FANTASISING PHRYNE: THE PSYCHOLOGY AND ETHICS OF EKPHRASIS*

> 'It's such a pity that we don't have
> Anything like a photograph
> Of her about whom the ancients rave...'
> ...
> Fragments, copies, our museums still hold
> Of statues she modelled, or so we're told
>
> (from *Phryne* by Robert Conquest, 2000)

Phryne, the celebrity *hetaira* who is said to have lived and loved some time during the fourth century BCE, was reputed to be 'by far the most phenomenal of the *hetairai*' (ἐπιφανεστάτη πολὺ τῶν ἑταίρων).[1] This article aims to examine the anecdotes told about Phryne and argues that collectively they constitute a discourse on viewing that illuminates a significant aspect of the production and interpretation of art: the ethical and aesthetic problems involved (for the artist, subject, model and other viewers) in making and describing naturalistic art, especially that which represents the gods. A rich repertoire of written material on Phryne, and on the statue of the Aphrodite of Cnidus for which she was said to have been the model, has survived, although mostly by later rather than contemporary writers. Among the descriptions of the statue there is a group of epigrams collected in the *Greek Anthology* whose authorship and dating are largely uncertain.[2] On Phryne we have accounts and imaginative scenarios in Alciphron, Lucian and Pausanias, all presumed to be writing in the second century CE; Athenaeus, who most probably wrote in the third century CE; and quotations from earlier writers.

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[1] Posidippus *The Woman from Ephesus* = K–A fr.13, quoted in Plutarch *Mor.* 849e, Athenaeus 13.591e and Quintilian *I.O.* 1.5.61, 10.5.2. ἐπιφανεστάτη means 'famous' or 'renowned' but has a strong visual charge: 'the most visible of the *hetairai*'. Her name means 'Toad', an irony in light of her renowned beauty. I have used the Loeb editions of texts unless otherwise indicated and all translations are my own except that of *Callirhoe*, for which I have used the translation of Rosanna Omitowoju in *Greek Fiction*, Penguin Classics, 2011.

[2] Cf. Squire (2011).

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The protagonists in Phryne's dramas are celebrated, scandalous and mythicised. The Aphrodite of Cnidos was the first known life-size female nude: an exceptional work of art. Praxiteles was said to have sculpted two statues of Aphrodite, one showing the goddess modestly draped and the other presenting her nude. The people of Cos, given first pick of the statues, selected the modest Aphrodite. Her immodest counterpart went to the island of Cnidos, where it became the Cnidians' cult statue and a major tourist attraction. We only have an approximate idea of what the original statue was like as only variations on it survive.[3] It was a much-emulated statue in antiquity and, not least through salacious anecdotes about desiring viewers, became an icon of eroticism.[4]

Phryne was scarcely less notorious. Tradition has it that she rose from humble beginnings in Thespiae to become the lover of many important men (including Praxiteles), and one of the wealthiest women in classical Athens, so wealthy that she offered to rebuild the walls of Thebes on condition that an inscription honour the donation: 'Alexander destroyed Thebes, but Phryne the *hetaira* rebuilt it.'[5] (Her philanthropy was rejected). It should be emphasised that we have no certain historical evidence about Phryne and it is likely that much of her story, if not herself, was invented.[6] However, there are a number of sensational stories about the *hetaira*, all of which are linked by their emphasis on her exposed body and viewers' reactions to it. This article argues that these tales can be read as allegorical narratives about the creation and reception of art. To do so is to risk ignoring the materiality of the woman and to marginalise her as metaphor. This is perhaps unavoidable given the impossibility of separating fact about Phryne from fiction.[7] However, if the stories about her had any basis in reality she was a remarkable woman who played an active

[3] The original sculpture was destroyed in a fire in Constantinople in 476 BCE. On the original statue and later copies cf. Havelock (1995), Osborne (1998), 230–5 and (with excellent photographs), Pasquier (2007). On Aphrodite in myth and cult, see especially Pirenne-Delforge (1994).

[4] Cf. Pliny HN 36.20; Lucian *Amores* 13–14. On people falling in love with the Aphrodite of Cnidos, see Bettini (1999) 60–67. Bettini (1999) is important on the relationships between images and people, but does not discuss Phryne.

[5] Athenaeus 13.591d.

[6] Even in antiquity some thought that there were two Phrynes: the Phryne who was tried for impiety and the Phryne from Thespiae, who were then merged into one composite figure: cf. Cooper (1995) 317 n. 39. Cf. also McClure (2003) 41: 'The attribution of prosecution speeches against Phryne to several different authors suggests that they may not have been intended for the law court, but as rhetorical exercises or some other kind of *epideixis*.'

[7] Cf. Davidson (2006) 35: 'It is a travesty to treat the Greek courtesan as a literary figment and equally mistaken to see her as pure unadulterated fact. She operates at the intersection and belongs to both art and reality, an artfulness in everyday reality, an everyday reality in art.'

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and knowing role in creating her own mythology. It is to that mythology that we shall now turn.

There are three main points of focus: first, the descriptions of Phryne's trial for impiety (*asebeia*) in or around 345 BCE. She was prosecuted for, according to different sources, introducing a new god to the city and for 'scandalous revelry'.[8] Speaking for the prosecution was her former client-lover Euthias, and for the defence her current client-lover Hyperides. Hyperides, a brilliant orator,[9] was failing to persuade the jury with his speech, until, in an unconventional moment for the lawcourt, Phryne's breasts were exposed: the judges were persuaded, and the courtesan acquitted. The descriptions of the trial are part of the cultural baggage that Phryne carries with her into her other adventures but also, it will be argued, comprise an acting out of, and meditation upon, some of the operations of *ekphrasis*. The differences between the various accounts reveal the interconnectedness between image, words, rhetoric and persuasion, and the different forms that these relations can take.

