

Art and Experience in Classical Greece

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Prologue

On the meaning of ‘classical’

The English words ‘classic’ and ‘classical’ and their cognates in other modern European languages have two fundamental areas of meaning – one a *qualitative sense*, the other an *historical sense*.

When we speak of the ‘classic example’ of something, or of a ‘classical phase’ within the development of an art or a science, we use these words *qualitatively* to express recognition of a standard of perfection within a particular genre, a standard by which succeeding objects or developments within that genre are to be judged. This sense of the modern words is rooted in the Latin terms from which they are derived. A *classis* was a ‘summoning’ or ‘calling out’ of the Roman people for military action. When the Romans assembled in this way, they arranged themselves in groups (*classes*) which were distinguished according to the financial resources and pride of lineage of their members. The adjective *classicus* thus came to mean ‘of or pertaining to class’ in a general way, but most often it referred to things associated with the upper classes. From this it acquired the general sense of ‘first class’ or ‘of the highest rank’. The second-century grammarian and encyclopaedist Aulus Gellius is careful to distinguish between a writer or poet who is *classicus*, by which he means ‘high-class’ and ‘authoritative’, and one who is merely *proletarius* (*Attic Nights* xix. 8. 15).

In an *historical sense* ‘classical’ has also come to mean ‘of or pertaining to Greek and Roman culture’. The literature of Greece and Rome is referred to collectively as ‘the Classics’ and the civilization which produced them is called ‘Classical Civilization’. This purely historical sense of the terms may have arisen because in the Middle Ages and later the ancient Greek and Roman authors, and by extension the civilization which produced them, were recognized as having an authoritative excellence in both thought and expression. In other words, the qualitative sense of *classicus* in Aulus Gellius may have been applied to the ancient world as a whole. Or possibly, since students were sometimes called *classici* in the Middle Ages (e.g. in the *Dictiones* of Bishop Ennodius, A.D. 475–521) and since study of the Greek

and Latin authors was an essential part of their education, the description of these authors and their civilization as *classical* may simply have meant that they were ‘objects of study by students’.

Around the beginning of the nineteenth century the historical and qualitative significances of ‘classical’ were fused into a new *stylistic* sense. In the world of Goethe and Byron it was recognized that the measured, restrained, balanced, and orderly nature of Greek and Roman poetry contrasted with the more openly enraptured, effusive art of the Romantic era. ‘Classical’ came to imply a style which was highly formal and ordered as opposed to one which was intensely ‘emotional’.

Since the latter part of the nineteenth century historians of Greek art have customarily referred to the art produced in Greece between the time of the Persian Wars (481–479 B.C.) and the death of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.) as ‘Classical’, and have distinguished this period from the ‘Archaic’ phase which preceded it and the ‘Hellenistic’ period which followed it. Those who first used ‘Classical’ in this way did so because they felt that the art produced in Greece between 480 and 323 B.C. was most worthy of the traditional meanings which attached to the word – it was of the first rank, it seemed to represent a standard by which other developments could be judged, and order, measure, and balance seemed to be quintessentially part of its style. In effect, they limited the *historical* meaning of ‘classical’ but maintained its *qualitative* and *stylistic* senses.

Today when Archaic art is so widely admired and Hellenistic art is beginning to receive its due, it seems uselessly contentious to insist on the superiority of one stylistic phase over another. In all periods of Greek art great works were produced; facile generalizations about ‘primitiveness’, ‘maturity’, and ‘decadence’ are almost always inadequate. I therefore propose to use ‘Classical’ in this book, at least at the outset, as an essentially conventional term for a particular stylistic and chronological phase of Greek art, devoid of any *a priori* value judgements, and to let the term define itself by demonstration. By an analysis of what characterizes the ‘Classical’ style, what forces produced it, and what unifies it in spite of its own considerable inner diversity, we can perhaps arrive at an appreciation of the word’s significance which will be inherent in the art itself.

3 *The world under control*

The Classical moment, c. 450–430 B.C.

The two opposing poles, confidence and doubt, around which the thought and expression of the Early Classical period gravitated, were by nature in conflict. In Athens during the first two decades after the middle of the fifth century, the scale seems to have tipped in favor of confidence, the belief that men could shape their world in accordance with their own vision of it. It was not so much a matter of man being raised to the level of unchanging divinity, which seems to have been the intent of the Kleobis and Biton, as of unchanging divinity being brought into the world of man and harmonized with it.

A number of forces helped to create this atmosphere of self-belief in the High Classical period: the psychological legacy of the victory over the Persians was still active; there was an anthropocentric drift in Greek philosophy away from concern with the physical world and toward a preoccupation with human society; and the prosperity and power which accrued to Athens from her Aegean confederacy undoubtedly gave some Athenians at least a new sense of well-being. But none of these factors, individually or in concert, can completely explain the new frame of mind. The heady effects of the victory over the Persians were dimming; the anthropocentric drift in philosophy was as much a result as a cause of the new era; and Athens' rise to power was beset with as many set-backs and frustrations as triumphs. What was needed to make all these forces effective and reap their fruit was a will to believe and spokesmen to articulate that will. The Great Believers and also the spokesmen were Pericles the son of Xanthippos and the artists like Pheidias and Sophocles who helped to make the Periclean vision real by giving it witnessable form.

Periclean Athens

Not all Classical art is Athenian nor are all the characteristics of Classical Athens attributable to Pericles, but without Athens Greek art would not have become

what it did and without Pericles Athens would not have been what it was. As the leader of the dominant faction Pericles exerted an influence on the course of Athenian politics from as early as 460 B.C. until his death in 429. The constitutional position which he most often held was that of a *strategos*, one of the ten generals of the Athenian military forces. Working from this relatively modest post he devoted virtually all the energies of his mature lifetime to a single aim: the glorification of Athens as a political power and as a cultural ideal. In order to assure the continuance of the city as a political power, he was committed to the nationalistic imperialism which had driven Athens to adapt the Delian League to her own uses; and to enable the city to fulfill his vision of it as the exemplary cultural center of Greece, he became a patron of philosophy and the arts. By subsidizing and encouraging the visual arts in particular he hoped to create the physical setting which would symbolize and be part of Athens' greatness. The measure of his success is attested by the fame which the monuments of Periclean Athens still enjoy, a fame which was shrewdly predicted by Thucydides (I. x. 2), when he remarked that if Sparta were to be laid waste its remains would give posterity little impression of its power, 'but if the same misfortune were to overtake Athens, the power of the city, from its visible remains, would seem to have been twice as great as it is'.

Perhaps in order to have some respite from the land battles of the 450s and to consolidate Athenian gains, Pericles cooperated in the recall of Kimon from exile (around 455 B.C.) and used the veteran commander's connections with Sparta to work out the five year truce (452/451 B.C.) previously mentioned (see p. 26). Kimon was then dispatched on a naval expedition to Cyprus where the remnants of Persia's Phoenician fleet had been harassing Greek settlements, and in 449 B.C., while the expedition was still in progress, he died. Kimon had stood for accommodation with Sparta and a continuation of aggressive action against the Persians, and whatever pressures he may have exerted on Pericles toward these goals were now removed. The Persians were no longer a serious threat; to continue campaigning against them was wasted effort, but to abandon the force which the Athenians had organized against them meant the abrogation of Athens' new power and prestige. Pericles made a decision, realistic but not altruistic, which committed Athens once and for all to her imperialistic policy. In 449/448 B.C. he arranged a peace treaty with Persia but did not abandon control of the tributary allies.

One of the products of the formal end of hostilities with Persia was the Periclean building program. As a result of an oath sworn by the Greeks before the battle of Plataea not to rebuild the monuments burned by the Persians but rather to leave

them in their ruined state as a reminder of the impiety of the barbarian,¹ there was little building activity in Athens between 479 and 450 B.C. But peace with Persia made this oath seem less binding, and Pericles now decided to rebuild the temples and public buildings of Athens both as monuments to Greece's victory over 'barbarism' but also, and perhaps even more important in Pericles' mind, as visible expressions of Athens' new status in Greece. The program was financed in part by Athens' own resources but also in part by the treasury which legally was to be used only for the coordinated actions of the Delian League. The distribution of this money to what must have been thousands of workmen, traders, and contractors meant prosperity as well as glorification for Athens. Pericles justified it to the allies at first by maintaining that as long as Athens gave them protection and security there was no need for them to worry about how their money was spent. Later in life, he seems to have inclined to the more idealistic (if no more satisfying, from the allies' point of view) idea that Athens had created an exemplary society and that the allies were privileged to be associated with it. The practical and idealistic aim of the program and the nature of its achievement are vividly described in these excerpts from Plutarch's detailed description of it in the *Life of Pericles* 12–13:

Now that the city was sufficiently supplied with the necessities for war [Pericles maintained that] they ought to devote the surplus of the treasury to the construction of these monuments, from which, in the future, would come everlasting fame, and which, while under construction, would supply a ready source of welfare by requiring every sort of workmanship and producing a wide variety of needs; these in turn would call into service every art, make every hand busy, and in this way provide paid employment for virtually the entire city, thereby ornamenting it and sustaining it at the same time . . . As the works rose, shining with grandeur and possessing an inimitable grace of form, and as the artisans strove to surpass one another in the beauty of their workmanship, the rapidity with which the structures were executed was marvellous . . . There is a certain bloom of newness in each work and an appearance of being untouched by the wear of time. It is as if some ever-flowering life and unaging spirit had been infused into the creation of them . . . Pheidias directed all the projects and was the overseer of everything for him [Pericles], although there were also great architects and other artists employed on the works.

As the usurpation of the treasury of the Delian League might suggest, the political events of the period between the signing of the peace with Persia and the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 B.C. contrast in an almost dismal way

¹ This clause of the oath is preserved by Diodorus xi. 29. 3 and Lycurgus *Against Leocrates* 81. As a matter of conscience it should be pointed out that the authenticity of the oath, as well as the Peace with Persia, was questioned by the ancient historian Theopompos, and modern historians, after years of controversy, are still divided on the point.

with Pericles' vision of Athens and the great buildings which were created to express it. The 'unseen war' between oligarchic (and usually anti-Athenian) and democratic factions which ran throughout the fifth century and often had a more decisive effect on the history of the various Greek cities (including, eventually, Athens itself) than did actual military confrontations, soon began to disrupt Athens' recently acquired holdings on the Greek mainland. Pericles' failure to quell oligarchic *coups d'état* resulted in the loss in 448–446 B.C. of Boeotia, Phocis, and Megara, and the near loss of the rich island of Euboea. The pressure of these events constrained Athens to seek a new peace with the Peloponnesian alliance led by Sparta. In 446/445 B.C. a thirty years' peace treaty was signed, but to obtain it Athens had to cede the ports on the Corinthian Gulf in the Megarid and Achaea which she had won in the 450s B.C. The prospects for an Athenian land empire had vanished.

As a result of these reversals Pericles seems to have decided that Athens should confine her energies to consolidating her maritime empire and should not compete actively with the Spartan alliance for territorial control on the mainland. The power which the Athenian fleet exercised in the Aegean islands and the coast of Asia Minor, Thrace, and parts of the Black Sea was now supplemented by a series of colonial outposts settled by Athenian citizens, and at the same time a basis for colonial and commercial operations in South Italy and Sicily was established. The decision to concentrate all efforts on maintaining their 'overseas' holdings turned out to be, from the Athenians' point of view, both opportune and effective. In 440/439 B.C. they were able to put down dangerous revolts against their confederacy in Samos and Byzantium. But the policy also led them into a series of conflicts with Corinth, the only Peloponnesian city which had extensive commercial interests overseas. When Corcyra, an early colony of Corinth, became embroiled in a quarrel with its parent city, Athenian ships, allied with the Corcyraeans, actually met the Corinthians in a naval battle off the south coast of Corcyra. In the same year Potidaea, a city in the Chalcidice which was a Corinthian colony but had been made a tributary ally of Athens, revolted from Athenian control and was besieged by an Athenian force. In the wake of these and other events the 'Thirty Years Truce' deteriorated. A council of the Peloponnesian allies at Sparta decided upon war and in the spring of 431 B.C. they invaded Attica and ravaged the land, rendering it henceforth useless as a source of food supply. The Athenians who had lived on the farms and in the villages of the country-side withdrew behind the walls of Athens and Peiraeus for safety. Following Pericles' strategy the Athenians decided not to oppose the Spartan land army but countered instead with a series of naval operations against the coast of the Peloponnesos and

the islands adjacent to it. The complex and wasting Peloponnesian War, which, with periodic truces, was to last a generation and alter drastically the Greek cultural psyche, was under weigh.

