4 Godsbodies

Is **this** a god's body [Apollo of Tenea]? Is **this** a goddess [Berlin Standing Goddess]? (**click again**) Herodotos had no doubt that the Greek gods were textual constructs. In the course of his discussion of what the Greeks owed to the Egyptians, Herodotos says it was Homer and Hesiod four hundred years before his time who had given the Greeks an account of how the gods came to be and had defined what the gods were called, what their reputations and means were, and their forms.[1]

Greek intellectuals not infrequently adopted a viewpoint akin to that of Herodotos, giving priority to the textual description of gods. In a story told much later by Strabo, Panainos, the nephew of the sculptor Pheidias and his collaborator at Olympia, asked him 'after what model he intended to make the image of Zeus' and, Pheidias 'said that he would make it to the image set out by Homer when he wrote: "Kronion spoke, and nodded assent with his dark brows, and then the ambrosial locks flowed from the immortal head of the lord and he made great Olympos quake"'.[2]

Pheidias' Olympian Zeus has not survived, and although the excavation of Pheidias' workshop at Olympia has recovered **moulds** and templates which show something of the detailed appearance of some parts of the statue, our knowledge of its appearance is dependent upon ancient descriptions and the inadequate images struck **on coins** or Elis or carved on gemstones. Nevertheless we can be confident that, for all that Pheidias may have succeeded in creating a god who looked as if he might nod assent with his dark brows and cause Olympos to quake, Homer's descriptions of Zeus, either in this or in other passages, provided no evidence at all for most of the features displayed by the statue.

[1] Herodotos 2.53.2 (quote Greek).
[2] Strabo 8.3.30, quoting *Iliad* 1.528–30. The idea that Pheidias' Zeus embodied Homer's description is already found in Polybius 30.10.6, where that view is put in the mouth of Lucius Aemilius Paulus.

As with the lines from *Iliad* 1 quoted by Strabo, and as Herodotos' own comment stresses, what Greek texts indicated about gods was their effects. From Homer and Hesiod we get a very extensive idea of what the gods could do, what their interests and motivations were, and of how the gods interacted with one another and with mortals. But even, perhaps especially, when gods make an appearance to mortals, what they looked like is at best hinted at. When Aphrodite intervenes in battle to save her son Aineias from Diomedes, we get a glimpse of the white arms she flings around her son, but apart from the place in her hand upon the wrist above the palm from which the ichor flows, causing her flesh to darken, after Diomedes has pierced her with a spear, no hint is given of her bodily appearance.[3] More remarkably still, even at the point at which her seduction of Aineias father, Anchises, is described in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, the description works by simile and by concentration not on the body but on the clothing:

> Aphrodite the daughter of Zeus stood before him, being like a unbroken maiden in height and form… When Anchises saw her, he marked her well and wondered at her form and stature and shining garments. For she was clad in a robe out-shining the brightness of fire, a splendid robe of gold, enriched with all manner of needlework, which shimmered like the moon over her tender breasts, a marvel to see. She wore twisted brooches and shining earrings in the form of flowers, and round her soft throat were lovely necklaces.[4]

And when Aphrodite has assured Anchises, falsely, of her status and he takes off her clothes before making love to her, it is the clothes that we are told about, not the body that is revealed:

> And when they had climbed into the well-constructed bed, Anchises first took off the shining jewellery from her flesh, the pins and the twisted brooches, earrings and

[3] *Iliad* 5.311–54.
[4] *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 81–90.

necklaces, and he loosed her belt and stripped off her bright garments and placed them upon a silver-studded chair.[5]

Even when she wakes Anchises next morning, and reveals herself as a goddess, the poet makes reference only to the fact that 'immortal beauty shone from her cheeks' and that Anchises realises that she is a goddess on seeing her 'neck and lovely eyes'.[6]

The absence of description of the body of Aphrodite in these passages does not, of course, mean that as far as the reader is concerned she has no body. The whole thrust of the seduction of Anchises would be lost if the reader took the view that what is not described in the text does not exist. The comparison to the unbroken maiden has the reader conjure up a young girl's body: it is by imagining the body of the young girl that we see the body of the goddess.[7] Because Aphrodite's body is not described it is necessarily indistinguishable from a woman's body. Richard Gordon's insistence that 'the non-existent, the fantastical, can be thought only in relation to that which has already been granted a place in the network of significations' is vital here.[8] And the indistinguishability of god's body from human body is of vital theological importance. For just as what goes undescribed is relied upon to give the narrative sense, so more generally the guarantee that the chaos that we observe on the surface of the world actually corresponds to a deeper order is provided by the fact that, however fantastic the particular actions attributed to the gods, gods act in ways just like the ways in which we act. To quote Gordon again 'fantasy worlds are not the pointless products of 'wild'