The second focus will be on Phryne's role as model for the Cnidian Aphrodite. This is from Athenaeus' description:

> ἦν δὲ ὄντως μᾶλλον ἡ Φρύνη καλὴ ἐν τοῖς μὴ βλεπομένοις. διόπερ οὐδὲ ῥᾳδίως ἦν αὐτὴν ἰδεῖν γυμνήν· ἐχέσαρκον γὰρ χιτώνιον ἠμπείχετο καὶ τοῖς δημοσίοις οὐκ ἐχρῆτο βαλανείοις. τῇ δὲ τῶν Ἐλευσινίων πανηγύρει καὶ τῇ τῶν Ποσειδωνίων ἐν ὄψει τῶν Πανελλήνων πάντων ἀποθεμένη θοἰμάτιον καὶ λύσασα τὰς κόμας ἐνέβαινε τῇ θαλάττῃ· καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῆς Ἀπελλῆς τὴν Ἀναδυομένην Ἀφροδίτην ἀπεγράψατο. καὶ Πραξιτέλης δὲ ὁ ἀγαλματοποιὸς ἐρῶν αὐτῆς τὴν Κνιδίαν Ἀφροδίτην ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἐπλάσατο
>
> As it happens, Phryne was more beautiful in those parts of herself that were not looked at. Hence one could not easily see her naked; for she always wore a tunic which wrapped her body closely, and she did not frequent the public baths. At the great assembly of the Eleusinia and at the festival of Poseidon, in plain sight of the whole Greek world, she

[8] It is not clear whether Phryne was charged under a *graphe asebeias* or *eisangelia* (which carried the death penalty). On the specifics of the accusation and the case against Phryne cf. Raubitschek (1941) 904, Versnel (1990) 118–31, Parker (1996) 162–3, 214–17 and Cooper (1995) esp. 311 n. 23.

[9] On the critical reception of Hyperides' *Peri Phrunes* as a superlative piece of oratory see Quintilian 10.5.3 and Longinus 34.2–4.

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> removed only her cloak and loosened her hair before stepping into the water; she was the model for Apelles when he painted his Aphrodite Rising from the Sea.[10] So, too, the statue-craftsman Praxiteles, being in love with her, modelled his Cnidian Aphrodite on her. (13.590f–591b).

Athenaeus goes on to relate how Praxiteles dedicated a statue of Eros to Phryne,[11] and that the local people commissioned Praxiteles to sculpt a statue of Phryne herself, a golden statue, which they displayed at Delphi.

Analysing ekphrasis typically involves understanding relations between the ekphrastic description and the following: the object described (real or imaginary), the rest of the narrative (in the case of ekphraseis embedded in poetry or prose), other description (through allusion and intertextual play), the one doing the describing (orator, narrator, persona or character), the viewer or viewers in the text, and the reader or listener (whose perspectives ekphrasis is in the business to shape and inform). Analysing a work of art usually involves a similar set of relations: the object itself, the artist, the viewers and the contexts (be they generic, religious, aesthetic, etc) in which it is viewed. When the work of art represents a human being, or anthropomorphic divinity, another agent can become involved that can complicate this set of relations: the artist's model. Artists frequently used models to sit for them when sculpting or painting humans and gods. However, it is rare for the *model* to be considered a significant component in the interpretation of ancient art and ekphrasis.[12] This is, no doubt, at least in part due to the lack of information available about models that posed for artists. Moreover, unless sitting for their *own* portrait, it was part of the model's job for his or her role not to be visible and for him or her, as an individual, to be occluded from the process of communication between object and viewer.

The anecdote about Zeuxis selecting models for his painting of Helen of Troy is relevant here.[13] Cicero gives the most detailed account, in which Zeuxis is commissioned by the citizens of Croton to paint a picture and chooses to create a likeness (*simulacrum*) of Helen, 'so that the portrait though mute might embody the surpassing beauty of women' (ut excellentem muliebris formae pulchritudinem muta in se imago contineret, *De inv.* 2.1). In order to do this he asks to see the most beautiful

[10] Pliny records it differently: according to him, the model for Apelles' *Aphrodite Anadyomene* was Pancaspe, consort of Alexander the Great: *HN* 35.87.

[11] Cf. Gutzwiller (2004).

[12] Although see Morales (1996) on Seneca, *Controversiae* 10.5, a fictional case which discusses the ethics of the artist Parrhasius using a tortured slave as a model for his painting of Prometheus and, on the role of the artist's model largely in the modern world, Steiner (2010).

[13] On this episode, see de Angelis (2005) and Mansfield (2007).

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girls in Croton 'so that the true [image] may be transferred from the living model to the mute likeness' (ut mutum in simulacrum ex animali exemplo veritas transferatur, 2.1.2). The citizens allow the girls to gather before him (in Pliny's account, extraordinarily, they parade naked before him),[14] and Zeuxis chooses five girls to model for different aspects of the portrait, because full perfection was not to be found in any single model. Cicero uses this tale to illustrate his approach to teaching rhetoric: culling the best bits from different sources. The point of the episode for Art History must be to emphasise both the skill of Zeuxis, and the impossible beauty of Helen, whose likeness cannot be paralleled in any one human being. *That* he had to use models is, thus, more significant than *who* those models were and, even though Cicero says that poets noted their names once they were given the *imprimatur* by the great artist, their identities have not survived in the historical record. It is testament to Phryne's beauty (and Praxiteles' daring) that she can model for Aphrodite, the goddess of desire, whereas no models are deemed beautiful enough to model for Helen, Aphrodite's earthly cognate. (In Lucian's *Imagines*, a strongly relevant text to which this discussion will return, the panegyric is troped differently; the *hetaira* Panthea is so beautiful that no one famous image can adequately describe her.) Moreover, as we shall, see, the particularity and visibility of its model are an important aspect of how the Aphrodite of Cnidos has been viewed and interpreted.

One aim of this article, then, is to ask what difference it makes, for art and for ekphrasis, when the model is put back into the picture. It is illuminating, this analysis hopes to show, to read the ekphrastic epigrams on the Aphrodite of Cnidos alongside and in dialogue with the wider discourse of viewing that the Phryne narratives can be said to constitute. My aim is to elucidate not only the individual ekphraseis of the statue, but more importantly, the ethical issues and psychological processes involved in reading and writing ekphrasis in general. My discussion responds in part to some urgent questions posed in a recent collection on ekphrasis, edited by Jas Elsner and Shadi Bartsch.[15] Simon Goldhill asks not what ekphrasis is (as so much scholarship on the subject has done) but what ekphrasis is *for*? Page duBois, in the same volume, argues for a more politicised version of ekphrasis and asks us to be alert to what ekphrasis leaves out as well as what it emphasises. But my discussion also, necessarily, responds to concerns voiced much earlier, at least since Plato's anxieties in the *Republic* about mimetic art and its effects on its viewers and society.