At the end of the first year of the war Pericles was selected to make a public funeral oration in honor of the Athenian soldiers who had fallen in the first campaigns. This famous speech, as Thucydides (II. 34-46) presents it, captures better than any other document the ideals of Periclean Athens and the spirit which pervades its art. Athens is depicted as the one society where justice applies equally to all and where social restrictions do not prevent a man from becoming as great in public life as his natural capacity permits; submission to law and authority and acceptance of the dangers of war are maintained voluntarily, without force and without complaint; power and discipline are balanced by a free intellectual life and a buoyant spirit; the functioning of the society is open for all to see; neither secretiveness nor suspicion exist. Such a society was a paradigm, Pericles felt, for all societies, the 'school of Hellas'. If it controlled others, it did so by virtue of innate merit, and its subjects therefore could have no cause for complaint.

The Funeral Oration is the high water mark in that tide of humanistic optimism which had been growing in Greece since the Persian War. Implied in it is the belief that man can shape the world to his own vision of it; that an ideal pattern can be made manifest in this world by human action; that the irrational and the chaotic can be overcome by conscious effort. The year 430/429 B.C. was the last time that an intelligent Athenian was able to adhere fervently to this doctrine. In 429, a plague, both physical and mental, struck Athens.

Man and the measure of all things

The confident belief in the value of human thought and action which is expressed in Pericles' Funeral Oration was part of a broad intellectual current in the second half of the fifth century B.C. and extends beyond the confines of Athens. In Greek philosophy it is most clearly articulated in the Sophist movement. The Sophists were a diverse group of itinerant teachers, scholars, and eccentrics who differed widely from one another in the details of their doctrines and activity, but were unified as a group by a common emphasis on the importance of human perception and human institutions in interpreting experience and establishing values. The tendency of Greek philosophy in the Archaic period, as we have said, was to search for a rational order, a *kosmos*, which was beyond the fallibility of human perception and the mutability of the human condition. The willingness of the thinkers of the Classical period to reverse this trend and bring the *kosmos* 'down

to earth' seems to be a reflection of the humanistic confidence of the age.

The most influential of the Sophists was Protagoras of Abdera (c. 480–410 B.C.) whose well-known dictum 'man is the measure of all things' has sometimes been expanded beyond its original context to serve as the motto of the Classical period as a whole. What Protagoras actually seems to have meant by this phrase was that all knowledge is subjective, that is, dependent upon the mind and sense organs of the individual, and that objective knowledge which discounted the perceiver is impossible. Each man's personal subjective experience became the standard by which judgements about the nature of existence, knowledge, and ethics were to be made. From this point of view a 'thing' was what it 'seemed' to be; the 'real' nature of an 'object' became a matter for subjective determination; man, and not an absolute standard outside of him, was the measure of it. This attitude, though it might at first seem to be a purely technical point of epistemology, has broad implications which can be extended not only into politics and morality (cf. Plato's critique of the idea in *Theaetetus* 151e–179b) but also into the history of art. Whether by direct influence or by a more general association 'in spirit', Greek sculpture in the Classical period, and the Parthenon sculptures in particular, show a tendency toward subjectivism in the design of sculptural form, that is, a tendency to think of sculptures not only as hard, 'real' objects known by touch and by measurement but also as impressions, as something which is in the process of change, a part of the flux of experience, bounded not by solidity and 'hard edges' but by flickering shadows and almost undiscernable transitions [34, 41, 42]. We shall return to this point below.

? articulation?

The doctrine of man as the measure of all things, however, can be, and was, also taken to imply a kind of general anthropocentrism, somewhat similar to that of Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in which human institutions, human endeavor, and human achievements are of more consuming interest than cosmological abstractions. One of the fruits of the anthropocentric attitude was the rise of a belief in human progress and the consequent belief in the possibility of a 'golden age'. A doctrine of cultural evolution which saw mankind as progressing, with the help of *techne* (usually translated as 'art' but meaning, more precisely, the orderly application of knowledge for the purpose of producing a specific, predetermined product), from the state of primitive food-gathering to the civilized condition represented by the Classical Greek *poleis*, was perhaps principally developed by Protagoras and other Sophists (cf. Plato *Protagoras* 322a–c) but passed beyond purely philosophical circles and became one of the general topics of discussion among thoughtful men in the fifth century. It occurs in poetic form in the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus (lines 476–506), but its most

impressive rendering is in the first *stasimon* of Sophocles' *Antigone*, where the idea of cultural evolution is incorporated into a hymn to man:

There are many wonders, but none more wondrous than man.

Across the white-capped sea in the storms of winter
this creature makes his way
on through the billowing waves.

And earth, the oldest of the gods,
the undecaying and unwearied one, he wears away
with constant ploughing, back and forth, year after year,
turning the soil with horses he has bred.

Carefree flocks of birds he brings under his control,
herds of wild beasts, and creatures of the sea,
caught in the coils of his woven nets,
this resourceful, skilful man.

He masters with his inventions the free-roaming
beast of the mountains, and the shaggy-maned
horse, broken for the bit, harnessed about the neck,
and the untiring mountain bull.

Language, thought swift as the wind, and the patterns
of city life he has taught himself, and escape from
the shafts of storms, and the shelter-piercing frosts of clear days.
He can cope with everything, never unprepared whatever
the future brings. Only from death does he fail to contrive escape.
Even for diseases thought hopeless he has figured out cures.

Clever, with ingenuity and skill beyond imagining,
He veers now toward evil, now toward good . . .

(lines 332-68)

Leaving aside the ominous implications of the last lines of this passage (implications which were to become more meaningful to Sophocles and others as time went on), the hymn reflects the spirit of Periclean Athens in its hey-day, when man's ability to create the society he wanted to live in must have seemed unquestionable. The *Antigone* was produced in 442 B.C. Protagoras must have been in Athens lecturing about the nature of society and progress in and around that year, since he is said to have been commissioned by Pericles to draw up the constitution of the panhellenic colony of Thurii, settled in 443 B.C. And the Periclean building program, giving physical embodiment to Athens' belief in itself, was in full swing. In this year, in fact, a team of sculptors under Pheidias' supervision may have begun to carve the Parthenon frieze, which in many ways occupies the place in the visual arts which Sophocles' choral ode holds in literature.

The Parthenon

Among the buildings which the Persians destroyed when they sacked the acropolis of Athens in 480 B.C. were two temples of Athena: one, located closer to the north slope on what was perhaps at an earlier time the site of a Mycenaean palace, dedicated to Athena *Polias*, and dating from about 520-510 B.C.; the other a marble temple which had been begun after 490 B.C. and was still in an early stage of construction at the time of the sack, situated toward the south slope, and dedicated to Athena in her aspect of *Parthenos*, the warrior maiden [29, 30].² The administrators of the Periclean building program intended to replace both of these buildings and turned their attention first to the temple of Athena *Parthenos* because the foundations of the temple which had been under construction in the 480s were still sound and some of the marble column drums and blocks, which had already been quarried on Mt Pentelikon in Attica and transported to Athens, were still fit to be carved and used.

Among many great creations of the Periclean building program the Parthenon [31], as this new Doric temple came to be called at least as early as the fourth century B.C., was the monument which most vividly embodied the experience and aspirations of its age. It was constructed between 447 and 432 B.C. when Athens' power was at its peak and the Peloponnesian War had not yet taken its spiritual and economic toll. The chief architect of the temple was ~~Iktinos~~, who was assisted by ~~Kallikrates~~, perhaps an Ionian and a specialist in the Ionic order, and perhaps by others. ~~Pheidias~~, the general overseer, as we have seen, of the Periclean building program, undertook to do the colossal gold and ivory cult statue of Athena and probably designed the architectural sculptures.³

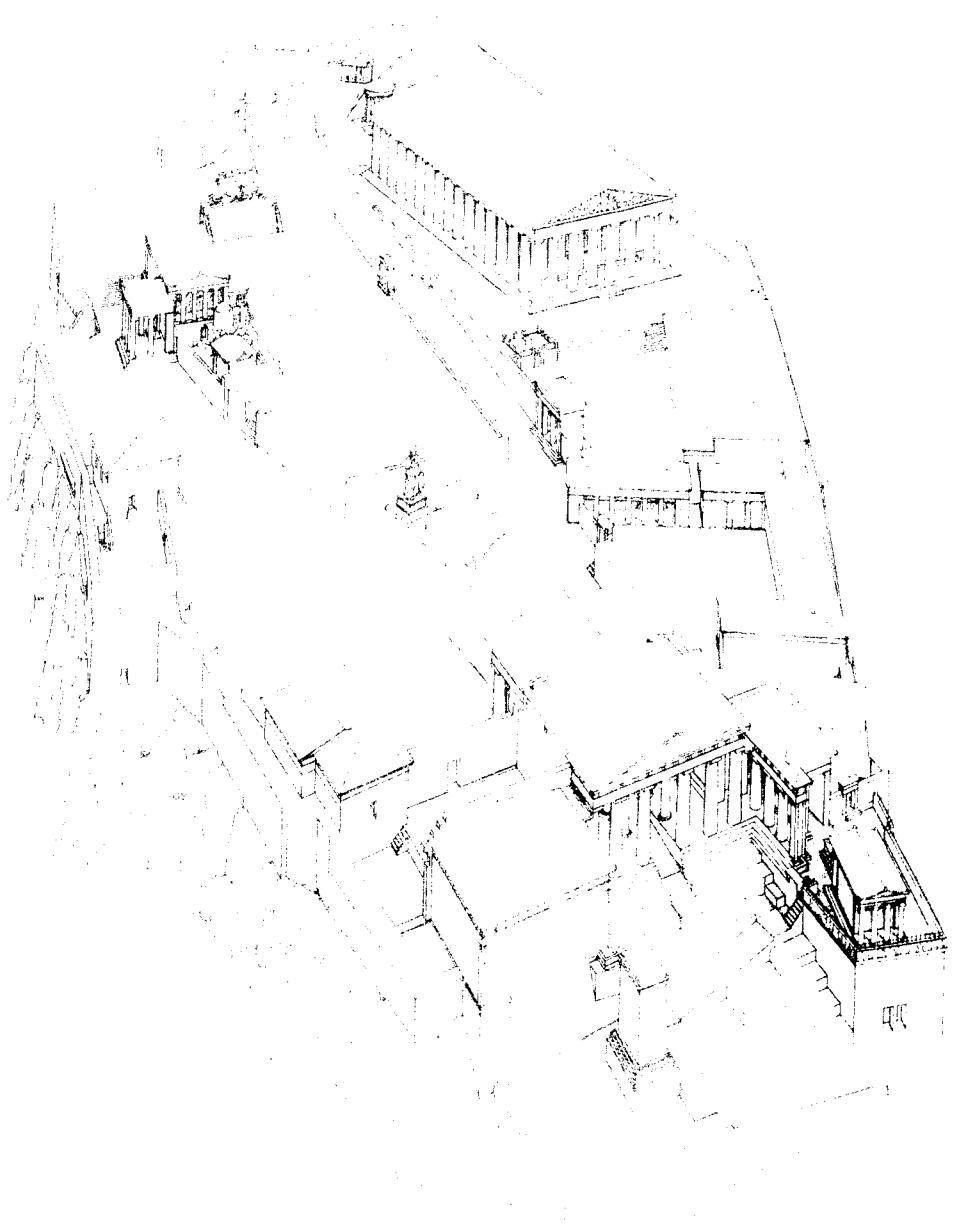
² In referring to 'Athena *Polias*' and 'Athena *Parthenos*' and also to the temples on the Acropolis as 'the Parthenon', 'the temple of Athena *Polias*', and the 'Erechtheion', I am following the conventional usage of modern archaeology and not necessarily the ancient nomenclature, for which the evidence is quite complicated. The relevant information is collected and analyzed in a lucid monograph by C. J. Herington *Athena Parthenos and Athena Polias* (Manchester 1955). Herington suggests that two goddesses, an agrarian mother goddess (= Athena *Polias*) and a warrior maiden (= Athena *Parthenos*) may originally have been worshipped on the Acropolis but that by the fifth century their identities had been fused into a single 'Athena'. The state religion of the Classical period recognized the existence of only one goddess on the Acropolis. The cult ceremonies associated with her seem to have focused almost exclusively on the northern sanctuaries (i.e. the temple of Athena *Polias* and its successor, the Erechtheion). The Parthenon, with its great cult image and elaborate sculptures, seems to have been deliberately designed, as Herington has suggested, as a vehicle for the expression of peculiarly Periclean ideals.