[5] *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 161–66
[6] *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* 174–5, 181.
[7] We might compare the way in which Plato has the beauty of the boy offer to the mind a glimpse of the Form of Beauty in *Phaedrus* (in a passage strongly contrasting with passages in other dialogues which insist that the senses are useless guides); see Nightingale (2004) 162–6.
[8] Gordon (1980) 20

imagination: they are necessarily better structured/than the 'real' human world. And if we cannot predict fantasy worlds, we can always in principle reconstruct their logic'.[9]

If that is all rather abstract, inscribed stories from the sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidauros provide a wonderful concrete example. In those stories, inscribed in the fourth century to advertise the power of the god to visitors to the healing sanctuary, the god does all sorts of fantastic things – making the blind to see, the dumb to speak, the lame to walk, and those pregnant for several years to give birth. But **the mechanisms** by which the god does so are always mechanisms which can be understood in human terms – binding a bandage around some marks a man has on his forehead so that they come off on the bandage, pouring a drug into an empty eye-socket to make an eye, cutting a man open to remove leeches inside him and sewing him up again, putting a drug on a man's head to cure his baldness. More than that, the stories construct a god with a character, who both makes jokes (causing a woman to be pregnant but not to give birth since she had only asked to be pregnant, not to be delivered of the child; causing one who tried spying on what went on to fall from a tree onto stakes which blinded him – only then to heal him). The structure of the fantasy here is precisely the structure of real life; the techniques of the healing god and the techniques of doctors are the same, gods like doctors need to be hands on and interventionist – but the god's techniques always work.

As both Asklepios and Aphrodite illustrate, when gods appear in texts they inevitably do things. What they do is theologically crucial. Already in the early fifth century Xenophanes of Kolophon complained that 'Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods everything that leads to blame and abuse among men – stealing, committing adultery, and deceiving each other'.[10] Such complaints are echoed by Plato who proposes in *Republic* to censor the stories that are told, eliminating those that make a bad representation of what gods

[9] Gordon (1980) 19–20.
[10] Xenophanes B11, quoted by Sextus *Adv. Math*. 9.193.

and heroes are. He targets Hesiod's stories of Kronos' castration of his father Ouranos and Cronos' subsequent swallowing of his own children, and then Homer's stories of arguments between the gods leading to Hera being bound, Hephaistos being thrown out from heaven.[11] But although the problem of the gods' actions is most obvious when those are actions which men regard as immoral, the problem that the gods' actions may not provide an appropriate model arises virtually as soon as they do anything. And Plato will indeed go on to suggest that episodes need to be rewritten in which Homer describes the children or close relatives of the gods, let alone the gods themselves, showing grief for men – reserving special criticism for Zeus grief at the death of Sarpedon.[12]

Xenophanes seems to have seen what the consequences were if one rejected immoral tales about gods: one could tell no tales about the gods at all. He claimed, accordingly, that there was 'one god, greatest among gods and men, in no way like mortals either in body (*demas*) or thought'.[13] Xenophanes' god had senses and could perceive but he did not move: 'without toil he shakes all things by the thoughts of his mind'.[14] Subsequent philosophical theology will come to very similar views.

Just as no one could write about the gods without making them do something, no one could create a visual image of a god without giving the god a body. The body that texts only imply, visual artists had to supply. If Xenophanes was right about god being not like mortals in body or thought, then god became incomprehensible and unrepresentable. The problem with texts about a god who was not like mortals in any respect was that no action could be attributed to such a god without those who read or heard the text importing assumptions about human action in order to comprehend that act, without the listener or reader turning the

[11] Plato *Republic* 2. 377b–378e.
[12] Plato *Repbulic* 3. 388a–c. The other examples are Achilles grief for Patroklos and Priam's for Hector.
[13] Xenophanes B23, quoted by Clement *Stromateis* 5.109.1
[14] Xenophanes B24–6, quoted by Sextus *Adv. Math.* 9.144 and Simplicius *In Phys.* 23.11 and 20.