[14] HN 35.36.64. Cf. also Valerius Maximus 3.7, ext. 3.
[15] Bartsch and Elsner (2007).

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Both the central and final sections of this article are concerned with problems of realism and description, in particular when a woman is likened to or viewed as identical to (the two modes of perception are not the same but are obviously related) a goddess, but whereas the emphasis in the central section is on the viewers' perspectives (including that of the very first viewer, the artist himself), the final section examines the issues from the perspectives of the women, real and fictional, who are both viewers and (of) themselves (as) the objects of comparison. Other material will be brought to bear here, hybrid statues found in Rome from the first century CE, and one insistently ekphrasised (as it were) female character from around the same period: Callirhoe, the heroine of Chariton's novel *Callirhoe*. Tracing juxtapositions and affinities between the configurations of these female figures will take us to the heart of the concerns of this article: beauty, power, responsibility and the ethics of description. The questions here will be how the woman experiences being compared to or viewed as Aphrodite, and whether she has any autonomy over how she is viewed. Does the object of ekphrasis have the ability (or the right) to control how she is envisaged?

Phryne's trial and the manipulations of ekphrasis

The conflation of the different accounts of the trial into one master narrative, as usually happens when scholars refer to it, effaces important differences between the descriptions. In the account by Athenaeus,[16] Phryne's exposure is *Hyperides'* action, not hers, and forms part of his defence speech:

> ὁ δὲ Ὑπερείδης συναγορεύων τῇ Φρύνῃ, ὡς οὐδὲν ἤνυε λέγων ἐπίδοξοί τε ἦσαν οἱ δικασταὶ καταψηφιούμενοι, παραγαγὼν αὐτὴν εἰς τοὐμφανὲς καὶ περιρρήξας τοὺς χιτωνίσκους γυμνά τε τὰ στέρνα ποιήσας τοὺς ἐπιλογικοὺς οἴκτους ἐκ τῆς ὄψεως αὐτῆς ἐπερρητόρευσεν
>
> As Hyperides, while defending Phryne, was making no progress in his plea, and it became apparent that the judges meant to convict her, he had her brought where all could see her; tearing off her tunics he laid bare her chest and broke into [such] piteous lamentation in his peroration at the sight of her (*Deipn.* 13.590e = Hermippus fr. 68 K–A)

[16] The versions of both Athenaeus and Plutarch derive from the biographer Hermippus (*c.*200 BCE) who adapted the story from Idomeneus of Lampsacus (*c.*300 BCE).

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In this description, the disrobing is the climax of the peroration. Though it is not made explicit, it would appear that Hyperides' defence involves a description of the wretched state of his client: a common rhetorical technique known as *hupotuposis* or *diatuposis*, 'vivid evocation', and one recommended by rhetoricians to arouse pity. Quintilian glosses *diatuposis* as *sub oculos subiectio* or *evidentia*: 'any representation of facts that is made in such language that they appeal to the eye rather than to the ear' (9.2.40), language which makes *diatuposis* equivalent to ekphrasis.[17] So what appears to be going on in Athenaeus' account is Hyperides realising that 'vivid evocation' through words is not going to suffice and capping it, as it were, with the actual sight of Phryne in a wretched state, and then continuing to speak and lament. The image, here, *encourages* speech, rather than *supplanting* it.[18]

In the brief account in Plutarch's *Lives of the Ten Orators*, it is once again Hyperides who exposes Phryne, but the exposure is the defining moment: the sight of her trumps his speech and after her exposure there are no more words from him:

> μελλούσης δ' αὐτῆς ἁλίσκεσθαι, παραγαγὼν εἰς μέσον καὶ περιρρήξας τὴν ἐσθῆτα ἐπέδειξε τὰ στέρνα τῆς γυναικός· καὶ τῶν δικαστῶν εἰς τὸ κάλλος ἀπιδόντων, ἀφείθη.
>
> When it looked likely that she would be convicted, he brought her out into the middle of the court and, tearing off her clothes, displayed the woman's chest. When the jurors looked upon her beauty she was acquitted. (849c–e).

However, in the accounts of Quintilian, Sextus Empiricus and Philodemus, the exposure is *Phryne's* stratagem and is configured as a *contrast to*, rather than an *extension of*, Hyperides' speech. For Philodemus: 'the goal of rhetoric is not to persuade but to persuade in a rhetorical speech. The philosopher persuades by logic, Phryne by her beauty; neither persuades rhetorically.' Sextus Empiricus has the following:

> Φρύνη [...], ὡς φασίν, ἐπεὶ συνηγοροῦντος αὐτῇ Ὑπερίδου ἔμελλε καταδικάζεσθαι, καταρρηξαμένη τοὺς χιτωνίσκους καὶ γυμνοῖς στήθεσι προκυλινδουμένη τῶν δικαστῶν πλεῖον ἴσχυσε διὰ τὸ κάλλος τοὺς δικαστὰς πεῖσαι τῆς τοῦ συνηγοροῦντος ῥητορείας.

[17] See Webb (1997) esp. 115–16 and 120 on this equivalence in Menander Rhetor (fourth century CE).
[18] As, some would argue, images ought to do: cf. Lucian's *On the Hall*.

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> Phryne, [...] they say, when Hyperides was pleading and she was on the point of being convicted, ripped off her tunics and with her breasts bared flung herself at the feet of the judges, and because of her beauty had more power to persuade the judges than the rhetoric of her advocate. (*Math.* 2.2)

Phryne's exposure appears to have become a stock argument in discussions of rhetoric. Quintilian refers to it during the course of a discussion about how rhetoric is not synonymous with persuasion. He lists a number of examples of non-verbal persuasion ending with the example of Phryne:

> Et Phrynen non Hyperidis actione quamquam admirabili, sed conspectus corporis, quod illa speciosissimum alioqui diducta nudaverat tunica, putant periculo liberatam.

> So also it is thought, Phryne was saved from danger not by Hyperides' pleading, admirable as it was, but the sight of her lovely body, which she had further revealed by opening her dress. (2.15.9).