³ The question of whether Pheidias was the designer of the architectural sculptures of the Parthenon and, if so, of how thorough his designs were, is a debated one among modern critics. Some feel that the artists sometimes had no more than general verbal instructions, others suggest that rough sketches on papyrus or parchment may have existed, while others hypothesize plastic models of some sort. On the whole, the frieze and pediments of the Parthenon seem to suggest a master

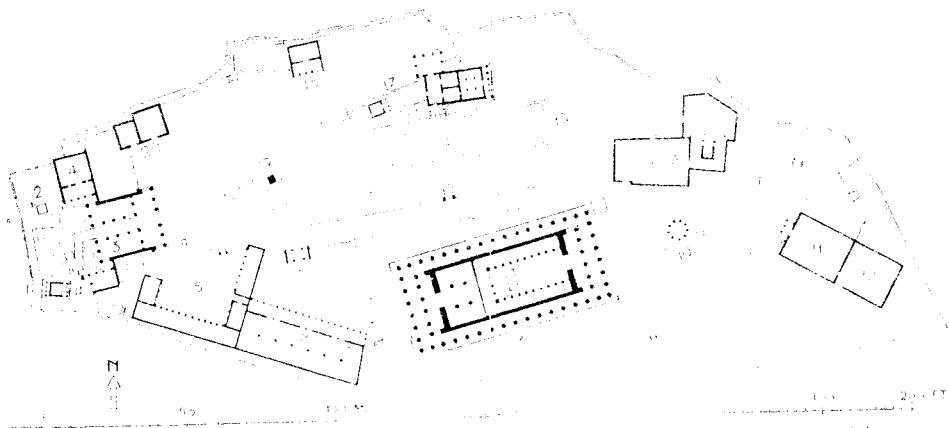
In the design of the building itself it is often difficult to draw a line between practical necessity and deliberate intention, since Iktinos seems subtly to have exploited the former in the latter. Practical necessity dictated a fairly wide temple in order not to cramp Pheidias' great cult image, and the foundations of the pre-Persian Parthenon had thus to be extended to the north. Practical considerations also compelled Iktinos to make use of several hundred unfinished column drums from the old Parthenon and thus to be restricted to the proportions of those drums. On the other hand, the preferred standards of proportion of the Classical period, which Iktinos himself must have helped to formulate, would have in any case demanded a temple which was wider in proportion to its length than the late Archaic Parthenon had been. The temple of Aphaia at Aegina, for example, which is perhaps an earlier product of the architectural workshop to which Iktinos belonged,⁴ had had a peristyle arrangement of 6×12 (six columns at the ends of the temple and twelve on its longer flanks) and a stylobate with a proportion just slightly more than $2:1$. The temple of Zeus at Olympia (see pp. 32 ff.) was 6×13 and had a stylobate of approximately 91 by 210 feet, the underlying principle seeming to be that, if length and width are divided into even units, the length should be twice the number of units of width plus one. Starting with the dimensions of the older column drums, Iktinos worked out a plan for the new Parthenon in which the ' $2:1$ plus 1' principle of commensurability runs throughout the temple. Its colonnade is 8×17 , and a $4:9$ proportion characterized its basic dimensions: e.g. the stylobate (approximately 101×228 feet), the proportion of the height of the order (up to the horizontal cornice) to the width of the temple, the diameter of the columns to the interaxial, and the proportion of the width of the cella to its length (excluding the *antae*). Practical necessity, in other words, seems to have been accepted as a challenge by Iktinos, and from what was potentially a limitation he created positive virtues. This pervasive proportionality in the Parthenon, it should be emphasized, was not simply the result of a kind of metrician's game, worked out as an intellectual exercise; the *symmetria* principle, the principle of 'commensurability' (see pp. 106–7), was seen, by some Greeks at least, as a potential source of philosophical illumination because it made manifest the abstract ideas which formed the substratum of immediate existence.

design more obviously than the metopes. For an excellent analysis of the 'design problem' applied specifically to the metopes but also applicable to the other sculptures, cf. F. Brommer *Die Metopen des Parthenons* (Mainz 1967) pp. 178–81.

⁴ The Aphaia temple, situated very near Athens, is the earliest structure in which there are substantial traces of the refinements (e.g. inclination of the peristyle; thickening of the corner columns) which are used with such astonishing subtlety in the Parthenon. The slenderness of its columns also perhaps connects it with the 'Ionicizing' trend in Athenian Doric visible in the Athenian treasury at Delphi as well as the Parthenon.



29. Acropolis of Athens as seen from the northwest. Restoration by Gennam P. Stevens.



30. Acropolis of Athens, plan by Gorham P. Stevens.

But the Classical period was not an age in which pure abstraction, divorced from the real world of human life and action, was of all-consuming interest. Man was the measurer, and things had to be measured in the light of his experience. It is perhaps this basic intellectual predisposition more than anything else which accounts for the subtle and intentional variations from mathematical regularity which run throughout the Parthenon. These are evident in the curvature of supposedly straight lines, the inclining of vertical members away from true verticality, and variations in the 'normal' dimensions of individual parts of the temple. The stylobate, for example, curves upward so that at the center on the flanks it is more than 4 inches higher than at the corners, and on the ends more than 2 inches higher than the corners. The whole stylobate thus forms a subtle dome. This curvature, moreover, is carried up into the entablature [32]. The columns of the peristyle have an inward inclination of more than 2 inches, including the corner columns which incline diagonally. This inclination is also carried up to the entablature, where a few elements, however, counteract it by inclining outward, e.g. the abacus of the column, antefixes, *akroteria*, and horizontal cornice. The columns at the corner of the temple are thickened by nearly 2 inches and the

intercolumniations adjacent to them are contracted more than 2 feet. These delicate variations meant that virtually every architectural member of the Parthenon had to be carved, like a jewel, to separate, minute specifications. The uniformity which systematic mensuration normally makes possible was obviated.

What motive was thought to justify the incredibly painstaking and time-consuming carving which these variations made necessary? The answers which have been proposed to this question in Antiquity and later fall into three essential theories which might be called the compensation theory, the exaggeration theory, and the tension theory.⁵

The first of these suggestions goes back to the Roman architect Vitruvius who maintains, for example, that 'if a stylobate is laid out on a level, it will appear to the eye to be hollowed out' (III. 4. 5), that corner columns should be thicker 'because they are completely set off against the open air and [without compensatory thickening] appear to be more slender than they are' (III. 3. 12); and who adheres to the general principle that *quod oculos fallit*, 'with regard to that in which the eye deceives us' (III. 3. 11), e.g. an apparent 'sag' of the stylobate or other horizontal lines, *temperatione adaugeatur*, 'addition should be made by calculated modulation' (III. 3. 13). Vitruvius holds, in other words, that the subtleties of the Parthenon are what the Greek writers on optics called *alexemata*, 'compensations' or 'betterments', to counteract optical illusion. Even if one finds Vitruvius' explanation of Greek architectural refinements less than completely satisfying, there is at least one strong reason for not ignoring him altogether. He claims to have had at his disposal a treatise written about the Parthenon by Iktinos and a certain Karpion (error for Kallikrates?). From what we know of ancient treatises on architecture (see Vitruvius' list, VII. praef. 12), they dealt principally with questions of engineering and proportion. It seems likely that Iktinos' treatise would have been of this sort and that in it he would have explained in detail the basis for both his system of *symmetria* and its variations. The assumption upon which the Vitruvian view is built, of course, is that the Greek architects wanted all the elements of their buildings to look 'regular' and 'correct' – e.g. horizontals should look horizontal, verticals vertical, columns should appear to be the same size – and that the function of the refinements was to make the appearance of the temple fit their mental conception of it.

It is possible, however, to take a completely anti-Vitruvian view of the nature of the refinements and hold that the architects' purpose was to make the temple look quite different from what it actually was. If one looks at a horizontal line from

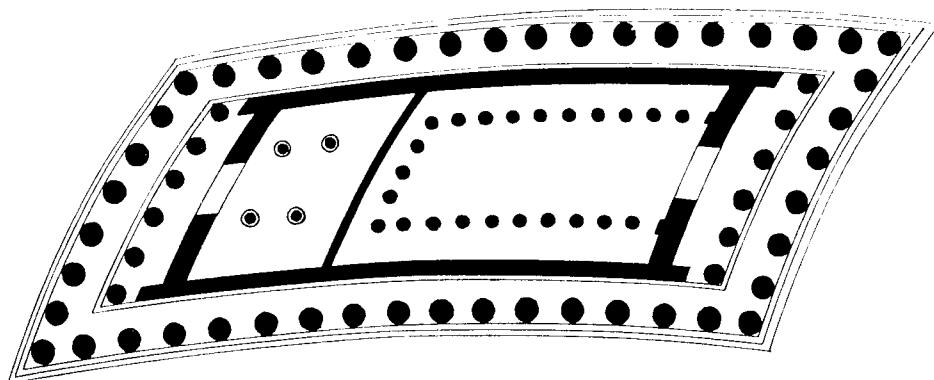
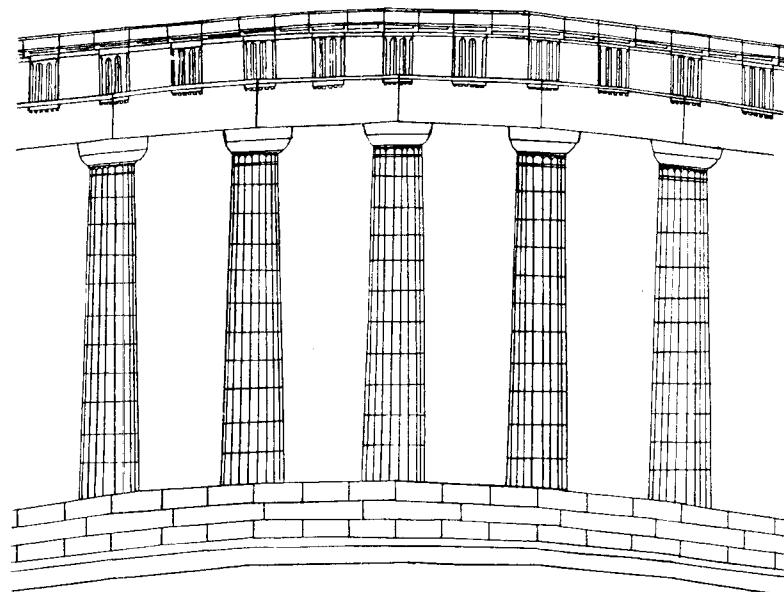
⁵ On the sources, ancient and modern, for the theories described here cf. W. H. Goodyear *Greek Refinements* (New Haven, London, Oxford 1912).

below, for example, as one would have with most of the horizontals of the Parthenon, it is normal optical experience that the line appears not to sag but rather to bow upward. And the longer the line the greater this upward curve seems to be. It is possible, therefore, that the curvature of the stylobate of the Parthenon, for example, was intended to amplify normal optical distortion so that the temple appeared to be more immense than it actually was. A similar explanation could be used to explain the entasis of the columns and a diminution in width of the metopes in proportion to their nearness to the corners of the building (the latter not carried out, however, with complete consistency). One objection to this approach is that it implies a kind of obvious and theatrical aspiration toward bigness, a feeling that bigness is itself desirable, which while it had some adherents among the tyrants of Greek Sicily, does not seem to fit what we know of the artistic taste of Periclean Athens.

Still a third interpretation of the refinements is that they are intentional deviations from 'regularity' for the purpose of creating a tension in the mind of the viewer between what he expects to see and what he actually does see. The mind looks for a regular geometric paradigm of a temple with true horizontals, right angles etc., but the eye sees a complex aggregate of curves and variant dimensions. As a result, the mind struggles to reconcile what it knows with what the eye sees, and from this struggle arises a tension and fascination which make the structure seem vibrant, alive, and continually interesting.

31. The Parthenon, from the northwest, 447–432 B.C. Height of columns 34' 2³/₄".





32. Diagram in exaggerated proportion of the horizontal curvature of the Parthenon. The upper diagram is based on N. Balanos, *Les Monuments de l'Acropole*, pl. 2, fig. 2.

It is not impossible that all three of these interpretations of the Parthenon's refinements have some validity and played a role in creating the temple's total effect – the thickening of its corner columns, for example, is almost certainly a compensation for optical distortion, and the curvature of horizontals may help to give the building an extra dimension of grandeur – but it is clearly the third which seems to reflect most naturally the intellectual experience of the age. It suggests that in the Parthenon things as they *appear* are harmonized with things as they are *known*. *Alétheia*, 'reality' as known by abstraction (e.g. mathematical proportions), is presented as the basis of *phantasia*, experience of things through the medium of our senses and brain. The new world of Protagoras is brought into balance with the older world of Pythagoras – the foremost of several fusions of opposites which make the Parthenon the most vivid and comprehensive embodiment in the visual arts of Classical Greek thought and experience.