god into a human. Xenophanes, again, famously observed that if cattle or horses or lions could draw they would draw the forms of the gods like cattle, horses and lions: 'they would make their bodies such as they each had themselves'.[15] What was surreptitious in the case of texts was immediate in the case of visual images: if god was not like mortals in body, then god could be given no body, for any body a god was given would be understood only through its likeness to something already known – if not the body of a human being then the body of an animal or an object. But if god was not like anything that men and women know, then how could men and women conceive what it was to be god, and how could god relate to humans?[16]

Given the difficulty of finding a role for a god who does not relate to humankind, it is perhaps not surprising that Xenophanes and subsequent philosophers had little influence on classical religious practice. But there are some signs that although Plato found much to censor in the Homeric and Hesiodic poems, that tradition was itself already censored. Gods may grieve in Homer and they may be wounded either by one another or, exceptionally, by mortals. But not only do they not die, they do not shed blood. It is ichor that flows in their veins, not blood.[17] Gods may have sex with each other and with mortals, but it turns out to be sex without any of the uncertainty that surrounds mortal sexual relations. When gods have sex with mortals, at least, there is invariably progeny, and divine pregnancies inevitably come to term, even if something drastic happens to the mother in the meanwhile – as we see in the case of Dionysos, and indeed of Athena. Unlike mortal bodies, gods' bodies are never dirty bodies. The god's body enjoys what Vernant has called 'corporeal plenitude', and it is by

[15] Xenophanes B 15, quoted by Clement *Stromateis* 5.109.3.
[16] There were, of course, objects closely associated with gods that were 'aniconic', but the sense in which these are 'images' of the gods is very weak, and no god is ever exclusively associated with aniconic objects. See Faraone (1992) 5–7.
[17] cf. Vernant (1986/1989) 26

comparison with that super body that the human body is marked with 'the seal of limitation, deficiency, incompleteness' that is pollution.[18]

The issue of how to represent the gods is implicit in every actual representation of a god. As scholars have observed, although it is possible Greek usage to talk of the image of a god, it is regular to talk of images simply as the god.[19] This usage does no more than recognise the ineradicable power of the image: if the image represents god, then god has the features of the image. But which features? When the young man in the story variously told by Pliny the Elder and by Lucian was so smitten with Praxiteles' naked **Aphrodite of Knidos** that he left his mark on the marble, we might be tempted to think that he is making a category mistake, acting towards a statue as if it is the sort of thing to which one can make love.[20] But the fact is that he *does* make love to it, the statue was what had inspired his passion. In a very real sense this statue *was* Aphrodite for him.[21]

This story of Aphrodite of Knidos is paradigmatic of the way in which the appearance of the goddess, what the goddess looks like in her statues, is the appearance of the goddess, her presenting herself before men. This is not a matter of reducing the gods to elemental forces, where Aphrodite becomes the name for sexual desire. Rather it is a matter of taking seriously the way in which all representations, whether textual or visual, three-dimensional or two-dimensional, call forth reactions and establish relationships. The gods are, for any individual, the sum of what they have been represented to be, the accumulation and overlaying of one story upon another, of one statue upon another, of one picture upon another. It is on the basis of these accumulated representations that worshippers know the gods with whom they have on-going relationships marked out in prayer and sacrifice.

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[18] Vernant (1986/1989 23.
[19] The classic discussion of this is Gordon (1979), introducing the issue on p.7. Compare Artemidoros *Interpretation of dreams* 2.39, and Schnapp (1988) 573.
[20] Pliny *Natural History* 36.20–21, Lucian *Amores* 15–16. For another story of the same sort see Athenaios *Deipnosophistai* 606b.
[21] And the story in Lucian ends with him throwing himself off a cliff or down into the waves.

Ancient writers persistently employ terms for statues that suggest precisely the qualities which statues lack, or denying those which they have, using *zoon* (living thing), *eikon* (thing that (only) seems), or *andrias* (embodiment of the manly).[22] This 'gamble with the impermissible' is an acknowledgement that, contrary to appearances, people can and do have living relationships with these images, can and do conjure with them in their imagination, can and do rely on their performance of gender.[23]

One conclusion that we might draw from all this is that it is no good denying that god has a body. Banning visual images of god is pointless, because visual images always lurk behind textual claims.[24] If god really doesn't have a body then while we have our bodies, at least, we have no hope at all of entering into a relationship.[25] But that is a theological point. The conclusion, I want to emphasise in this context is that if god has a body, then that body is not outside history. And the history of that body is important not simply for what humans think about god, but for what they think about themselves.