Elsewhere he states his disapproval of when an image takes the place of speech: 'I would not ...go so far as to approve', he writes, 'a practice of which I have read, and which indeed I have occasionally witnessed, of bringing into court a picture (*imaginem*) of the crime painted on wood or canvas, that the judge might be stirred to fury by the horror of the sight. For the pleader who prefers a voiceless picture (*mutam... effigiem*) to speak for him in place of his own eloquence must be singularly incompetent.' (6.1.32). These accounts envisage the event as a *contest* between words and images, between Hyperides' voice and Phryne's body. Women were not typically allowed to speak in an Athenian courtroom, but Phryne, fashioned by these writers as a kind of living picture, finds another means of communication, one that threatens the supremacy of speech and of male persuasion.

In yet another representation of the trial this dynamic is challenged and Phryne is warned not to get above herself. It was Hyperides' success, she is informed, not hers after all. This text is rather different: it is the *Letters of Prostitutes* by Alciphron in the second century CE, and it features the imaginary correspondence between prostitutes and other 'historical' figures, including Phryne and Praxiteles.[19] Letter 4 features the

[19] On Alciphron's *Letters*, see Rosenmeyer (2001a) 255–307, Schmitz (2004) and König (2007).

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hetaira Bacchis writing to Phryne and urging her not to believe those who say that Hyperides could not have won the case without her having exposed herself:

> μηδὲ τοῖς λέγουσί σοι ὅτι, εἰ μὴ τὸν χιτωνίσκον περιρρηξαμένη τὰ μαστάρια τοῖς δικασταῖς ἐπέδειξας, οὐδὲν ὁ ῥήτωρ ὠφέλει, πείθου. καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ἵνα ἐν καιρῷ γένηταί σοι ἡ ἐκείνου παρέσχε συνηγορία.
>
> When people tell you that, if you hadn't ripped open your tunic and displayed your breasts to the judges, your advocate would not have been of use, don't believe them. As a matter of fact it was his pleading that gave you the opportunity to do that very thing at the appropriate moment.

Even though the exposure was Phryne's action, the fictional Bacchis, no doubt in an attempt at one-upmanship over her fellow *hetaira*, gives more credit to Hyperides than to Phryne. In this account, his words provide a crucial introduction to, and framing of, her appearance. The question of a woman's control over herself-as-image is one to which we shall later return. Examined closely, then, and with sensitivity to the variations therein, the descriptions of Phryne's trial provide a good illustration of the different relations description of a spectacle can have to the event described; ekphrasis can have to image.

Another significant point of difference between the descriptions lies in how they configure the responses of the judges when they see Phryne. Athenaeus explicitly says that one of the reactions of the judges was to feel pity (*eleos*). Indeed, the disrobing, as part of Hyperides' piteous lamentation (*tous epilogikous oiktous*) must be fashioned as a gesture designed to evoke pity in the tradition of Hecuba baring her breast in appeal to Hector in *Iliad* 22, or Clytemnestra doing the same to Orestes in Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*. In the other texts, in contrast, it is Phryne's *beauty* that persuades. Sextus Empiricus compares Phryne's means of persuasion to that of Helen of Troy who was said to have bared her breasts to persuade Menelaus not to kill her.[20] When Hecuba and Clytemnestra bare their breast, they bear the mother's breast, the breast that is primarily a symbol of nourishment. Helen bares the overtly sexualised breast, primarily a symbol of desire.[21] In these descriptions the difference lies in the different terms used to describe what and how the judges saw, not in the gesture of disrobing itself.

[20] Cf. Eur. *Andr.* 629–30; Ar. *Lys.* 155.

[21] One of Herodas' *Mimes*, thought to be a parody of Phryne's trial, is a leering acknowledgement of the viewers' lustful response. It stages a brothel-keeper parading a girl before a court and bidding the jurors look at her torn dress. What are revealed are the girl's depilated genitalia: *Mime* 2. 65–78.

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The vocabulary used for 'tearing off the garment' (*perirexas…perirexas…perirexamene…katarexamene*) is remarkably consistent. It is *how this act is interpreted* that determines whether the exposure is piteous or titillating and that casts Phryne as a Hecuba or as a Helen.

Another response further complicates the possibilities for how Phryne was viewed. Athenaeus' description continues:

> τοὺς ἐπιλογικοὺς οἴκτους ἐκ τῆς ὄψεως αὐτῆς ἐπερρητόρευσεν δεισιδαιμονῆσαί τε ἐποίησεν τοὺς δικαστὰς καὶ τὴν ὑποφῆτιν καὶ ζάκορον Ἀφροδίτης ἐλέῳ χαρισαμένους μὴ ἀποκτεῖναι.
>
> he broke into such piteous lamentation at the sight of her, that he caused the judges to fear as a deity this interpreter and attendant of Aphrodite, and indulging their feeling of compassion, they refrained from putting her to death. (13.590e)

The judges react with compassion, but also fear. The language here portrays the men responding to Phryne as if she were an epiphany of Aphrodite.[22] This changes the nature of the viewing relations quite considerably. It makes the encounter a much edgier one, evocative of the many tales in which mortals come to grief because they catch sight of a goddess.

The descriptions of Phryne's trial, then, stage a repertoire of different viewing relations with different literary models and very different power dynamics. (We might note that Jean-Léon Gérôme's famous *Phryné devant l' Aréopage* (1861) represents *all* of these different responses in the one painting.) The accounts of the trial illustrate the power of description to direct a reader's psychological and emotional responses to an act as it is shaped in his or her mind's eye. They also introduce Phryne as having an especial association with vision and persuasion. Indeed, more than that, she transcends the literal sphere to bear metaphoric significance for visuality: for how vision itself is represented and thought about. All of this constitutes important framing through which to appreciate the other material relating to Phryne, and we shall now turn to her status as a model for the Aphrodite of Cnidos and her relationships with the statue, its maker and its viewers.

[22] Cf. Semenov (1935) 278–9 who draws a parallel with the famous trick of Peisistratus (Hdt. 1.60) when he paraded a girl, Phye, in full armour, as if she were Athena herself.