The subtlety and originality of the exterior of the Parthenon is also carried into its interior [plan 30]. Its *pteroma* (the ambulatory between the cella and the exterior colonnade) was very narrow and within it at either end one was brought up against the front and rear porches (*pronaos* and *opisthodomos*) whose six sizable (almost 33-feet-high) Doric columns must have seemed to stretch across the entire width of the temple creating the impression of a closely-packed grove of columns similar to those in the great Ionic temples of Asia Minor. This Ionic impression would have been reinforced by the continuous sculptured frieze, an Ionic architectural form, which ran above the columns and their purely Doric architrave around the entire exterior of the cella. Passing through the *pronaos* into the *naos*, the main room of the cella facing east, one again confronted an enveloping colonnade, this time consisting of superimposed Doric columns which not only framed Pheidias' great cult image along its sides (as the interior colonnade at Olympia would have done with his Zeus) but also ran behind the image (a device not required for the practical job of supporting the ceiling) forming a kind of columnar exedra around the image. This interest in exploring the effects which could be produced by the manipulation of architectural elements in interior space had not been a characteristic of most earlier Greek architecture; after the Parthenon, as we shall see, it became increasingly common, and Iktinos continued to be its most brilliant exponent (see pp. 126–9). Behind the *naos* was another large room (entered from the west through the *opisthodomos*) which served cult purposes and was the *Parthenon* proper. Its ceiling was supported by four large columns which, judging by their lower diameter in proportion to the height of the ceiling, must have been Ionic.

If we keep these Ionic details in the interior of the temple in mind and look

again at its exterior, we can perhaps sense there too an Ionic feeling. The slender columns of the peristyle (the height being 5·48 times the diameter of the column at its base, compared to 4·7 at Olympia) seem to instill some of the elongated Ionic grace into the Doric order; and the octastyle façade calls to mind the wide fronts of the temples of the Ionian world in contrast to the compact hexastyle arrangement of most Doric temples.

This fusion of Doric and Ionic forms in the Parthenon was undoubtedly intended to express one of the qualities of Periclean Athens. On a mundane level, it called to mind the fact that although situated on the essentially Dorian mainland, Athens claimed kinship with the Ionians of the Cyclades and Asia Minor, and the basis of its newly-won political power resided to a great degree in these areas. And on an idealistic level it was Pericles' conviction, enunciated in the Funeral Oration, that Athens had managed to 'cultivate refinement without extravagance and knowledge without softness' (Thucydides II. 40). The Ionic order called to mind the luxury, refinement, and intellectualism of Ionia; the Doric was associated with the sombre, stolid simplicity of the descendants of Herakles in the Peloponnesos.⁶ In a temple which embodied Athens, it was natural that Pericles should want the two to be harmonized.

The sculptures of the Parthenon were integrally bound up with the building's form and meaning and are inseparable, in form and execution, from its architecture. From epigraphical evidence it can be determined that the external metopes were executed during the period from 447 to about 442 B.C., that the internal frieze was worked on mainly between 442 and 438 B.C. (when Pheidias' cult image was dedicated), and that the pedimental groups were essentially finished by 432 B.C. During this fifteen-year period we must visualize what must have been a small army of sculptors, assembled from different parts of Greece and having different technical backgrounds, moving from project to project under Pheidias' supervision, watching one another at work, absorbing and exchanging ideas, competing with one another in displays of skill, and eventually developing a common spirit and a

⁶ Aside from a perhaps natural tendency among non-intellectuals to classify intellectuals as 'soft', the traditional Ionian reputation for unmanliness seems to have arisen from the fact that the Ionians in Asia Minor were conquered first by the Lydians and then by the Persians in the sixth century B.C. An early example of the attitude is Xenophanes' elegiac poem denouncing the Colophonians for submissiveness and love of luxury (Diehl, frag. 3). By the second half of the fifth century the weakness of Ionians (and hence Athenians) seems to have become nearly proverbial, and the Spartans clearly used it as one of the themes of their political propaganda cf. Thucydides v. 9; vi. 77. Herodotus implies that many Athenians were somewhat ashamed of their Ionian ancestry (I. 143 and v. 69), and it may be that in emphasizing Ionic elements in the architecture of his building program, Pericles was attempting to counteract Spartan propaganda by developing a new sense of pride in Ionic traditions at Athens.

homogeneous style. The end product of this intense period of activity and inter-association (the atmosphere of which, in artistic matters at least, must have been similar to that of Renaissance Florence) was the High Classical style of Greek art, a style which, once it had developed in the Parthenon, became a standard by which not only later Greek and Roman art but most later European art, either in a spirit of emulation or rebellion, measured itself.

The metopes of the Parthenon, numbering ninety-two in all, were by far the most extensive cycle of metopes ever put together in Doric architecture and employed a series of archetypal myths and legends to celebrate, in a manner characteristic of most Greek architectural sculpture, the triumph of the forces of order and civilization over those of chaos and barbarism. Those on the east depicted the battle of the gods against the earth-born giants who attempted to seize Mt Olympus; those on the west appear to have presented a conflict (or conflicts) of Greeks and Amazons, the oriental warrioresses who once, according to legend, had attacked Athens itself. Because of extensive destruction it is now difficult to reconstruct the themes of the metopes on the longer north and south sides in their entirety. Some, and possibly all, of those on the north represented scenes from the Sack of Troy (again a theme in which Greeks face Orientals). On the south scenes of Lapiths struggling with Centaurs [33, 34] flanked a central group, now known only through seventeenth-century drawings, which may have dealt with the early history of Athens.⁷

With the exception of the Lapith-Centaur metopes from the south side, all of these sculptures are so badly damaged that it is impossible to base many iconographic or stylistic generalizations upon them. It is possible, however, to speculate on what the metopes of the Parthenon as a whole might have been thought to be allusions to by the Greeks who first saw the temple taking shape. As we have

⁷ In its later history the Parthenon served first as a Byzantine church and subsequently as a mosque. During the Christian period some of the metopes appear to have been interpreted as presenting Christian subjects (the westernmost north metope was perhaps taken as an Annunciation and the Lapiths and Centaurs on the south were perhaps seen as illustrations of the Byzantine moral fable, the *Physiologus*); those which did not, i.e. most of the east, west and north sides, suffered from vandalism.

The temple as a whole remained largely intact until 1687, when a Venetian shell struck a Turkish powder magazine installed within the building and blew it up. Although this explosion did not completely demolish the building, it did deprive most of the surviving sculptures of their protective covering, and they began to deteriorate rapidly from the effects of weathering and further vandalism. During the years 1799–1812 Lord Elgin, the British ambassador to Turkey (at that time in control of Greece), obtained permission from the Turkish authorities to remove from the Acropolis most of the surviving south metopes, substantial portions of the frieze, and some battered pedimental figures. These pieces, forming the major part of the 'Elgin Marbles', were transferred to England, later sold to the British government, and are now in the British Museum.



33. Parthenon, south metope no. XXXI, c. 447-442 B.C. Height approx. 4' 8".

already suggested the Greeks had a tendency to see the specific in the light of the generic – for example, Classical portrait statues tend to embody a category as much as an individual, Greek buildings adhere to pre-established ‘orders’, and statues embody numerically conceived patterns. This habit of thought helps to explain the persistent use of a relatively small number of themes in Greek architectural sculpture – the battle of the gods and giants, for example, and the exploits of Herakles – over several centuries. These themes became general archetypes, generic expressions, of specific events. In the scenes depicting the triumph of their ancestors and their gods against barbaric (i.e. both ‘savage’ and ‘foreign’) adversaries few Greeks would have missed an allusion to the triumph over the



34. Parthenon, south metope no. XXVII, c. 447-442 B.C. Height approx. 4' 8".

Persians. The Athenians would probably also have sensed an allusion to Pericles' exaltation of Athens as the most profoundly civilized of the Greek cities. Some might also have recognized another example of the Greeks' deep-seated will to define the emergence of order out of chaos. It might have seemed that man's harnessing of the wild forces of nature, embodied by the earth, which had given birth to the giants and been the source of the actual stone from which the Parthenon had been constructed, had been made manifest in the measured, refined brilliance of the temple and its ornaments.

The stylistic development of the Parthenon metopes can best be measured by comparing south metopes no. XXXI, an early (or at least conservative) example [33], which harks back in style to Olympia and perhaps the school of Myron, and no. XXVII, a later (or at least progressive) metope [34], in which the essential

elements of the Parthenon style have taken shape. The hard, linear musculature of the earlier work, its simple paratactic composition, and the tentative, unconvincing interaction of the two figures (e.g. the awkwardness of the Lapith's 'right hook') seems to place this sculpture in a state of suspension between the schematic, purely ornamental tradition of Archaic relief and the organically pictorial nature of sculpture which was developing in the Classical period. (Of course judgements of artistic virtues and faults are relative to the standards one employs. By average standards this metope is a fine piece of sculpture; only by standards set by the Parthenon itself can we fault it.) One wonders if an older sculptor, confronted with the 'new vision' of Pheidias' design, found himself hard-pressed to translate that design into stone. In metope xxvii [34] a revolution has taken place. Its motion-filled and graceful composition unifies the counteracting forces of the Lapith and Centaur. The Centaur appears as a compressed coil of energy pulled back into a circle by the taut Lapith whose left leg and arm anchor the composition above and below. The muscles of his lean torso are formed not by lines but by a subtle undulation of the surface which is defined by shadows. This exploitation of the play of light across a surface is even more apparent in his great mantle which unfurls in a series of balanced but not schematized ridges behind both figures. This metope seems to hover on a borderline between pictorial illusion and the hard 'reality of carved stone'. Like the Parthenon itself, it must be simultaneously understood as something known and measurable and also as a sense-impression, something which the individual consciousness must sort out for itself in the unending fluctuation of light and dark. It demands that we employ the complete range of our powers of perception to understand it.

Along with this fusion of *alētheia* and *phantasia* we also sense an emotional disengagement. The battle is real but the Lapith has become 'Olympian'. He seems to partake of the awesome aloofness which must have characterized Pheidias' great cult image of Athena – the *maiestas* and *pondus* of Pheidias, as Quintilian expressed it, which eclipsed and suppressed the study of character and emotion of the Early Classical period. In the developed metopes, it has often been noted, even the faces of the Centaurs seem to absorb some of this calm dignity and lose the mask-like, caricatured quality (inherited from the west pediment at Olympia) of their less progressive brethren.

The frieze of the Parthenon, which formed a band 3 feet 5 inches high and about 524 feet long running around the upper edge of the outer wall of the cella, presented only one subject. Precisely what that subject is has become a controversial question, although most critics would agree that in a general way it represents a religious procession in honor of Athena which begins on the west side of the temple, from

there runs eastward in parallel streams along the north and south sides of the temple, and culminates over the entrance to the *naos* on the east side, where the parallel streams merge upon a religious ceremony witnessed by a group of deities. A visitor to the Acropolis would have followed essentially the same path: he would have approached the temple from the west through the Propylaea and then have moved along one of its sides, most commonly the north (hence the west frieze is more closely connected in composition to the north frieze than to the south), toward the main entrance to the temple on its east side [2, 30]. He would have seen the frieze at a very steep angle and in reflected light. To compensate for this, the upper part of the relief was made slightly deeper than the lower, and all the figures were, as usual, vividly painted; but one still is inclined to wonder whether the Classical Greeks were in as good a position as we are to appreciate the frieze's purely sculptural beauty.

On the west frieze a group of horsemen are seen marshalling and mounting up at the beginning of the procession [35]. There is a general drift toward the north corner, but this drift is, at times, controverted by anecdotal figures and static details (one horse seems to chase away flies while his riders converse) and is stabilized by a magnificent rearing horse at the center. As the procession turns the corner at the north and south it gets fully under weigh. The massed riders, now projecting a reserved seriousness appropriate to the religious awe of the occasion, exert calm control over the vivid clattering energy of horses [36, 37]. As a group they provide an especially good example of the genius in composition of the frieze's designer. No two figures are alike; each relates significantly to the others and yet is interesting in itself; the scene has narrative coherence and yet arrests our attention as a purely abstract design [37]. Ahead of the riders come the chariots surmounted by drivers and men in armor; then a group of older men, musicians, and, at the head of the procession on the sides of the temple, figures who are to be participants in the sacrificial rites: pitcher bearers, tray bearers, and the caretakers of the sacrificial victims [38]. As the corner is turned on either side of the temple and the east section of the frieze begins, the procession comes to a slow halt in the presence of a sacred rite which takes place in the center. Here a man and a young assistant appear to be receiving and folding a large piece of cloth while a woman prepares to receive two folding-chairs brought forward by her assistants. This scene is framed by twelve seated deities (or thirteen if one counts the small child on the right of the group who may be Aphrodite's child Eros), who are in turn framed by standing groups of bearded men, and, on the outer edge, a group of maidens holding offering bowls and jugs who are supervised by marshalls. The seated deities seem certainly to be the twelve Olympian gods, with Zeus and Hera



35. Parthenon, west frieze, *in situ*, c. 442–438 B.C. Height approx. 3' 5".

seated nearest the center on the left and Athena and Hephaestus, the two who were most particularly associated with Athens, on the right.