The **first god** we can recognise in Greek vase painting is Athena, and we recognise her from her context. Faced with a decapitated Gorgon, two Gorgon sisters, and a male figure disappearing stage right, separated from the Gorgon sisters by a female figure, there is not much doubt that the story is the story of Perseus and the Gorgon, and the female figure is Perseus' protector, Athena. But if we ask whether there is anything about the body of Athena that distinguishes this as a god's body, the answer is pretty clearly that nothing does. It is true

[22] On the 'devaluation of the image' involved in the language of *eikon* etc. see Vernant (1979) 128–30.
[23] For the vocabulary used of statues and the 'gamble with the impermissible' see Gordon (1979) 9–10.
[24] Compare Osborne C (1987).
[25] For Plato 'godlikeness' comes to be dependent on escaping the body, and on the assumption that the soul has parts and one part of the soul is not essentially connected to the body and not affected by what affects the body. See *Timaeus* B–D and discussions by Annas (1999) ch.3 and Sedley (1999). Plato never explains how or why his cosmic god involves himself with the changeable world; Aristotle in adopting the view that we must leave our body to get close to god who has no body makes god exclusively intellectual: *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.

that this is a woman of stature – like the Gorgon sisters her head presses against the top picture margin, and perhaps if Perseus himself survived better he would be smaller. It is true, too, that this figure wears an extremely elaborately decorated garment. But although these are signs that this is a woman of status, they do not definitively mark her out as divine. Nor will the staff that she holds in her hand do so.

There is a positive as well as a negative side to this manner of presenting Athena. Just as it has to be at least plausible that Aphrodite can deny her own divinity to Anchises, and that in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* the queen Metaneira can ask Demeter to serve as nursemaid for her, even though when Demeter enters the room 'her head reached the roof and she filled the doorway with heavenly radiance', so too visual representations of gods' bodies must come within the range of the humanly plausible and plausibly human.[26] Gods will often be shown carrying items which distinguish them and make their identification easy, but their bodies remain bodies that might belong to mortal men and women.

In vase painting the equipment figures carry and the context in which they are shown, quite apart from the explicit labels which are often given, mean that ambiguity over the divine or human status of a figure is ultimately rare. The same applies to architectural sculpture, where allusion to some story or other is common and where difficulty in identifying deities is unusual. But free-standing sculpture is a different matter. Statues, small, modest, large, and colossal were to be found in every sanctuary, often in very large numbers. But in the case of many surviving archaic Greek sculptures we remain uncertain as to whether or not they represent gods. Even in the case of what are often taken to be the **earliest surviving cult statues**, the beaten bronze figures from the temple of Apollo at Dreros, it is context alone that suggests the identification, and we cannot absolutely exclude that these

[26] *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 188–90.

figures are votaries.[27] And when a figure of a **heavily armed warrior**, now without his shield, is dedicated to Apollo at Thebes at more or less the same time, engraved with the inscription 'Mantiklos offers me as a tithe to Apollo of the Silver Bow; do you Phoibos, give me a pleasing favour in return', should we take the figure to represent Apollo, to represent Mantiklos, or to represent neither – or both?[28]

The problem of whether a figure is mortal or divine is particularly acute for the **two largest classes** of archaic Greek freestanding statues, *kouroi* and *korai*. Neither *kouroi* – naked, beardless men, their arms by their side, one foot advanced and, until the end of the archaic period, their hair long – nor *korai* – young women, standing and with feet together, variously and more or less elaborately clothed, and holding some sort of offering in a hand outstretched or folded across the breast – are plausibly to be identified as always and everywhere representations of gods, though scholars in the past have sometimes made such claims. Both statue types are, for instance, as we have already seen, used as grave markers. Much more difficult is the issue of whether they are *ever* to be thought of as standing for a god or goddess. Certainly *kouroi* are **turned into Apollo** with the addition of the minimal attributes of bow and libation bowl, as with the bronze Apollo recovered from the Peiraieus harbour, probably with the colossal Naxian statue on Delos (which, however, describes itself in its inscription as an *andrias*, statue of an *aner*), and various images of such figures with bows in conjunction with temples on later vase paintings.[29] Whether ***korai* are ever** turned into goddesses is less clear. Keesling has recently argued that we should see the extended forearm gesture, which is a feature of all the *korai* from the Athenian Acropolis, except for six early ones, as the mark of a deity, on the grounds that cult statues are shown and known to

[27] Heraklion, Archaeological Museum 2445–7.
[28] Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 3.997.
[29] cf. Stewart (1986) 57

have had extended forearms.[30] [Keesling sees these *korai* as Athenas, except for the famous 'Peplos Kore' which she thinks may have held a bow and an arrow and thus been an Artemis.[31]