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Praxiteles on trial: the ekphrastic epigrams on the Aphrodite of Cnidos

The Aphrodite of Cnidos was a popular subject for ekphrastic epigram. These epigrams, attributed to different authors, were possibly originally composed to accompany small-scale replicas of the Cnidian, but were later collected in the *Planudean Anthology*.[23] The emphasis in these ekphraseis, the recurrent conceit, is the statue's hyper-realism. That is to say that the descriptions insistently *draw attention* to the statue's hyper-realism; they do not actually *convey* it. In fact, there is next to nothing written about the physical appearance of the sculpture. These ekphraseis are directive rather than descriptive.[24] One epigram, attributed to a Lucian, suggests the statue is so realistic, Praxiteles might even have seen Aphrodite:

> Τὴν Παφίην γυμνὴν οὐδεὶς ἴδεν· εἰ δέ τις εἶδεν,
> οὗτος ὁ τὴν γυμνὴν στησάμενος Παφίην.
>
> The Paphian naked no one has seen, but if anyone did,
> it is this man here who erected the naked Paphian.
> (A. Pl.163)

Others elaborate on this motif, but make Aphrodite herself the amazed viewer of the statue and judge of its realism:

> Ἡ Παφίη Κυθέρεια δι' οἴδματος ἐς Κνίδον ἦλθε,
> βουλομένη κατιδεῖν εἰκόνα τὴν ἰδίην·
> πάντῃ δ' ἀθρήσασα περισκέπτῳ ἐνὶ χώρῳ,
> φθέγξατο· "Ποῦ γυμνὴν εἶδέ με Πραξιτέλης;"
>
> Paphian Cytherea came through the waves to Cnidus, wishing to see her own image, and having viewed it from all sides in its open shrine, she cried, 'Where did Praxiteles see me naked?' (Plato, A. Pl. 160)

[23] I have used the following text for the *Planudean Anthology* (henceforth A. Pl): Robert Autrebon and Félix Buffière (eds.) (1980) *Anthologie Grecque. Anthologie de Planude*, Paris, Budé edition, making some minor changes to punctuation and layout. Platt (2002) is an excellent analysis of these epigrams, though without discussion of Phryne. Cf. also Gutzwiller (2004) 398; Havelock (1995) 64–7 who argues that copying the Cnidia only began in the late second century BCE; Elsner (2002) 9–13 and Squire (2011) on the ekphrastic epigram more generally.

[24] Arguably they exhibit the quality of *enargeia* (visibility) but not *sapheneia* (clarity): cf. Elsner (2002) 1.

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Another by an anonymous author puts it more pithily:

> Ἁ Κύπρις τὰν Κύπριν ἐνὶ Κνίδῳ εἶπεν ἰδοῦσα·
> "Φεῦ, φεῦ· ποῦ γυμνὴν εἶδέ με Πραξιτέλης;"
>
> Cypris, seeing Cypris in Cnidos, said, 'Alas, alas! Where
> did Praxiteles see me naked?'(A. Pl. 162)

And yet another, anonymous, is devised as if spoken by the Aphrodite herself:

> Γυμνὴν εἶδε Πάρις με, καὶ Ἀγχίσης, καὶ Ἄδωνις·
> τοὺς τρεῖς οἶδα μόνους· Πραξιτέλης δὲ πόθεν;
>
> Naked, Paris, Anchises, and Adonis saw me. I only know
> of these three, so how did Praxiteles manage it? (A. Pl. 168)

The voice here is both that of the statue and the goddess, playing with the common conception that a cult statue was in some sense an embodiment of the divine: the goddess animated in her cultic image.

Yet another queries whether the statue is a statue or the goddess herself, descended from Olympus:

> Τίς λίθον ἐψύχωσε; τίς ἐν χθονὶ Κύπριν ἐσεῖδεν; ἵμερον
> ἐν πέτρῃ τίς τόσον εἰργάσατο; Πραξιτέλους χειρῶν ὅδε
> που πόνος, ἢ τάχ' Ὄλυμπος χηρεύει, Παφίης ἐς Κνίδον
> ἐρχομένης.
>
> Who gave a soul to marble? Who saw Cypris on earth?
> Who wrought such longing in stone? This must be the
> work of Praxiteles' hands, or else perhaps Olympus is
> bereaved since the Paphian has come down to Cnidus.
> (A. Pl. 159).

Hyper-realism is, of course, a common trope of ekphrasis.[25] However, it is a less than straightforward trope when applied to an image of a *deity*, and a naked deity at that. The recurrent conceit in the epigrams is that the statue is so like Aphrodite that Praxiteles

[25] Cf. e.g. Breed (2003) 35–56.

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must have actually seen her. This may be understood as a way of complementing Praxiteles, but it is accompanied by an anxiety about what is and what is not appropriate behaviour for an artist when creating an image of a deity.[26] We know from many mythic narratives of visual transgression that for a mortal to look at a goddess without her permission can lead to the harshest of punishments. The viewer may experience an attendant anxiety: what sort of visual appreciation is appropriate for *this* statue, both cult image and object of art? Indeed, as Jas Elsner reminds us, there are a range of possibilities for viewing cult images, that are not (necessarily) mutually exclusive:

> Some cult images (Aphrodite of Cnidos, for instance), were very naturalistic indeed, but the correct ritual preparations and attitudes could prevent the viewer from succumbing to the dangers of voyeuristic projection. The naturalism of the Cnidian Aphrodite – one of antiquity's sexiest and yet most sacredly charged cult images – shows that we are not looking at mutually exclusive visualities that were separate in antiquity, though they may seem so to modern sensibilities. Rather we have a dynamic spectrum of interchanging visualities that appear to have existed in permanent dialectic and that could manifest together in the same viewer.[27]

Many of the epigrams are aware of this 'dynamic spectrum' of possibilities for the viewer. In particular, they construct two positions for the viewing subject, which are in tension with each other. Certain of the ekphraseis are aware of this tension. The first fashions the viewer of the statue (artist, worshipper, tourist) as a second Paris. This solicits an evaluative gaze that is focused on her beauty, and, moreover, supplies the license for the viewer to indulge in the statue's eroticism without transgression. Thus epigram A. Pl. 161 addresses the Cnidian Aphrodite in terms that deny her status as representation at all (and so lets Praxiteles off the hook), and instead transport her back to the scene of the Judgement of Paris:

> Οὔτε σε Πραξιτέλης τεχνάσατο, οὔθ' ὁ σίδαρος·
> ἀλλ' οὕτως ἔστης, ὥς ποτε κρινοπένη.
>
> Neither did Praxiteles nor the chisel crafted you, but so
> you stand, as once you stood to be judged.

[26] Cf. Gordon (1979) 9: 'illusionism is one obvious way of dicing with the impermissible.'
[27] Elsner (2007) 25.