It has long been felt that the frieze as a whole must represent the great procession which formed part of the Panathenaea, the Athenian festival in honor of Athena. Although this festival was annual, it was celebrated with increased elaboration every fourth year. At that time a new and elaborately woven cloak (*peplos*) was borne to the Acropolis in accordance with what seems to have been a very ancient religious tradition and presented for the adornment of the old image of Athena (not Pheidias' gold and ivory image). It must be this act which is taking place in the center of the east frieze: the man receiving the *peplos* is perhaps an Athenian magistrate or priest, and the woman with him must be a priestess of Athena, supervising the disposition of chairs which either symbolize the priesthood or help



36. Parthenon, north frieze, slab no. xxxix, detail of a rider.

to invoke particular deities. From literary sources we know that the Panathenaic procession began near the Dipylon gate by which one entered Athens from the northwest and that it ran along a prescribed route through the Agora and up to the

Acropolis. The west frieze is perhaps to be interpreted as the organization of the procession near the Dipylon gate, the north and south friezes the procession toward the Acropolis (with its rocky ascent possibly being conveyed by painted details), and the east the final stages of the celebration in the precincts of the gods. The riders, the warriors on chariots, and the musicians seem to be participants from the equestrian and musical contests which formed part of the Panathenaic festival.

Greek architectural sculpture had always in the past represented the archetypal actions of gods and legendary heroes. If in the Parthenon frieze the Athenians have in fact inserted a picture of themselves into a context normally reserved for gods and demi-gods, the innovation is only explicable in the light of the humanistic idealism and confidence of Periclean Athens. We have seen that in the Classical period in general and in Periclean Athens in particular, there was a tendency to fuse the real and the ideal, to see an ideal pattern as immanent in immediate experience rather than as transcendent. Pericles' Funeral Oration depicted Athenian society with god-like qualities, and perhaps the Parthenon frieze, where the visible and spiritual gap between men and gods vanishes, was intended to convey the same vision. Perhaps we see the citizens of Periclean Athens apotheosized.

A number of scholars have noted, however, that the frieze curiously omits

37. Parthenon, north frieze, slab no. xxxvii, detail.





38. Parthenon, north frieze, slab no. II.

certain features of the Panathenaic procession which are known to have formed an important part of it in the Classical period, most notably armed infantrymen (*hoplites*) and the maidens who bore baskets containing sacred objects (*kanephoroi*). These omissions may be attributable to an episodic technique of narration in which the effect of the whole procession is captured by a linked series of excerpts from it. But there is also the possibility that the frieze shows us not the Panathenaea of the Periclean period but the Panathenaea of an earlier time, perhaps the legendary festival which took place at the founding of Athens itself,⁸ when the infantrymen and basket bearers did not form part of the ceremony. By this interpretation the figures on the frieze would consist of deities and divinized humans of an heroic

⁸ This view has been advocated in particular by Chrysoula Kardara 'Glaukopis, the Ancient *Naos*, and the Subject of the Parthenon Frieze', *Ephemeris Archaiologike* (1961) 61–158, esp. 115–58 (in Greek). For a summary in English of Kardara's proposals and another approach to the problems which they raise cf. R. Ross Holloway 'The Archaic Acropolis and the Parthenon Frieze', *The Art Bulletin* (1966) 223–6.

past, and would not, as subject-matter, be nearly so remarkable a departure from the norms of Greek architectural sculpture.

To answer the question of what the Parthenon frieze really meant, we would have to know, first, the designer's intention, and secondly, what his contemporaries would have understood. Did the designer, for example, intend a specific Panathenaic procession in all its details, or was he trying to invoke in a more general way the spirit of all Athenian religious processions, including the one which must have taken place at the time of the dedication of the Parthenon? And how much did he expect his contemporaries to comprehend? The identifications of individual figures on the frieze proposed by those who see it as a primeval Panathenaea – e.g. some of the virtually attributeless figures on the west frieze as Erichthonios, Hermes, Theseus, and Poseidon – are not convincing.⁹ The Athenians who first observed the completed frieze in the 430s B.C. would perhaps have noticed details which seemed heroic or traditional rather than contemporary – the 'heroic' nudity of some of the male figures, for example – but would they have concluded that they were looking at the Panathenaic procession in the time of King Kekrops? It seems more likely that they would have seen an exalted picture of themselves.

The style of the Parthenon frieze is much more even than that of the metopes. One feels that the common idiom of the Pheidian school has solidified, although the presence of different hands, and even different ways of thinking within the general medium, are identifiable. Perhaps its most apparent feature is the Olympian emotional disengagement which we could detect emerging in the metopes. A sense of aloof, divinized youthfulness runs throughout all the figures, even those who are supposedly old. This Olympianism is emphasized by deliberate contrast with the wild energy of the animal figures – the impetuous rush of the horses and the nervous bolting of the sacrificial bulls. Contending forces are once again controlled and harmonized. Although as a rule in the frieze we may say that the indisputable knowability of things is more strongly felt than their sensuous mutability, the same fusion of the ideal and the apparent which we detected in the metopes is also present. Perhaps the most spectacular exploitation of the new appreciation of optical impression is the depiction of an onrushing chariot and armed

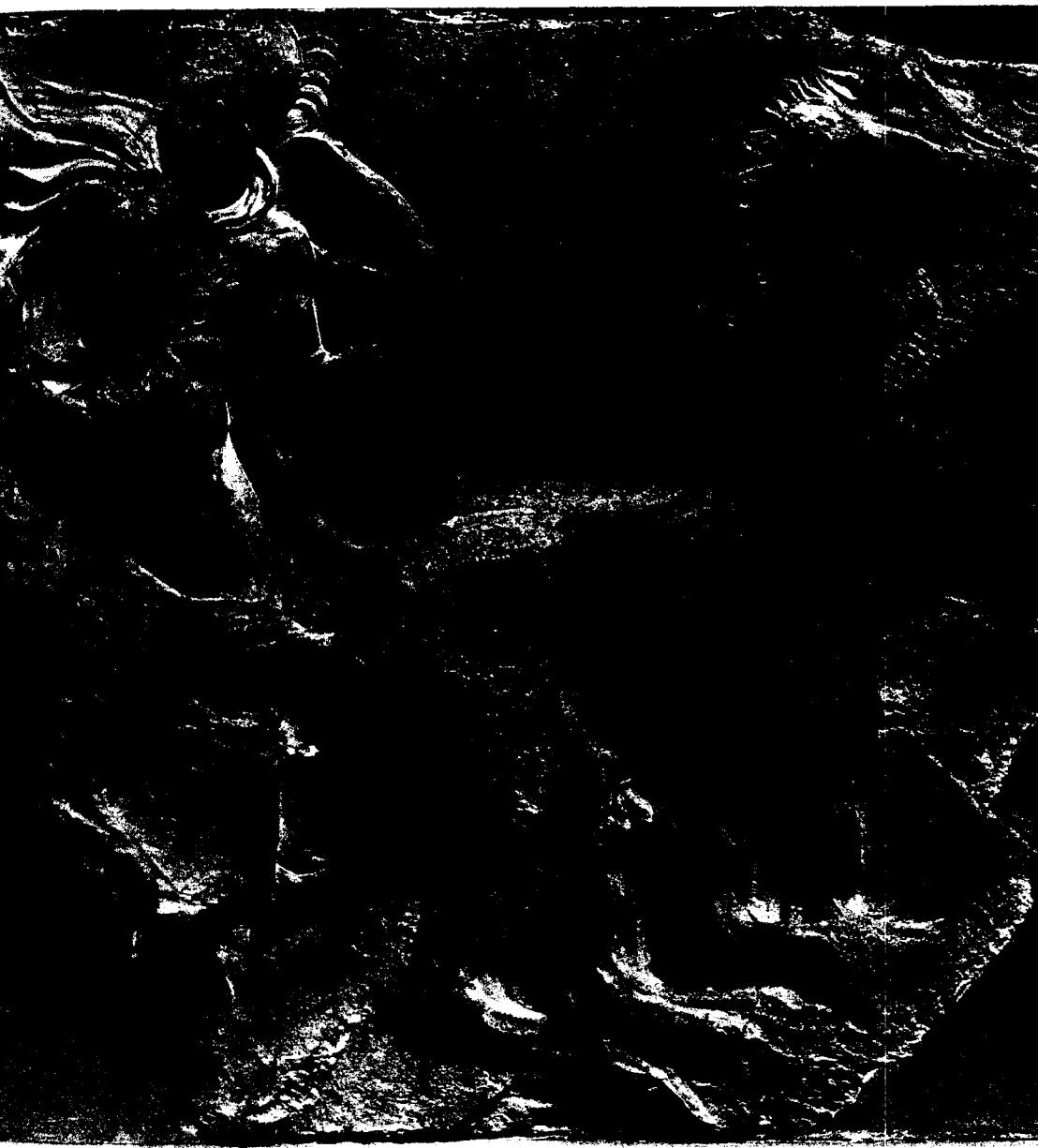
⁹ The whole question of just how much the designers of Greek architectural sculpture expected their contemporary audience to understand is an obscure one. In the inscriptions recording the expenses incurred during the building of the Erechtheion, payments to the sculptors who worked on the frieze of that building are noted (*J.G.* I² 374). From these we learn that the sculptors were paid for each figure carved and that the figures were recorded by such general descriptions as 'the man holding the spear, the horse and the man striking it, the woman and the small girl pressed against her'. Such descriptions perhaps suggest that the accountants, and possibly even the sculptors, did not know what the specific subjects of the carvings were.

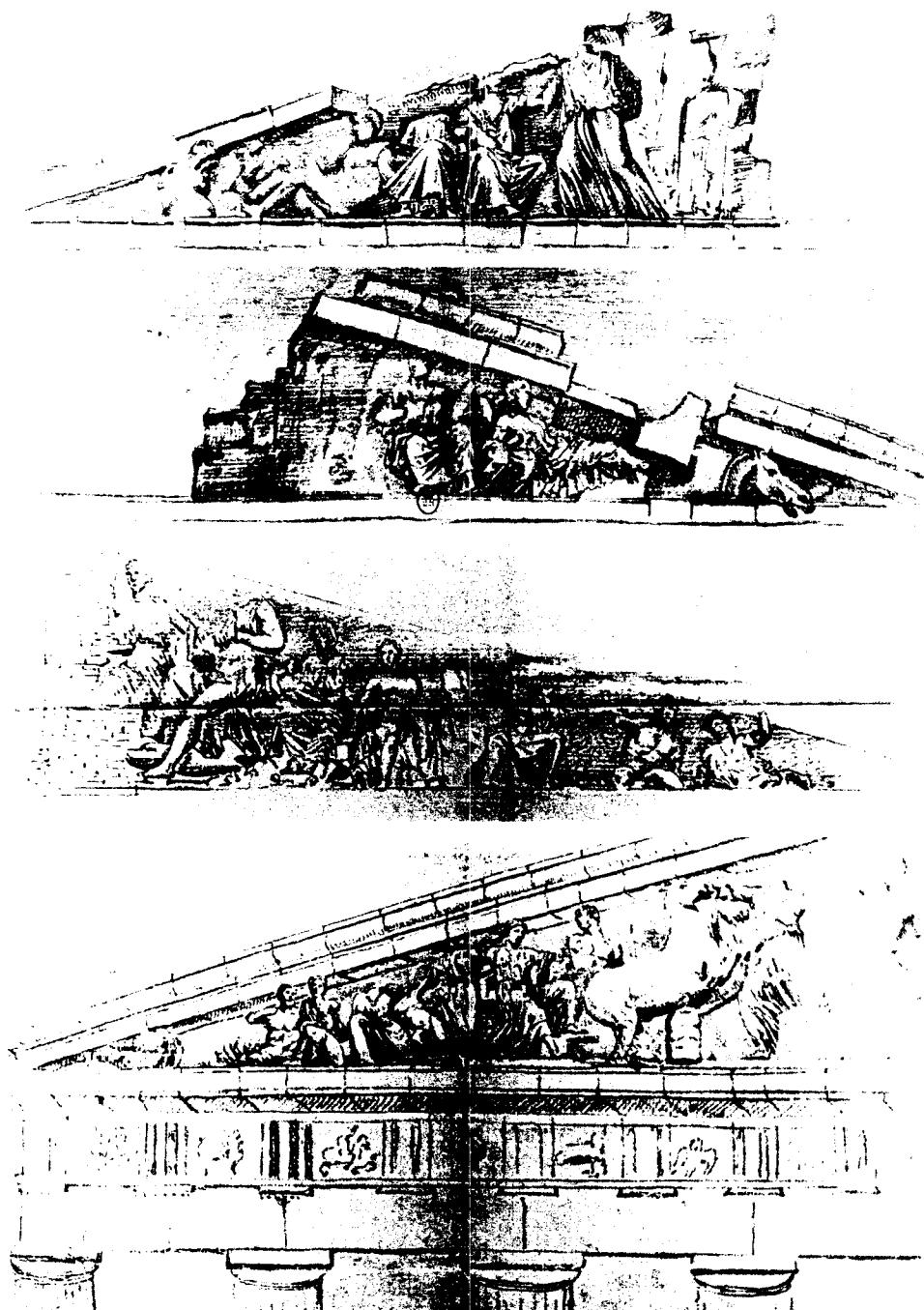
warrior which forms slab xxx of the south frieze [39]. It is as if an explosion had taken place just in front of the chariot and shock waves were enveloping the group. The lines composing the horses' heads and manes seem like sudden flames and are carried across the panel by the crest of the warrior's helmet and by his cloak as it ripples violently in the wind. The wind-blown, fleeting impression which the group makes serves as a reminder of the transiency of sense-perception even in a setting where men are approximating divinity. It seems again to emphasize man's role as the measurer of things, and, in contradistinction to the Kleobis and Biton, for example, to anchor even the most Olympian subject to the human dimension. Perhaps this is why the impressionistic element of the Parthenon style becomes especially apparent in the pediments of the temple, where the divine forces which brought Athens into being and sustained it in days of greatness are extolled.

