cultural *system*," as does Tanner (2006), 39, in an account that concentrates on the representation of gods and accounts for the changes with reference to Kleisthenic democracy (92–96).

[53] Cf. Beard (1985). Gombrich's belief that maybe Homer was different is born of a conviction that there was a divide between Greek and Near Eastern cultures.

any culture. Nor is Elsner's revolution in visuality one that can only happen once in history—the choice of whether to make the figures address the viewer or whether to have the viewer spectate a scene in which he or she is not involved is one that has to be made by every maker of figurative images.

That factors that can be found to operate across cultures play a part in the history of art in a particular culture is not in itself a problem—indeed it would be extraordinary if such factors were absent. But it is a problem if those factors are held to act on their own. Art does not develop simply in accordance with the improving observational and motor skills of artists; the history of art is not simply an image of the development of the artistic skills of an individual from childhood to maturity.

But it is equally questionable whether explanations that have art's history shaped by outside "influence' or peculiar historical factors are any more plausible. Historical events and cultural influence shape art history only if they shape the way in which artists see the world, the world that artists see, or the world that their patrons want to have represented. Sculpture or painting on pottery are the means by which artists do things within the world, and when the sculptures or the paintings change, that is because what the artists want to do changes, or because to do the same things in a different world means doing them differently. But sculptures and pots do not do things in the world simply by the way they are painted or the style in which they are sculpted, they do things in the world because of what they represent, and what they represent is a matter of subject matter as well as of style.

The Athenian desire in the eighth century BC to have monumental grave markers created a demand met by outsize pots with figurative decoration. But the decision to show figurative scenes of burial on large pots was not a decision required by the use of pots as grave markers; rather, pots used as grave markers created an opportunity that artists exploited by showing scenes of the laying out of the body. In doing so, and perhaps even more in surrounding the scenes of the laying out of men's bodies with scenes of warriors, chariots, and ships, the artists fed back into the cemetery ideas that will themselves have influenced how Athenians viewed burial and regarded the dead. When, a hundred years later, an Athenian had the Nessos Painter produce an amphora in the black-figure technique showing Herakles attacking the centaur Nessos to stand on a grave, he was making a different sort of intervention in the cemetery—invoking not the idealized community on display at the funeral but the exotic world of myth with its monsters and hybrids. In doing so he presented those who visited the cemetery with an image of death not as a social fact but as something coming from elsewhere that individuals fought with on their own. The different style of the later pot, and the greater proportion of its surface occupied by the scene, play a part in this story—but only a part. The changing subject matter cannot be ignored.

In this book, my concern is primarily with Athenian painted pottery of the later sixth and fifth centuries BC. Although substantial amounts of

architectural sculpture survive from classical Greece, providing us with monuments whose temporal and physical context is unusually well secured, we are far less well supplied with freestanding sculpture. Large numbers of dedicatory statues have been recovered in excavations from archaic Greek sanctuaries, but the loss of classical freestanding statues to the melting pot once bronze became the usual material for such statues in the classical period means that even the architectural sculpture that we have cannot be properly contextualized.[54]

By contrast several tens of thousands of the pots painted in Athens in the sixth and fifth centuries BC survive. And while a pot survives in only one of the many contexts in which it was used during its ancient life (most frequently its use in an Etruscan grave; sometimes simply its disuse in rubbish discard), their shapes and to some extent their own figurative decoration enable us to be reasonably confident about at least one other of their earlier contexts of use. What is more, although individual pots can be securely dated only in rare cases, when deposited in association with graves or buildings or episodes of destruction for which we have a firm date, the whole sequence of Athenian painted pottery has been studied in such detail that, despite some recent challenges to accepted chronology, we can be more or less confident of the broad date (plus or minus ten years) of any pot.[55]

The combination of a very large sample, firm dating, and good contextual information means that in the case of pottery, by contrast to that of sculpture, we have a good chance of coming to understand what those who painted, bought, and deployed a pot were trying to do when they chose one scene rather than another. The figurative decoration on these pots is extremely various, but the scenes fall into a relatively small number of broad classes (representing myths and mythical figures, war, athletics, sex, cult acts, the symposium and reveling, and such). In this book, I shall look at a substantial subsection of those pots and at some of those broad classes of scene. The patterns I am interested in are patterns of change in scenes representing, more or less directly, actions in which ordinary men and women engaged on a regular basis.[56] I ask whether the marked changes that occur in the way scenes of athletic, military, sexual, sacrificial, sympotic, and satyric activity are represented on the red-figure pots painted between circa

[54] The best we can do to compare archaic and classical statuary is to resort to Pausanias's account of what he saw on the Athenian Acropolis in the second century AD. See Osborne (forthcoming).

[55] For the challenge and responses, see Williams (1996), 240n50, 245–50.

[56] The question of whether it makes sense to divide the scenes on Athenian pots between "myth" and "genre" has been pointedly raised in recent years by Ferrari (2002), esp. 17–25, (2003), and Topper (2012). I remain convinced that for Athenians the mythical world was continuous with, rather than removed from, the present (hence the dress and equipment of mythical figures is homeostatic and Achilles and Co. wear contemporary armor, etc., cf. Boardman [2002], 158, Topper [2012], 69), and that addition of mythological names adds piquancy to scenes rather than removes those scenes from contemporary relevance (cf. Beard [1991], 21). Satyrs are, in my view, simply at one end of the mythical spectrum, not a quite different phenomenon—hence the possibility of talking of *La cité des satyres* (Lissarrague 2013). So while I have largely excluded scenes where the iconography is determined by a particular myth, the discovery of inscriptions giving mythological identities to figures on the pots I discuss would not alter the arguments here.

520 and circa 440 BC can be accounted for by social, cultural, and political developments. In answering this question, I will try to show why history needs art history, but also why art history needs history.[57] For, on the one hand, attention to changing representations of activities related to everyday life in art can offer us a guide to transformations of social expectations and values more sensitive than that offered by any textual sources. On the other, only when we can understand the implications of the artists' choices of what they represent and how they represent it, can we understand why those were the choices they made.

The chapters of this book fall into three sections. In chapter 2, I provide an account of the nature of Athenian painted pottery, to bring out the features of Athenian pots that make a study such as this possible. In chapters 3 and 4 I use the cases of scenes of athletes and of soldiers to establish the nature of the change in imagery that needs to be explained. In chapters 5 to 8, I examine how the change affects four other bodies of imagery that between them account for a great proportion of Athenian painted pottery—scenes of courtship and sex, of sacrifice, of the symposium, and of satyrs. In chapters 9 and 10 I explore how we can account for the change, and place the change in relation to the observations of both historians and art historians. In a brief conclusion, I then reflect back on what we have learned about classical Athens and what we have learned about the history of classical art.

[57] Cf. Bažant (1985), 44–45: "Ainsi pour interpréter les représentations de la vie sociale il faut trouver le point de vue d'où les peintres ont regardé et représenté la vie. Il convient de tenir compte non seulement du système d'ensemble iconographique et de ses connexions littéraires, sociales, religieuses, etc., mais aussi de la position du peintre face à la réalité qu'il essaie de représenter."