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Others imagine the viewer of the statue affirming Paris' judgment. Thus the first couplet from epigram *A. Pl.* 169:

> Ἀφρογενοῦς Παφίης ζάθεον περιδέρκεο κάλλος,
> καὶ λέξεις· Αἰνῶ τὸν Φρύγα τῆς κρίσεως.
>
> Gaze from every side at the divine beauty of the foam-born Paphian and you will say, 'I applaud the judgment of the Phrygian'.

This following epigram attributed to Evenus adds another layer of complication, making the judgment of Paris itself a witness to Praxiteles' skill. It is an invitation to confirm that Praxiteles has lived up to Paris's judgment and created the most beautiful goddess of all.

> Πρόσθε μὲν Ἰδαίοισιν ἐν οὔρεσιν αὐτὸς ὁ βούτας
> δέρξατο τὰν κάλλευς πρῶτ' ἀπενεγκαμέναν·
> Πραξιτέλης Κνιδίοις δὲ πανωπήεσσαν ἔθηκεν,
> μάρτυρα τῆς τέχνης ψῆφον ἔχων Πάριδος.
>
> Of old on the mountains of Ida only the cowherd saw she who gained first prize for beauty, but Praxiteles has set her in full view of the Cnidians, having as witness to his skill the vote of Paris. (*A. Pl.* 166 = Gow and Page 1968, 10)

And yet another imagines the defeated goddesses, Athena and Hera, being so impressed by the beauty of the statue that they agree with Paris's original judgement:

> Παλλὰς καὶ Κρονίδαο συνευνετις εἶπον, ἰδοῦσαι
> τὴν Κνιδίην· "Ἀδίκως τὸν Φρύγα μεμφόμεθα."
>
> Pallas and the consort of of the son of Cronos said, when they saw the Cnidian, 'We were wrong with finding fault with the Phrygian'. (Evenus, *A. Pl.* 165 = Gow and Page 1968, 10)[28]

[28] Epigram 172, about a statue of Aphrodite (though not necessarily the one at Cnidos) has Athena herself as the sculptor: 'Pallas herself, I think, fashioned Aphrodite to perfection, forgetting the judgment of Paris.'

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However, there is a tension between this permitted gaze, and a second, rather different subject position constructed by several epigrams: that of the transgressive viewer. Epigram *A. Pl.* 168 compares the artist to three mythological figures that were expressly given licence to look on Aphrodite naked: Paris, Anchises and Adonis. The goddess's admission that she did not know how Praxiteles managed it highlights that he did not do so at her invitation. The epigram thus puts him in the mythological company of those who have looked at goddesses without permission: Actaeon and Teiresias. The threat, then, is implicit: Praxiteles has overstepped the mark. A couplet (most likely) added at a later date to epigram 160 (*A. Pl.* 160 and 160a) both confirms and seeks to evade the accusation of sacrilege by making the tool, rather than artist, the agent of impiety, and making Ares direct the gaze (harking back to their love affair as described in *Odyssey* 8):

> Πραξιτέλης οὐκ εἶδεν ἃ μὴ θέμις· ἀλλ' ὁ σίδηρος
> ἔξεσεν οἷ' ἂν Ἄρης ἤθελε τὴν Παφίην.
>
> Praxiteles did not see what is not right to see, but the iron
> Chiselled the Paphian as Ares wished her to be.

This is the lover's gaze, permitted for Ares but not usually for a mortal, as the anxiety of Anchises in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* makes clear.

So, if direct mimesis of a divinity is a problem, as the epigrams suggest, then what are the solutions? One may be to understand the artistic process quite differently, as involving not imitation, but *phantasia*. A famous passage of Philostratus' *Apollonius of Tyana* is instructive here. The wise Apollonius is discussing representation of the gods with Thespesion, the leader of the 'Naked Ones' of Egypt. Apollonius compares the 'strange and ridiculous shapes' that the Egyptians give their gods to Phidias' Zeus, Praxiteles' Cnidian Aphrodite and other anthropomorphic images of the Greeks. Thespesion cannot envisage Phidias and Praxiteles using any method other than mimesis, yet scoffs at the idea that they went up to heaven and made casts of the gods' forms before turning them into art. Apollonius replies:

> Phantasia created these objects...a more skilful artist (σοφωτέρα... δημιουργός) than Mimesis. Mimesis will create what it knows, but Phantasia will also create what it does not know, conceiving it with reference to the real ὑποθήσεται γὰρ αὐτὸ πρὸς τὴν ἀναφορὰν τοῦ ὄντος) (6.19.2)

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In Apollonius' understanding, Praxiteles will have employed phantasia, rather than mimesis, to produce the Aphrodite of Cnidos. Usually translated 'imagination', phantasia is, as Ellen Perry reminds us, not the capacity for free-floating innovation (as the English word might connote), rather 'a faculty that produced visions that were both emotionally powerful and essentially, objectively true'.[29]

From another perspective, the anecdotal information that Praxiteles used a human model might be thought to serve the same function as the phantasia explanation: they explain the superlative beauty of the statue and at the same time exonerate the artist from the charge that he improperly saw Aphrodite naked. This brings us to the question of whether the two explanations are incompatible. What exactly does Athenaeus mean when he writes that Praxiteles made the image of Aphrodite 'from her' (*ap'autes*)? One version of the artistic process might envisage the artist employing a model as entirely consistent with his using phantasia. We might imagine a scenario in which Phryne's beauty sparks something in Praxiteles' mind that enables him to capture an essential truth about the goddess in stone. The final product need not resemble Phryne at all; she was simply the muse, if you like, that inspired the artist to conjure up an image of the goddess. In this case, phantasia might be seen as being in the service of mimesis in the sense that, through imagination and not replication, it allows the artist to create a representation that viewers will find 'realistic', true to their impression of the goddess. But if Phryne was so beautiful that she inspired Praxiteles to envision the goddess, then does it follow that he would (or could) have created an image that did not resemble her *at all*? In other words, would capturing the essence of Aphrodite preclude also capturing Phryne's likeness, especially if that essence was beauty? To what degree did phantasia preclude mimesis?

Another version of the process would understand phantasia as something that substitutes for using a model. Cicero talks in terms of there being, 'something perfect and superlative in sculpture and painting – an intellectual ideal by imitation of which the artist represents those objects [like the gods] which do not themselves appear to the eye' (in formis et figuris est aliquid perfectum et excellens, cuius ad cogitatam speciem imitando referuntur ea quae sub oculos ipsa non cadunt). He discusses the work of Phidias as a good example of this:

> Nec vero ille artifex cum faceret Iovis formam aut Minervae, contemplabatur aliquem e quo similitudinem duceret, sed ipsius in mente insidebat species pulchritudinis eximia quaedam, quam intuens in eaque defixus ad ilius similtudinem artem et manum dirigebat.