The pedimental sculptures of the Parthenon suffered grievously in the explosion of 1687, and it is easier today to appreciate the splendor of individual surviving figures than of the pedimental compositions as a whole. We know from a brief statement by Pausanias that the east pedimental group represented the birth of Athena and the west the struggle between Athena and Poseidon for the overlordship of Athens. Only one original element from either group is still in place on the building (the 'Kekrops and Pandrossos figures' in the west pediment), but we can form some idea of the original appearance of the entire west pediment and the flanks of the east pediment from drawings made in 1674 by an artist whose identity is not completely certain but who seems to have been Jacques Carrey, a painter attached to the suite of the French ambassador to Turkey [40].

In the center of the west pediment we must assume that Athena has just performed the decisive miracle which won her the right to be the protectress of Athens – she has made an olive tree miraculously spring up on the Acropolis – and she and Poseidon draw back excitedly at its appearance. On either side of them are chariot groups accompanied by attendant messenger deities, Hermes on the side of Athena, and Iris on the side of Poseidon. Flanking the chariot groups are smaller figures who seem to have represented members of the legendary founding families of Athens. All of these figures, beginning with the explosive V-shape formed by Athena and Poseidon, give the impression of being agitated by shock waves radiating from the miraculous center of the pediment. In the windblown rushing figure of Iris [41] we are confronted with a figure whose effect is created almost exclusively by the vibrant play of irregular patterns of light and shade over its surface. The Parthenon sculptors' concentration on the optical, subjective dimension of sculptural experience is now fully developed. Light and shade have become the tools of a new expressionism.

39. Parthenon, south frieze, slab no. xxx.





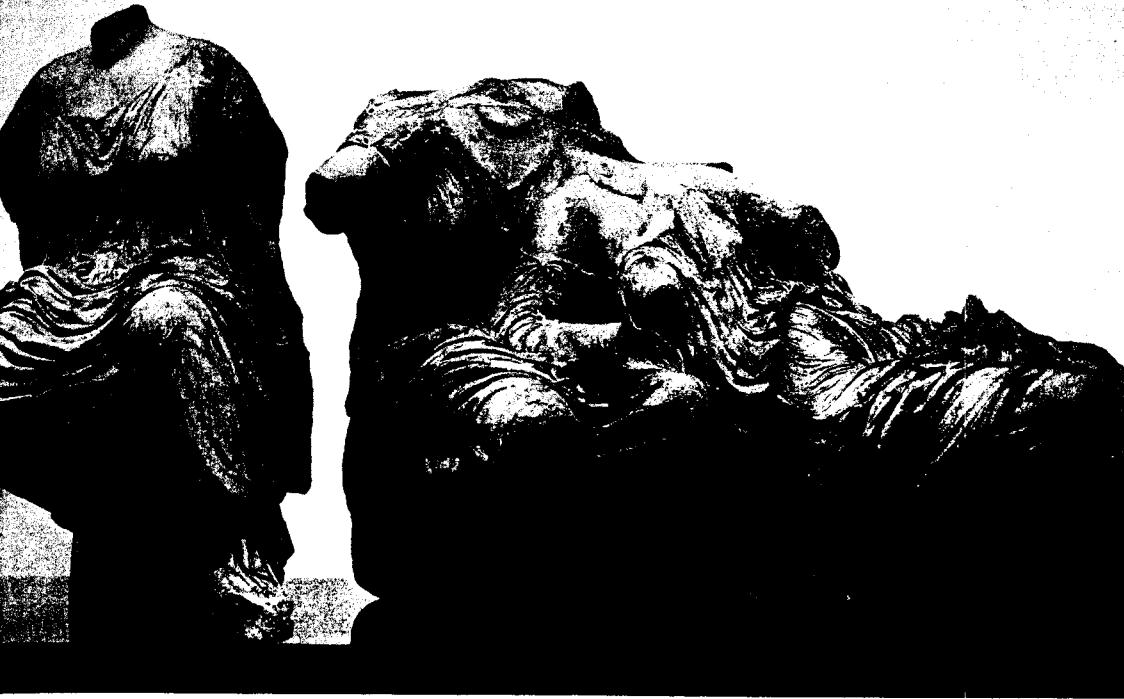
40. Drawings by Jacques Carrey (?) of the east (above) and west (below) pediments of the Parthenon as they appeared in 1674.



41. Parthenon, west pediment, Iris, c. 438–432 B.C. Height as preserved, approx. 4' 5".

The central figures of the east pediment are totally lost. From what appear to be copies of parts of the central group in later Greek and Roman sculpture and vase painting, modern scholarship has been able to produce reasonable restorations of what its general appearance might have been, but the identification, position, and format of the individual figures are highly controversial, and it would require a separate book even to summarize them. For our purposes it suffices to say that the center must have been occupied by a seated figure of Zeus, and by Athena herself, fully grown and fully armed, already embodying the new Athens. These figures probably created an explosive center, as in the west pediment, the effect of which was carried out in progressive stages through the now missing attendant deities immediately flanking it to the preserved figures on the far edges of each side. At the ultimate boundary, in the narrow corners of the gable, the scene is framed by the rising of Helios (the sun) and his horses on the left (south) and the sinking of Selene (goddess of the moon) or Nyx (night) on the right. These figures, marking the horizon and the procession of the heavens, seem intended to emphasize that the pediment depicts an orderly cosmos of which Athens, in the form of Athena, forms the center along with Zeus, the source of divine power, and with Hephaistos, the god of *technē* and hence of human achievement. It has been suggested by Evelyn Harrison that the other deities in the pediment were perhaps disposed on the north and south sides of this central group in accordance with the geographical location of their cult centers or shrines in ancient Athens, and that they symbolized, through their own mythological characters, through their relationship to one another, and through their relationship to Athena, different aspects of the Athenian *polis*.¹⁰ This close association which seems to have been felt between the gods of the pediment and the life and land of Athens may also be expressed in a purely abstract way by the style of some of the figures, which seems to connote earth forms and natural forces. The drapery of the famous group of three goddesses on the north side of the pediment [42], for example, often conventionally called the 'Three Fates' but probably representing Hestia, Dione, and Aphrodite, is carved in bold, whirling, heavily shadowed folds which suggest the cascading of a waterfall over a mountainside. The same effect is felt with slight differences on the opposite side where a goddess with her cape billowing out behind her, probably Artemis, rushes like the wind across the sky to bring the news of Athena's birth to two seated goddesses whose heavy forms convey an earth-bound solidity and who are, in fact, probably Demeter and Kore, the deities *par excellence* of earth [43]. Next to them a relaxed but massive and powerful male figure reclining on an

¹⁰ Cf. Evelyn B. Harrison 'Athena and Athens in the East Pediment of the Parthenon', *American Journal of Archaeology* 71 (1967) 27–58.



42. Parthenon, east pediment, figures 'K', 'L', and 'M', perhaps Hestia, Dione, and Aphrodite. Length of 'L', 'M' approx. 7' 8".

animal skin, confronts the rising sun. The undulating, gradual transitions between the details of the musculature of his torso call to mind a sun-lit hillside which balances the 'watery shape' suggested by the 'Three Fates' group. He has been identified as Dionysos or, perhaps even more plausibly as Herakles,¹¹ the man who through his achievements became a divinity and thus symbolized that bridging of the gap between the human and the divine which is so characteristic of the thinking of the Parthenon's designers.

The Parthenon and the Classic moment

The difficulties involved in defining the words 'classic' and 'classical' were pointed out at the beginning of this book. Now that some of the products of the

¹¹ It can be objected that the birth of Athena preceded the admission of Herakles to Olympos in 'mythological time', and that Herakles should logically not be present at the goddess' birth. It may be, however, that symbolic values outweighed the demands of literal narrative in the mind of the pediment's designer.

The different interpretations of this figure, known simply as 'D' in the scholarly literature, are summarized by F. Brommer in *Die Skulpturen der Parthenon-Giebel* (Mainz 1963) pp. 148–50, to which add: Harrison's observations in the article cited in the previous note and Rhys Carpenter 'On Restoring the East Pediment of the Parthenon', *American Journal of Archaeology* 66 (1962) 265–8 (Carpenter identifies the figure as Ares).

High Classical style have been examined, we can appropriately return to this question, not to frame general definitions but rather to isolate what might seem to be characteristic of the works to which the terms are applied. In Archaic Greek art the genre of particular things had outweighed their specific, individual qualities in artistic representation. Hence abstraction, expressed through the geometricization of natural forms, dominated Archaic art. In the fourth century, as we shall see, it is possible to detect the first indications of a taste, which would mature in the Hellenistic period, for the representation of specifics without any emphatic suggestion of the genre or form (in the Platonic sense) from which they were derived. Realism, in short, began to undermine the long-standing role of abstraction in Greek art. In the art of the High Classical period, and particularly in the art of the Parthenon, these two poles of artistic thinking – the absolute and the relative – seem to have been magically balanced. The relativity of sense experience (e.g. optical refinements) co-exists, as we have seen, with absolute concepts like 'number'. The mutability of nature, unformed and unreflective, represented by the mountains and the sea which ring the Acropolis are pitted against the formal perfection, seemingly symbolic of the human mind's capacity for abstract thought, of architectural order. The mortal natures of the processionists of the frieze are

43. Parthenon, east pediment, figures 'A' through 'G', perhaps Helios and his horses, Herakles, Demeter and Kore, and Artemis. Height of 'G' approx. 5' 8".



infused with the traits of undying divinity. Historical time in the west pediment was given equal weight with what seems to have been a symbol of timeless cosmic order in the east.

Besides being an outgrowth of a new anthropocentric drift in Greek philosophy, which we have already discussed, the Classical moment also seems to reflect, in fact to be a projection of, the sense of group solidarity which Pericles' eloquence, combined with prosperity and a degree of luck, had forged in Athens. A Greek *polis*, when understood as a particular pattern of life and not just a geographical grouping of people and their belongings, was essentially an abstract conception just as a 'nation' is today. Personal life, on the other hand, is basically a succession of particular, concrete interests and experiences. In Periclean Athens, if we may believe the picture presented to us in the Funeral Oration, the latter, for many citizens at least, came to be merged without friction into the former. What an individual wanted for himself and what he owed to the ideal were in harmony.

In the same persons there is at once a concern for private and for civic affairs; and even among those whose attention is usually turned to their private occupation, there is no lack of understanding of civic matters. For we alone regard the man who takes no part in civic affairs not as unconcerned, but as useless . . .

Belief in the group, in society raised to the level of an abstraction and revered as a quasi-deity, seems to have been an essential ingredient in the atmosphere of the High Classical period and its art. When the belief was shaken, as we shall see, the artistic style which it sustained lost its cohesion.

The Pheidian style and spirit

In spite of the frequency with which his name enters into discussions of High Classical Greek art, Pheidias remains a shadowy figure. How well he knew Pericles, to what extent he had absorbed the thought of Protagoras or Anaxagoras, to what extent he himself really shared or helped to formulate the convictions which Thucydides ascribes to Pericles – these are unanswerable questions. We know Pheidias and his feelings only through the art which is ascribed to him.