Giving a woman a bow clearly marks her out as different. **In many contexts** on painted pottery it would mark her out not as divine but as an Amazon, but in the **context of a man being attacked** by (his own) hunting hounds, or of the shooting of young men and women, a woman with a bow is readily identified as Artemis. So too an isolated female figure with a bow in a sanctuary would also have to be Artemis. By contrast, the motif of the extended hand holding out a piece of fruit or a bird is not one that is strange to mortal women and demands no special context. Indeed that it can occur both in the context of dedication and in the context of the grave, where the figure represented is unlikely to be unequivocally identified as a goddess, emphasises the gesture as one at home among mortals. That the gesture recurs on statues which from their context undoubtedly represent gods only serves further to emphasise how much gods and men share. There is arguably nothing which a god does which in certain particular contexts a mortal might not be seen or fantasised doing.[32] Only in a particular context can a given body, even in action, become a god.

Almost no archaic statue which was the main object of devotion within a temple has survived, excepting the statues from Dreros, if they are such. Our knowledge of archaic cult statues relies on texts, and it is subject to the distortion of texts. Pausanias and other antiquarian authors such as Plutarch and, rather earlier, Kallimachos, tell of a time before the skill of carving had developed when planks or unworked stones represented the gods, but this

[30] Keesling (2003) 124, 149–58.
[31] Keesling (2003) 135–9.
[32] Giving birth from the head, as Zeus does to Athena, might count as an exception to this claim.

was a story based on assumption not knowledge.[33] Nevertheless it is arguable that, at least in the case of the olivewood statue of Athena Polias on the Athenian Acropolis, there *was* something of a process of embellishment towards the end of the sixth century, with the addition of a gorgoneion, jewellery and a libation bowl.[34] If this is true, then Athena's body was made more distinctive, and the identity given by her context reinforced by attributes which both made of her a goddess and Athena.

The embellishment of the Athena Polias statue at Athens may be more or less contemporary with the creation at Delphi of the most elaborate of all known gold and ivory work from the archaic period, the **three life-size figures** from the 'Halos Deposit'.[35] Various remains of ivory or gold-and-ivory figures survive from the eighth century on, and it is clear that ivory was a peculiarly precious substance regarded as particularly suitable for dedication to the gods, but not restricted in its use to figures of gods.[36] This is reinforced by the literary evidence, particularly that of Pausanias. Pausanias pays special attention to cult statues, and most of the archaic chyselephantine work that he mentions is in statues of gods, but on occasion he notes that associated non-divine figures may be of gold and ivory also.[37] This appears to have been the case with the figures in the Halos deposit, where the identity of the **eight smaller figures**, in particular, cannot be established but where the most plausible candidates include figures such as Horai, Graces, or Muses. While there is good reason to

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[33] Donohue (1988) 195–7 quoting Pausanias 3.20.9, 7.22.4, 9.24.3, Kallimakhos *Aetia* frg.100 Pf./Plutarch *Moralia* frg. 158 Sandbach; cf. also Donohue (1997) who points out that 'cult image' is also a modern construct, and that any image of a god was religiously powerful. This is clearly true, and the premise of what I have said above, but it remains the case that some images, because of their setting in temples, acquired particularly 'iconic' status.

[34] Keesling (2003) 156–7, Kroll (1982).

[35] Lapatin (2001) 57–60.

[36] Lapatin (2001) 42–55. Ironically, Plato at *Laws* XXX objects to the dedication of ivory objects on the grounds that ivory comes from a living animal.

[37] e.g. Pausanias 2.1.7; in the classical period gold and ivory continued to be used for non-divine figures, e.g. that of Eurydike, mother of Philip II of Macedon, at the Philippeion at Olympia, Pausanias 5.17.4.

think that gold and ivory was primarily associated with the gods, the association was not, and never became, exclusive.

In the fifth century gods were given a new body. This new body was a direct product of fifth-century politics. When the Athenians decided shortly after 450 to rebuild a temple to Athena on the Acropolis, following the destruction by the Persians in 480 of the old temple of Athena Polias and the part-built earlier Parthenon, they took the decision from the beginning to make room for a monumental cult statue, adopting an unusual, indeed architecturally revolutionary, eight-column rather than six-column façade, in order to achieve this.[38] **The result was** Pheidias' colossal gold and ivory statue of Athena that has become known as the Athena Parthenos. Nothing like this had been known before, but it immediately set a standard. The authorities at Olympia decided that their new temple of Zeus needed such a statue too, called in Pheidias, and acquired for themselves the monumental gold and ivory Zeus, described by Strabo in the passage I quoted at the start of this lecture.[39] To the question what does a god's body looked like, there was now a new answer: completely out of scale with the bodies of men.