[29] Perry (2005) 153. See also Elsner (1995) 26–7.

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> For surely that artist when he was forming the features of Jupiter or Minerva did not look at something from which he might trace a likeness; instead, a vision of exceeding beauty settled in his mind. Examining this and remaining focused on it he guided his skill and hand. (*Orator* 3.9–10)

In Cicero's account, something in the artist's mind (we might take this to be phantasia, though he does not use the term) obviates the need for a human model. However, in going to compare the ideal to one of Plato's Forms, it is clear that some sort of mimesis is also involved. Some theoretical discussions in ancient texts take phantasia to be compatible with mimesis; others do not. Moreover, some critics (as we shall discuss shortly) evidently understood Praxiteles to have fashioned Aphrodite *as a likeness* of Phryne.

The difficulty in determining exactly how Praxiteles used Phryne raises a series of problems of recognition and identification. Would it be fair to say that the statue was both of Aphrodite *and* of Phryne? Do we imagine that the first viewers of the Cnidian Aphrodite would have recognised Phryne in the statue? How different in appearance was Praxiteles' statue of Aphrodite (modelled-by-Phryne) from his statue of Phryne (modelled-by-Phryne)? An epigram about another image 'of Aphrodite/beautiful woman' can be read both as conventional flattery and, more profoundly, as dramatising these dilemmas of discernment and recognition from a viewer's perspective:

> Κύπριδος ἅδ' εἰκών· φέρ' ἰδώμεθα μὴ Βερενίκας·
> διστάζω ποτέρᾳ φῇ τις ὁμοιοτέραν.
>
> This is an image of Cypris. Come, let us take a look; is it not Berenice instead? I am in two minds as to whom one would say it most resembles (Asclepiades, *A. Pl.* 68 = Gow and Page 1965, 39)[30]

The epigram directs the viewer to scrutinise more carefully as the anthropomorphic rendering of the goddess has, in this case (as in that of Phryne?), made its visual referent unclear. There is a paradox in an artist's creating a sculpture so exquisite, so superlative, that its beauty honours the divinity it purports to represent, and yet at the same time resembles a mortal woman to such an extent that the very identity of that representation is called into question. It is a paradox that rests on 'the essential truth'

[30] The ascription is to 'Asclepiades or Posidippus'. On grounds of dating, the subject is almost certainly Berenice I, wife of Ptolemy I Soter: see Cameron (1990) 294–5. Cf. Squire (2011) 83–5 for a fine discussion of the epigram in relation to Posidippus 19 GP.

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of the goddess perhaps not being so objective after all. When she was alive, at least, the resemblance of Berenice to the statue could presumably have been measured by viewing the two together. But the resemblance of Aphrodite to the statue is determined by the viewer's (culturally informed) opinion and is, therefore, to some degree, intangible. In Phryne's case, the question of whether the statue of her was discernibly different from the statue of Aphrodite (modelled on her) is one with very real implications for Art History. As Aileen Ajootian has demonstrated, it has been impossible to identify any statue as being that of Phryne's portrait, or a 'copy' of Phryne's portrait, because any candidates for this identification may instead be variants of the Cnidian Aphrodite.[31]

Moral problems also arise. The epigrams omit or erase the model's role in the creative process entirely: Phryne is the absent referent in the ekphraseis. The anecdotal material, however, does not allow us to collude in the erasure. As much as the visibility of Phryne in the artistic process might solve one moral dilemma, the suggestion of Praxiteles' trespass, it is at the cost of ushering in other, equally urgent ones. The anecdotal material reveals a gap between the divine qualities of the ekphrastic object (it's a goddess!) and the emphatically non-divine circumstances of its creation (involving a *hetaira*, and, moreover, a *hetaira* with a particular reputation for impiety). Indeed, perhaps unsurprisingly, what troubled some critics was precisely the imitation of a prostitute (and we should note they clearly understand Phryne's 'modelling' to involve mimesis and not phantasia). The Christian theologian Clement of Alexandria wrote that it is 'shameful' for artists to make statues of gods resemble their lovers:

> The Athenian Pheidias inscribed on the finger of Olympian Zeus, 'Pantarces is beautiful', though it was not Zeus (Pantarces) whom he thought beautiful, but his lover. Praxiteles...when creating the statue of the Cnidian Aphrodite, made the goddess closely resemble the form of his lover Cratina,[32] that the little people might have the sculptor's lover to worship (*ten eromenen proskunein*). When Phryne the Thespian *hetaira* was in her bloom, the painters all used to imitate her beauty (*to kallos apemimounto*) in their pictures of Aphrodite, just as the stone-masons copied Alcibiades in the busts of Hermes at Athens. It remains for you to apply your own judgement as to whether you wish to bow down in worship before *hetairai* (*tas hetairas proskunein*).' (*Exhortation to the Greeks* 4)

[31] Ajootian (2007) 13–16.

[32] Clement is straying here from the usual cast of characters.

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For Clement, Phryne's role in the artistic process is so discernible that viewers end up worshipping her, rather than the goddess she posed for. This is, of course, Christian polemic, and designed to serve a religious rather than art historical agenda.[33] However, this means neither that his analysis is uninteresting for art history, nor that his religious motivations should lead us to marginalise his views on art. It is significant that Pliny, who is not writing with a Christian agenda, discusses the artist Arellius with remarkably similar opprobrium for remarkably similar practices:

> Fuit et Arellius Romae celeber Paulo ante divum Augustum, ni flagitio insigni corrupisset artem, semper ei lenocinans feminae, cuius amore flagraret, et ob id deas pingens, sed dilectarum imagine. Itaque in pictura eius scorta numerabantur.
>
> A little before the period of the late lamented divine Augustus, Arellius also was in high esteem at Rome, had he not corrupted his art by a notorious outrage, by always playing the pimp to any woman he happened to fall in love with, and consequently painting goddesses, but in the likeness of his mistresses. As a result his pictures included a number of portraits of whores. (HN 35.37.119)