Ancient writers give us a confused and troubling picture of his later years. He was accused of embezzling some of the precious materials used on the Athena *Parthenos* and left Athens in disgrace, either as a fugitive or as an exile. While there is some evidence that the condemnation of Pericles' artistic overseer was an indirect attack by political opponents on Pericles himself, it is not impossible that Pheidias was actually guilty as charged. In the years following his departure from Athens he worked on the great image of Zeus at Olympia, after which he either died in exile or returned to Athens where he was imprisoned and executed.

Either way, it was a strange fate for an artist who must be considered one of the great and influential intellectuals of the fifth century. Thucydides' history seems not to have been written, and certainly not generally known, until well after the hey-day of Periclean Athens. Sophocles and Euripides were as often critics as apologists of their home city. It was really Pheidias who, by forging a style which gave external, symbolic form to the Periclean vision and by carrying it abroad to the panhellenic sanctuaries, particularly through the Olympian Zeus, made it possible for the rest of the Greeks to appreciate and to an extent participate in the Athenian experience.

Today, even when we may doubt that the master's hand is anywhere in evidence on them, we look first of all at the sculptures of the Parthenon in order to understand the spirit of Pheidias' work. In Antiquity it is clear, however, that one thought of Pheidias above all as the creator of two great chryselephantine cult images – the Athena Parthenos and the Zeus at Olympia. The appearance of these images can be reconstructed to an extent from literary descriptions, diminutive and partial copies, and representations on coins and other small media, but their real force and grandeur is lost to us. Each image, as the ancient sources make clear, was adorned with a series of decorative details which brought together a variety of significant themes, just like the temples in which they were placed.

The Athena *Parthenos*, for example, held an image of Victory in her right hand. Her left hand rested on a large shield which bore an Amazonomachy in relief on its exterior and Gigantomachy (possibly painted) on its concave interior. On her sandals were reliefs representing a Centauromachy, and the base which supported the statue was decorated with a relief showing the birth of Pandora in the presence of a group of deities. Thus the goddess who was the embodiment of Athenian intellectual and cultural attainments was adorned with familiar symbols of the triumph of order and civilization over chaos and barbarism on all levels. But she rested on a base in which Pandora, 'The All Endowing One', fashioned by Hephaistos and given life by Athena, was shown making her first appearance in the world. The choice of this last myth is puzzling and provocative. Every Classical Greek knew from Hesiod that Pandora was sent by Zeus to punish mankind for having received fire, perhaps symbolic of technology and self-assertion, from Prometheus. She brought to mankind grace and beauty, but also desire; the arts, but also toil; intellect, but also guile and deceit. Before Prometheus and the coming of Pandora men had lived, as Hesiod tells us, 'free from ills, and without harsh toil' like Adam and Eve before the Fall. Afterwards, there would be struggle and triumph but also peril. Perhaps in choosing the Pandora myth Pheidias was hinting that since the Athenians had received the real blessings of Pandora they must

also be prepared to accept her curses. Athens had reached her cultural pre-eminence through risks and struggle, and there was now no going back to a world without cares. This too, if we look again at the Funeral Oration, was one of Pericles' themes:

But none of these [the fallen Athenian soldiers] allowed either wealth with its prospect of future enjoyment to unnerve his spirit, or poverty with its hope of a day of freedom and riches to tempt him to shrink from danger . . . For it is not the miserable that would most justly be unsparing of their lives; these have nothing to hope for: it is rather they to whom continued life may bring reverses as yet unknown, and to whom a fall, if it came, would be most tremendous in its consequences.

Pheidias, like his Early Classical predecessors, perhaps at times knew the old doubt as well as confidence, and should perhaps be understood as a prophet as well as a propagandist.

The Zeus at Olympia, executed after the *Parthenos* (hence after 438 B.C.) and probably Pheidias' last great work, can be shown to have had similar thematic complexities when all the details in Pausanias' description of it are analyzed. But too close an analysis might tend to obscure the fact that the principal effect of this image, and apparently of all Pheidian art, was what one might call an 'Olympian' feeling, that is, the feeling of an atmosphere associated with the Olympian gods, who were thought of as emotionally disengaged from, but at the same time conscious of, the human condition. An ancient anecdote recounted that when Pheidias was asked what model he used in making his Zeus, he cited not a human model but some lines from Homer:

Thus spoke the son of Kronos and nodded his dark brow and the ambrosial locks flowed down from the lord's immortal head, and he made great Olympos quake. (*Iliad* I. 527-30)

Pheidian sculpture stood somewhere between the complete aloofness of most Archaic art and the deep involvement in specific characters and emotions of most Early Classical art. Like the Parthenon figures, all Pheidian sculpture seems to have projected a state of mind which was detached but not remote, aware but not involved.

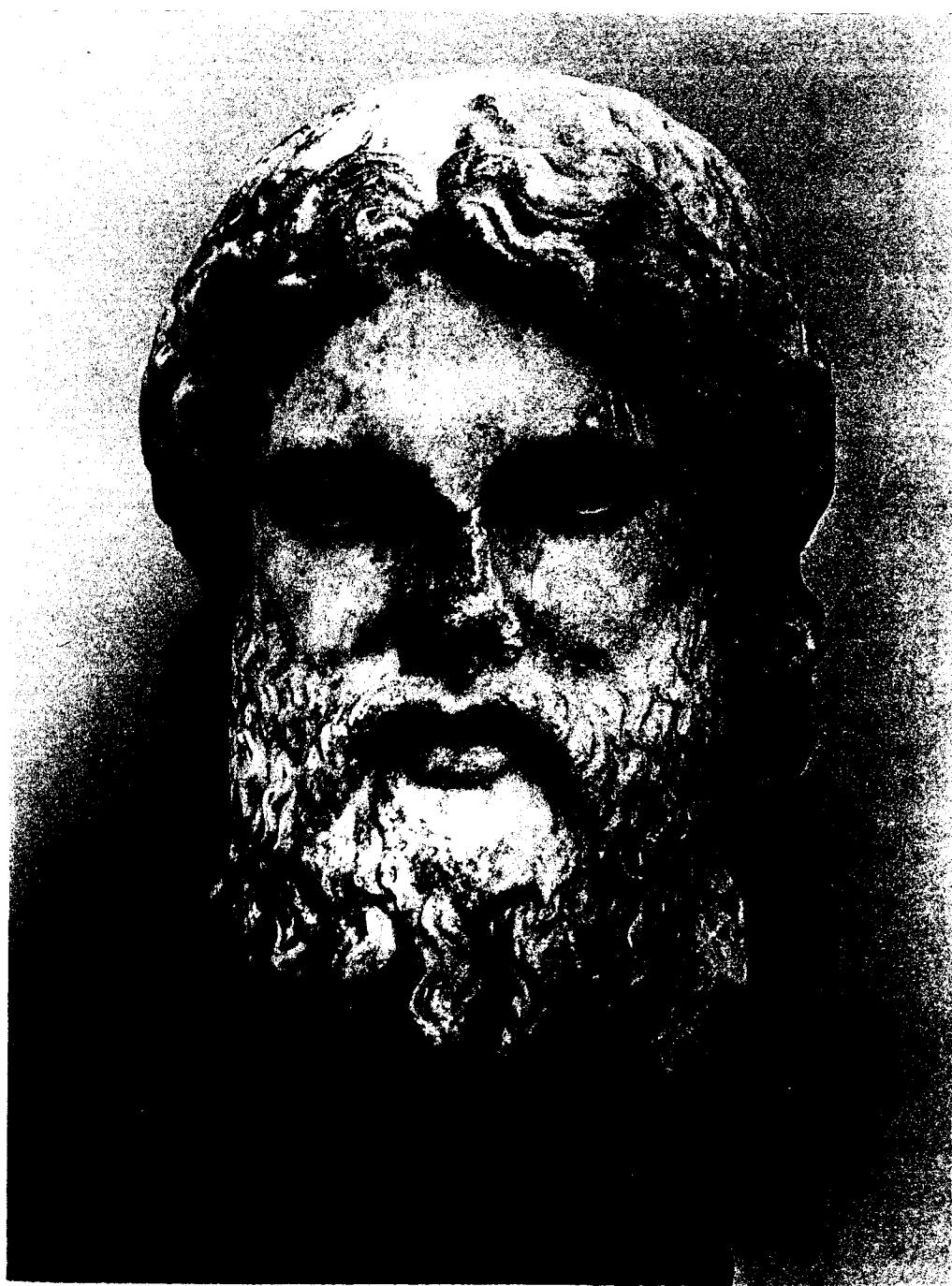
It is the literary descriptions of the effect of the Zeus, rather than Pausanias' factual description, which bring us closest to it. Quintilian felt that it 'added something to traditional religion'. And Dio Chrysostom gives us a hint as to what Quintilian's remark meant: ' . . . whoever might be burdened with pain of the soul, having borne many misfortunes and pains in his life and never being able to attain sweet sleep, even that man, I believe, standing before this image, would forget all the terrible and harsh things which one must suffer in human life'.

It is probably fair to say that no cult image after the time of Pheidias was ever

without his stamp. The Zeus and Athena became prototypical standards for the representation of divinity, standards which in the opinion of the later Hellenistic and Roman critics, were the products of the spiritual intuition of a great sage. 'When he was in the process of making the form of his Zeus and Athena', says Cicero (*Orator* 9), 'Pheidias did not contemplate any human model from whom he took a likeness, but rather some extraordinary vision of beauty was present in his mind, and, fixing his attention on it and intuiting its nature, he directed his hand and his art toward making a likeness from it.' 'To such a degree', adds Quintilian, 'did the majesty of the work do justice to the deity.' Among extant monuments it is, if anything, in later works influenced by the Pheidian types, rather than in rough copies, that we can participate in the spirit of Pheidias' masterpieces. The head of Zeus from Mylasa in Caria, now in Boston [44], and the bronze Athena recently discovered in Peiraeus, both probably products of the second half of the fourth century B.C., and more generally the Serapis type [74] by the fourth-century sculptor Bryaxis, all seem imbued with a Pheidian spirit and are perhaps later variations on sculptural types which Pheidias created.

Using this 'Olympian feeling' as an emotional index and the sculptures of the Parthenon as a stylistic index, a number of works known in Roman copies – e.g. the presumed 'Athena Lemnia', and the Tiber Apollo – have with some justice been attributed to Pheidias and still others to his renowned pupils, like Alkamenes and Agorakritos. Perhaps one of the more significant and sound of these attributions is the identification of a portrait of Pericles known from good copies in the British Museum and the Vatican with the 'Olympian Pericles' of the sculptor Kresilas [45] mentioned by Pliny. Kresilas was a native of Kydonia in Crete, but judging by the number of dedicatory statue bases with his signature found in Athens, he must have been part of Pheidias' circle. The aloof but aware feeling in this portrait, the original of which was most probably a full-length bronze, must have contrasted strikingly with the seemingly 'involved' portrait of Themistokles created a generation earlier [26].

Identification of the lost works of Pheidias and his followers must, however, always be surrounded by controversy. For a more immediate and less speculative example of the spread of Pheidian Olympianism and how it penetrated to a popular level of consciousness in Athens, we can turn once again to Attic red-figure vase painting. As I have indicated previously the gap between the painters who worked in larger media and the vase painters tended to widen as the fifth century progressed, and vase painting tended to become increasingly a minor art. But even so, there always seem to have been one or two artists who managed to overcome the seeming limitations of the medium and achieve that harmony of form and meaning,



44. Head of Zeus from Mylasa in Caria, marble, c. 350 B.C. Height $18\frac{1}{2}$ ".



45. Portrait of Pericles, Roman copy in marble of a bronze original, c. 440–430 B.C. Height approx. $23\frac{1}{4}$ ".

of intention and technique, which had characterized the finest Greek vase painting of the earlier eras. Such an artist was the Achilles Painter, who was probably about the same age as Pheidias (i.e. active between 460 and 430 B.C.) and seems to have grown into the Pheidian style. In one of the earliest works attributed to him, a bell-krater [46] probably executed around the time of the Olympia temple sculptures (see pp. 32 ff.), the vivid face of the bearded old warrior who is conversing with a younger man (the latter's face now broken) – his knitted eyebrows, wrinkled face, and intense gaze – belong to the Early Classical tradition of character drawing. As on several of the Olympia metopes the figures are at rest, and yet one feels that their confrontation may be part of a dramatic narrative. Even if we do not know precisely what the subject of the scene is, it is clear that a dialogue is going on, and emotions appropriate to a particular narrative situation are being expressed. By contrast, in the works executed by the Achilles Painter twenty years or so later, this narrative style is submerged in favor of a Pheidian Olympianism. The figure of Achilles on the amphora in the Vatican [47] which gave the painter his name seems to have stepped out of the Parthenon frieze. Specific emotion yields to a serene, unruffled presence. The face, particularly the eyes, which are now drawn with



46. *Krater* by the Achilles Painter, c. 460-450 B.C. Height $14\frac{1}{2}$ ".

long eyelashes and the pupil and iris clearly contrasted, is full of potential expression, but that expression does not seem to be qualified by any specific situation.