Few sanctuaries were as well-funded as Olympia and the Athenian Acropolis, but Pheidias' statues established what a cult statue ought to be like. Monumental chryselephantine cult statues are known from literary sources to have been produced for Pellene, Megara, Argos, Epidauros and Kalydon.[40] But such statues existed side by side, sometimes in the same temple, with other statues and statuettes of gods that were of marble or bronze or terracotta and might be on the scale of human bodies, or indeed well under that scale. So how significant was the invention of the monumental gold and ivory statue for conceptions of gods' bodies?

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[38] Coulton (1984) is fundamental.
[39] Lapatin (2001) ch. 5 is the fullest description of 'The Pheidian Revolution'.
[40] Lapatin (2001) 62–3, 96–113.

Monumentality was no more a Pheidian invention than was the use of gold and ivory. In the early sixth century there was something of a competition in colossal *kouros* creation across the Aegean, with figures upwards of 3 m. high sculpted in Attica, Delos and Samos.[41] From the early fifth century we know of a 3m. cult statue of Artemis Delia on Paros. But although the stature of gods is often emphasised in descriptions of their epiphany, and large stature is one thing that persuades people that what they are seeing is a god, neither large stature within the bounds of the humanly possible, nor monumentality beyond the human, marked a sculpture as representing a god. What the Pheidian statues did was combine colossal size with highly precious material, evoking the radiance ascribed to divine epiphanies as well as the size.

As important as size and material in suggesting that gods' bodies really were different from men's bodies was the removal of the gods from narrative. The Athena Parthenos bore representations of battles with Amazons on her shield and other narratives on her base, sandals, etc., but she herself simply stood, helmeted and with Victory on her outstretched hand – a martial goddess for sure but not engaged in martial acts. So too the Zeus at Olympia had all sorts of scenes on his throne and footstool, but Zeus himself sat with Victory on his right hand.[42] In neither case was it episodes in which the god or goddess in question played a sole or particular part that were displayed in conjunction with the images. Both were thus presented as presiding over the course of myth-history, but not as figures with particular involvement in it.[43]

It is fundamental to the Homeric picture of the gods that gods and men cannot be securely told apart. The gods might be grand in stature, beautiful in form, radiant in

[41] Hermary (2006), cf. Osborne (2005)
[42] Pausanias 5,11,1–11 for our fullest ancient description.
[43] This was not in itself entirely novel: the figures of Zeus and Apollo on the east and west pediments at Olympia, respectively, provide a parallel, and this use of the centre of the pediment is to some extent anticipated at Aigina and on the old temple of Athena Polias at Athens (cf. Osborne 2000)

complexion, fed by ambrosia and enlivened by ichor not blood, but, even when they do not choose to adopt the appearance of a mortal, their bodies are merely superior human bodies. Likewise, although gods have powers that enable them to do things that no human can do, their activities are fundamentally the activities of men – feasting, conversing and quarrelling, making love. Quite distinct from contemporary statues in style, the Pheidian images present distinctly different gods – gods who could not be mistaken for humans and who preside at a distance over the affairs of the world. While Xenophanes would no doubt continue to object to the presentation of gods in human form at all, Pheidias offers images of the gods which go some way to answer the burgeoning philosophical criticism of the Homeric picture. If ancient critics were right to see a reflection of the Homeric description of Zeus in the statue at Olympia, it was just one particular aspect of the Homeric picture which was there instantiated.

One sign of the importance of the Pheidian theological revolution is that it did not go unchallenged. Not only did the other sculptures of the Parthenon show gods in narrative action (particularly in the gigantomachy metopes, but also in the west pediment where Athena and Poseidon battled it out), but Praxiteles in the fourth-century chose to reassert with particular force what the body of a god shared with the human body. His **Apollo slaying** a lizard brought the mythical slaying of the Pytho at Delphi down to size and raised issues about the gendering of gods' bodies: Apollo may be male, but is he manly? His **Aphrodite of Knidos** encouraged the viewer to enter into a narrative relationship with the goddess that was also an erotic relationship – whether as voyeur or as lover.[44] Praxiteles makes the gods' bodies aggressively our bodies, bodies that we give shape to. Nevertheless, for all the continuation of old traditions and the devising of radical responses, once Pheidias had offered his vision that gods' bodies might be quite different, that possibility could not be dismissed.