The same is true of the many white-ground *lekythoi* executed by the Achilles Painter and his followers. In the hands of lesser artists the Olympianism of the Achilles Painter sometimes became mere vapidity, but these white-ground vases, perhaps because most of them were used as funeral offerings or for funeral ceremonies, have a quiet poignancy which calls to mind the unflinching, unregretting, but not unfeeling acceptance of death of the Funeral Oration.



47. *Amphora* by the Achilles Painter, c. 440 B.C. Height 23⁵/₈.

There were other very gifted vase painters in this era like the Kleophon Painter [48], who also absorbed the spirit and even the motifs of the Parthenon style [compare with 38] but used a more free (at times even casual), expansive style of drawing which at times has a monumentality scarcely containable in vase painting. The viewer often finds himself thinking what the artist might have done if he had been working in a grander medium. The self-sufficiency of earlier red-figure, its crisp linearity and untroubled subordination of content to design, had already begun to show signs of strain in the Early Classical period, and its breakup is now carried one gentle step further. But while the vases produced in the 440s and 430s may not have their predecessors' appeal purely as *objets d'art*, the best of them capture the assertive freedom and dignity which were part of their era.

Polykleitos: new versions of old formulae

The one non-Athenian sculptor of the High Classical period whose merit was not eclipsed by the brilliance of Periclean Athens was Polykleitos. In the Hellenistic and Roman periods his work stood second only to that of Pheidias in the admiration of connoisseurs. Polykleitos' native city Argos, had been neutral during the



48. Krater by the Kleophon Painter, c. 430 B.C. Height of vase approx. 26".

Persian Wars, and later, while usually favoring Athens over Sparta in the great power struggle which occupied the remainder of the fifth century, the Argives for the most part managed to avoid being swept up in the more debilitating phases of that conflict. Argos was spared the emotional shocks and revolutions which seized Athens. It was a good place for older traditions to survive.

Polykleitos was remembered in Antiquity as the chief master and foremost exponent of the principle of *symmetria*, 'commensurability of parts', in art. Around the middle of the fifth century, or shortly thereafter, he wrote a treatise, known as the *Canon*, in which he delineated and apparently sought to justify the system of *symmetria* which he had developed for representing the human body in sculpture. The *Canon* seems to have been well-known and influential, in its intent at least, in later times. During the fourth century a number of important artists – for example, the sculptor Lysippos (see pp. 174 ff.), the painter-sculptor Euphranor, and the painter Parrhasius – also propounded systems of *symmetria*, apparently emulating (although not duplicating) Polykleitos' work.

The basic idea behind the *symmetria* principle, that an artistic composition should consist of clearly definable parts, was a venerable one in Greek art. It existed, as we have seen, in the Geometric period and continued in force throughout the Archaic period. Greek sculpture in particular in the Archaic period saw the development of workshop formulae of *symmetria* which seem to have been inspired by Egyptian prototypes, but underwent considerable local development.

What distinguished Polykleitos' system of *symmetria* from what had gone on before, however, was that it seems to have had philosophical content as well as a practical function. Its aim was to express what Polykleitos himself called *to eu*, 'the perfect' or 'the good', and what others seem to have called *to kallos*, 'the beautiful'. There is some evidence that the philosophical tradition which gave rise to and helped to shape this philosophical conception of *symmetria* was Pythagoreanism.

Although there are no extant writings by Pythagoras of Samos (active in the late sixth century B.C.) or by his immediate successors in the philosophical brotherhood which he founded at Croton in South Italy, many of their basic ideas are preserved by Aristotle in a summary of the views of the 'Pythagoreans' given in the *Metaphysics*. Like other pre-Socratic schools of philosophy the Pythagoreans were concerned with finding a substratum of some sort from which all visible phenomena could be explained. The substratum which they hit upon as fulfilling these functions was *number*, or more precisely, numbers. Numbers were seen as the basic constituents not only of physical bodies but of abstract qualities, like justice, as well. It was perhaps Pythagoras' own observation that the intervals needed to pro-

duce harmonic chords on the string of a lyre were expressible in a limited group of integers (2:1, 3:2 etc.) which led him to suggest that all distinct phenomena resulted from the imposition of numerical limit on an infinite continuum. If musical sounds could be reduced to a series of consonant proportions, so too, perhaps, could the stars, planets, and the diverse objects on earth. In Aristotle's words, 'The qualities of numbers exist in a musical scale (*harmonia*), in the heavens, and in many other things' (*Met.* 1090 a 23). To some Pythagoreans, at least, the contemplation of numerical harmony in diverse phenomena had a spiritual end; contemplation of 'divine' patterns was seen as a means of purifying the soul and preparing it for a higher state of being.

How much of this doctrine was known to Polykleitos and appealed to him is a matter of guesswork, but his term *to eu*, 'the perfect', does have Pythagorean overtones,¹² and it may be that in expressing this quality through a harmony of parts in sculptural form, he was attempting to give expression to an ideal conception of human 'nature', a divine pattern which expressed the essential nature of man in Pythagorean terms.

It is interesting to note, as a parenthesis, that the gap between the Archaic workshop formulae of *symmetria* and Polykleitos' philosophical elaboration upon it, is spanned by the Early Classical period and that one of the sculptors who was most influential during this period was named Pythagoras. One interpretation of the literary evidence suggests that this Pythagoras migrated, like his namesake the philosopher, from Samos to South Italy. Moreover, according to Diogenes Laertios, 'he was the first to have aimed at *rhythmos* [see p. 58] and *symmetria*'. One cannot help but wonder whether the sculptor Pythagoras might not have been, philosophically speaking, a Pythagorean, and hence been the first to attribute philosophical significance to sculptural proportions. Unfortunately no work by the sculptor Pythagoras, even in Roman copies, can be identified with reasonable certainty, and we have little evidence as to how his work compared in form and intent with that of Polykleitos.¹³

In turning from the literary tradition to the monuments we find that it is probably impossible to reconstruct Polykleitos' famed *Canon* of *symmetria* in detail but that one can quite easily 'feel' the presence of a harmonious system in the works which are ascribed to him in Roman copies. In the *Doryphoros* ('Spear-bearer') [49], for example, however its arithmetical or geometrical proportions

¹² Cf. Aristotle *Metaphysics* 1092 b 26, where, by implication it appears that the Pythagoreans used the phrase to express the ethical and spiritual good which was derived from the contemplation of numerical proportion; also Plato *Timaeus* 68E where it refers to the 'good' in all generated phenomena fashioned by the cosmic Demiurge, a passage which may reflect Pythagorean influence.

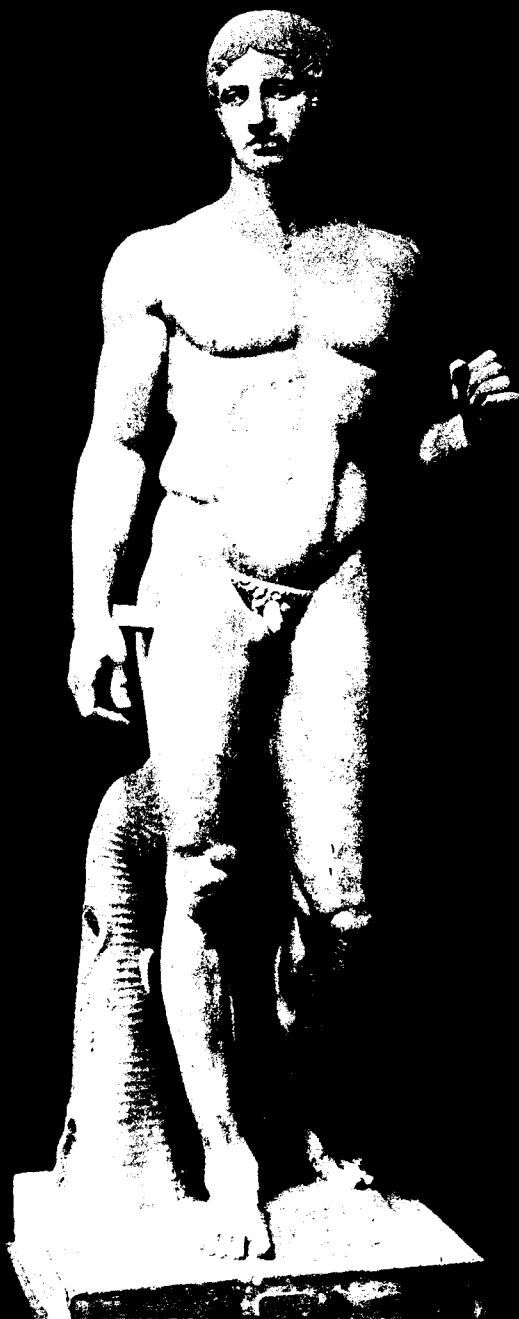
¹³ See, however, p. 58, n. 16.

may have been measured, there is a visible harmony of counterbalancing forces achieved by arranging the parts of the body in a chiastic scheme: the straight, weight-bearing right leg is balanced by the bent, weight-bearing (the spear) left arm; the free but flexed left leg is balanced by the free but straight right arm; the raised right knee opposes the lowered left hip and *vice versa*; the head turns to the right while the torso and hips are twisted slightly to the left. There is also a balance between motion and stability: he is taking a step, yet he is statically balanced. In the *Diadoumenos* ('Youth binding a fillet on his hair') the same features, plus an additional contrast of the axis of the hips against that of the shoulders, are apparent. In fact, this system of balances can be found to a degree in every work which can reasonably be associated with Polykleitos for other than purely stylistic reasons.

In spite of his strongly traditional interests, a number of features clearly link Polykleitos' work in spirit with the art of Periclean Athens. The goal of his system of *symmetria* was to describe an ideal nature in man, as in the sculptures of the Parthenon. He also concentrated on harmonizing opposing forces. What the Parthenon artists did with light and shade, with substance and impression, with the knowable and the apparent, Polykleitos did with theoretical proportions and the eye's perception of them: he developed a form in which the commensurability which one *knew* to exist was also *felt* or sensed to exist.

The literary sources give no indication, however, that Pheidias and his pupils and contemporaries at Athens shared Polykleitos' preoccupation with the theory of *symmetria*. In itself this preoccupation marks Polykleitos as an Argive traditionalist. The same may be said about the types of statues which he produced. The original *Diadoumenos*, for example, must have been a votive statue in bronze set up to commemorate an athletic victory in one of the panhellenic sanctuaries. The *Doryphoros* is recorded to have been a kind of display piece made as an illustration of Polykleitos' *Canon*; but it too probably stood in some public place as part of a votive or sepulchral monument. The greater part of Polykleitos' effort, in fact, was probably devoted to making athlete figures upon specific commission, and this simple fact of his professional life links him with earlier traditions of Greek sculpture rather than with contemporary developments at Athens.

It is fair to ask, then, whether Polykleitos was influenced at all in any direct way by Athens and Pheidias, and whether there is ~~any~~ historical, as well as a thematic unity, between the two greatest sculptors of the High Classical period. It would appear that there was. Polykleitos seems to have been increasingly influenced by the Pheidian style as his own career progressed. Athens and Argos were on good terms, and it is not improbable that he visited Athens on occasion and saw the Parthenon and other projects take shape. And of course almost every Greek must



49. *Doryphoros* of Polykleitos, Roman copy in marble of a bronze original, c. 450-440 B.C. Height approx. 6' 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

have seen Pheidias' image of Zeus at Olympia at one time or another. If dating by the stylistic details (particularly the rendering of the hair) of Roman copies has any validity, the *Doryphoros* would seem to date from about 450 B.C. and the *Diadoumenos*, with its richer, more plastic hair, from about 430. In the interim between these two works a certain 'Pheidelianization' seems to have taken place. While both, as so many critics have pointed out, represent an idealized vision of youth, the *Doryphoros* has a rather neutral and strictly theoretical feeling, while the *Diadoumenos*, perhaps because of the meditative cast of the head and the fact that it represents a specific action within the format of a completely relaxed pose, seems to have taken on some of the Olympianism of the Parthenon frieze. Like the riders of the Parthenon frieze, it suggests conscious reflection even when devoid of emotion. If this comparison seems too subjective, it can also be noted that around 420 B.C. Polykleitos undertook to do a colossal gold and ivory statue of Hera for a new temple at the Argive Heraion, thus becoming, either under pressure or by predilection, both a rival and successor to Pheidias in the genre of sculpture for which the Athenian master was best known.