[44] Osborne (1994) for Aphrodite, (1998b) 23–5 for Apollo.

As far as Plato was concerned it was a problem both for theology and for human communities that gods might be presented acting in ways that contravened the behavioural standards he regarded as necessary in a human community. The consequences for human communities of conceiving gods as having bodies different in order from the bodies of humans were no less problematic. If godsbodies only share the *appearance* of human bodies, in Greek terminology if they are merely *eikones*, and are not otherwise commensurable, then, in as far as all experience is mediated through the body and the body is 'that through which we learn to be affected', the experience which humans have of the world and the experiences which gods have will be incommensurable. In Greek terms, that statues can be *agalmata*, things of delight alike to men and to gods, depends upon gods and men being commensurable.

Incommensurability between gods and men means that there can be no sympathy between them, and while it does not prevent gods having power over men it raises questions as to whether there can be any basis for gods having authority over men. If gods' bodies are fundamentally different then man must look after himself and make up his own rules. The authority which gods who shared a body with humankind possessed by nature, gods who have a quite different body can have only by convention.

I have spent most of my time this week emphasising how hard it is to tell bodies apart. I have drawn your attention successively to the ways in which the divisions which textual labelling effects between citizens and non-citizens, Athenians and non-Athenians, Greeks and foreigners, the pure and the polluted, are divisions which fail to manifest themselves in contemporary images of the human bodies to which those labels were applied. I have argued that the images are good evidence for what was observed and that we need to make the fact that these divisions were not written upon the body central in our story of

Athenian political, social and religious life. On the one hand, Athenian chauvinism and the Athenian citizen club need to be put into the context of a city in which the only people with whom one came into daily contact whom one could place inside or outside the supposedly charmed circle were those about whom one knew more than could be judged by appearances. On the other hand, we need to acknowledge that when qualities which are held to oblige particular individuals and groups treating differently are not visible, this actually increases the scope for indiscriminate victimisation.

Moses Finley, the last Wiles Lecturer to speak about Greek history, once suggested that classical Athens was a 'face-to-face society'.[45] In a face-to-face society people know without looking whether a man is a citizen, a metic, a Theban, a Thracian, know without looking that a woman has just given birth, that her husband or father has just died, even perhaps that she has had sexual relations with her husband (or with someone else) the previous night. But a community numbering in total perhaps 300,000 persons, numbering 30 to 60,000 adult male citizens, was never as a whole a 'face-to-face' society. Even the various subdivisions of the Athenian polis can rarely have been face-to-face societies in the sense in which Laslett, whose model was the family gathered round the fireside, originally used the term.[46] Certainly one might reckon to know by sight two hundred people, and so be able to distinguish demesmen from non-demesmen, but knowing births, deaths, and sexual relations within two hundred families is already potentially a different matter.

[45] Finley (1973) 17; for criticism cf. Osborne (1985b) 64–5, 89.

[46] There were 'at least about thirty' phratries, but even at twice that number we are still dealing with, on average, five hundred adult male members in each (Lambert (1993) 19), The 139 demes varied in size by a factor of forty-four, to judge by the numbers of representatives they had on the Council of Five Hundred, which varied from one every other year to twenty-two. A population of 30,000 implies an average of 60 adult male citizens per bouleutes, so any deme with four or more representatives on the Council would have had upwards of two hundred adult male members, not all of whom, and in the case of some demes perhaps rather few of whom, would live in their ancestral village which bore the deme name.

Such *a priori* reasoning can be reinforced with reference to texts. Thucydides, for instance, notes that the success of the oligarchic coup in 411 depended upon people not knowing who was and who was not part of it.[47] Even more revealingly Lysias' preserved speeches include one in which he seeks to demonstrate that one Pankleon is not an Athenian. Pankleon claimed to be a Plataian, and the Plataians had, following their expulsion from their own city by the Spartans, been given Athenian citizenship, which involved registration in a tribe, phratry, and deme. The prosecutor in this case bases his demonstration that Pankleon is not a citizen on Pankleon's name being known neither in the deme of which he claims to be part, Dekeleia, nor among the other Plataians. David Whitehead observed that 'To discredit the claim of Pankleon to be a Dekeleian… all that was necessary was to establish that the Dekeleians had never heard of him'.[48] But matters are not quite that simple. First, although Lysias can have brought into the court 'those of the Dekeleians I have questioned', he cannot show that no Dekeleian knew Pankleon, or prevent Pankleon calling upon other Dekeleians who might claim to know him as a fellow demesman. Second, Lysias does not rest his case on the ignorance of the Dekeleians, he also consults the Plataians. What follows is highly revealing:

> I first asked Euthykritos, who I knew was the oldest of the Plataeans and I thought would be the best informed, whether he knew a Plataean called Pankleon, the son of Hipparmodoros. He replied that he knew Hipparmodoros but was not aware of any son, either Pankleon or anybody else. So I then asked also those others whom I knew to be Plataeans. None of them knew his name, but they said I would obtain the most accurate information by going to the fresh-cheese market on the first day of the month, because the Plataeans assemble there on a monthly basis.'

[47] Thucydides 8.66.3.
[48] Whitehead (1986) 226.

So here we have a situation where one might know a person but not know for sure whether or not he had any son, and where several members of a group might reckon it entirely plausible that there might be a member of the group that they did not know. Admittedly we are dealing here with a group that is a whole city, and one in exile, but nevertheless the expectation of incomplete knowledge is clear.

If even forensic investigation was often inconclusive, the importance of what could and could not be read off the body for day-to-day encounters is revealed as vital. We need therefore, and not just, I would suggest, for classical Athens, to contemplate the consequences of the inability of actual members of a community or state to map onto the bodies they meet the distinctions which political discourse, and even the letter of the law, require them to make. Clearly what people say and the opinions that they articulate about others matters. As we saw yesterday, the conventions about pollution map quite closely onto the expectations about shame, and shame depends on individuals being self-conscious, precisely regardless of whether or not others know. But not only do pollution conventions *not* map onto shame exactly, but issues of status and origin never generated significant shame – or to put it more accurately, the shame involved in issues of status was more the shame of being recognised for what one's true status was than the shame of pretending to another status.

In the first three lectures the issue of change over time surfaced in various ways. I argued that although the definition of what it was to be a citizen changed both in detail and in nature over time, the quality of being a *polites* remained more or less constant, with the focus upon participant membership of the community. What the ever-more-closely-defined rules for belonging to the community meant was simply that the gap between what could be seen and what law required one to know got wider and wider.

In the case of the foreigner, what changes over time is the relationship between image and reality. The Athenians increasingly enjoy the presence of significant numbers of non-Athenians among them, both other Greeks and non-Greeks, and that very presence changes the way in which the visual language of the foreign – in particular foreign items of clothing – can be used to imagine an other world. This change only makes more striking that the repertoire of visual images indicates little interest in registering foreign bodies, and limits its interest to using conventional signs of foreignness to draw attention, for approbation as much as for criticism, to unusual status or behaviour.

Yesterday my concern was with the very invention of the dirty body. I argued that if we take seriously the absence of ideas of purification and pollution in Homer, the parallelism between the development of ideas of metaphysical dirtiness and the development of codes of law becomes manifest and should be reckoned of fundamental significance. Metaphysical dirt comes to operate in places which law cannot reach, and relies precisely on the fact that it is *not* written on the body. The invisibility which acts to mitigate law over matters of status, and serves as a sign of resistance to political ideology in the case of ethnic identity, acts in this case to reinforce social conventions. It does so because of the links between pollution and shame, because the rhetoric of dirt expects its own anticipation by the dirty subject, because the eye is turned not outward upon others but inward upon the self.

What I have tried to show today is that when it comes to the gods we can trace a movement from there being no visible sign that distinguishes gods' bodies from human bodies to the creation of bodies for the gods to which humans may not aspire. This movement from invisibility to visibility matters because, I contend, the very possibility of communication between men and gods and gods and men depends upon the extent to which they share the same body. The abandonment of commitment to a shared body in the fifth century undermined the grounding of human morality in the world of the gods more

fundamentally than any moral failings displayed on Olympus. But more important than that, when gods' bodies ceased to be human bodies, the whole need for bodily knowledge was undermined. We enter a world where the only knowledge is propositional, and where the categories offered by language become the only categories that are relevant.[49] Perhaps it is not by chance that the abandonment of the shared body and the invention of history in the hands of Herodotos and Thucydides go together. That history can be written without bodily knowledge has been assumed ever since. I hope to have done something in these lectures to show that that assumption is false.

[49] This is closely linked to the appropriate of the idea of *theoria* to refer to the rational 'vision' of metaphysical truths: see Nightingale (2004).