For Clement and Pliny, the outrage is not simply that there is gap between the divine qualities of the art object and the seedy circumstances of its creation. Rather, in their accounts, the representation itself has become differently configured: the image produced is no longer that of a goddess based on a prostitute, but is simply that of the prostitute herself (which brings us back to the problem of what the differences between the two might be). It might, of course, be objected that Aphrodite is a special case: she was a *hetaira* of sorts and so Clement and Pliny's moralising is misdirected.[34] Moreover, Clement and Pliny are as reductive, as blinkered in their way of viewing these statues, as the ekphrastic epigrammatists. Whereas the epigrams make the

[33] For a more detailed analysis of the Cnidian Aphrodite and Clement's criticisms, cf. Nasrallah (2010) 249–95 and more broadly on Clement and images, 272–95. There are echoes of Clement's critique in Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes* 6.13

[34] So Nigel Spivey comments: 'The aesthetic [of anthropomorphism] would naturally demand an erotic statue of Aphrodite: if she was president of sanctuaries at which "sacred prostitution"... was provided... then statues of Aphrodite looking like a *hierodoulos*, or even a *hetaira*, logically follow': Spivey (1995) 454. Even though 'sacred prostitution' as such is now thought to be a bogus category, it is significant that in the account of Athenaeus discussed above Phryne is described as a *hupophetis* (an interpreter) and *zakoros* (the honorific term for temple assistant) of Aphrodite, and so some sort of ritual role is here implied: cf. Pirenne-Delforge (1994) 113.

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model the absent referent, and see the statue as only representing the goddess, Clement and Pliny occlude the primary referent of the statues, and see them only as representations of the models: the lovers and prostitutes. In so doing, they imply that sculptors like Praxiteles perpetrate a visual con upon the viewers of their work. For Clement, this results in a corruption of the viewer. For Pliny, it is the artist's skill itself that is corrupted when he paints goddesses to resemble their prostitute models.

One final text for discussion in this section offers an insight into Phryne's role as model, written as if from her perspective. It also provides a response, of sorts, to some of the questions that have just been addressed. It is the fictional letter of Phryne to Praxiteles, the first in Alciphron's book of letters to and by courtesans, and here quoted in full:

> μὴ δείσῃς· ἐξείργασαι γὰρ πάγκαλόν τι χρῆμα, οἷον δή το οὐδεὶς εἶδε πώποτε πάντων τῶν διὰ χειρῶν πονηθέντων, τὴν σεαυτοῦ ἑταίραν ἱδρύσας ἐν τεμένει. μέση γὰρ ἕστηκα ἐπὶ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης καὶ τοῦ Ἔρωτος ἅμα τοῦ σοῦ, μὴ φθονὴσῃς δέ μοι τῆς τιμῆς· οἱ γὰρ ἡμᾶς θεασάμενοι ἐπαινοῦσι Πραξιτέλη, καὶ ὅτι τῆς σῆς τέχνης γέγονα οὐκ ἀδοξοῦσί με Θεσπιεῖς μέσην κεῖσθαι θεῶν. ἓν ἔτι τῇ δωρεᾷ λείπει, ἐλθεῖν σε πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἵνα ἐν τῷ τεμένει μετ' ἀλλήλων κατακλινῶμεν. οὐ μιανοῦμεν γὰρ τοὺς θεοὺς οὓς αὐτοὶ πεποιήκαμεν. ἔρρωσο.
>
> Have no fear; for you have wrought a very beautiful object of art, such as nobody, in fact, has ever seen before among all things fashioned by men's hands: you have set up a statue of your own *hetaira* in the sacred precinct. Yes, I stand in the middle of the precinct near your Aphrodite and your Eros too. And do not begrudge me this honour. For it is Praxiteles that people praise when they have gazed at us; and it is because I am a product of your skill that the Thespians do not count me unfit to be placed between gods. One thing only is still lacking to your gift: that you come to me, so that we may lie together in the precinct. Surely we shall bring no defilement on the gods that we ourselves have created. Farewell.

The voice that is speaking in this remarkable letter, as Patricia Rosenmeyer observes in her excellent analysis to which I am here indebted, is fashioned so as to oscillate between that of Phryne and that of her statue (and sometimes both together).[35] It is a

[35] Rosenmeyer (2001b).

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similar dynamic, here magnified, to that which we observed in the epigrams where the speaking voice shifted between the goddess Aphrodite and her Cnidian statue. In the letter, it enables the courtesan to lend the statue her voice, 'in order to "talk back,"' to her maker in a way that imaginatively inverts the dynamics of the myth of the artist-lover Pygmalion and his mute and passive statue-turned-woman. There is much that could be said about this fascinating scenario, but I am going to limit myself to three further observations.

First, the language of the letter purposefully exacerbates the instability of the speaking subject. When she says 'those who have gazed at us', the pronoun 'us' could refer to herself and Praxiteles, herself-as-statue and the others in the group: Eros and Aphrodite, or to both her human self and statue self. The instability of the subject in this scene reflects the instability of the object in the Aphrodite of Cnidos, once we know of Phryne's role in its creation. Alciphron lets us see the model in and as the statue that bears her name. It is left to the imagination how the model might be seen in and as the statue that bears Aphrodite's name.

Second, Alciphron's Phryne acknowledges that having a statue of a *hetaira* in a temple precinct between statues of two gods might be thought impious. Repeatedly in the narratives about Phryne, the question of what is and what is not appropriate, of where the boundaries are, is raised. If there were any doubts that placing a courtesan in a sacred space, even between two deities that embody lust, were appropriate, these are immediately, and comically, confirmed when Phryne invites Praxiteles to have sex with her in the temple. Her reassurance that it will not defile the gods that they themselves have created is, of course, unpersuasive. It was for sure an act of pollution (*miasma*) to have sex within the sacred space. However, the wording here, and the shifting subject that allows the invitation to have sex to come from the statue as well as the courtesan, is reminiscent of the story told in a number of writers of when the young man attempted to have sex with the Cnidian Aphrodite and ejaculated upon the statue.

My third and final observation is that Phryne here gives herself full credit for her role in creating the statues that Praxiteles carved. How exactly she contributed, especially to the making of the statue of Aphrodite (inspiring phantasia, posing for mimesis) is not glossed. But there is no doubt, in this representation, of the significance, and pleasure, of the lover and model in the artistic process.

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The trials of beauty and the politics of similitude

This final section aims to demonstrate that the story of Phryne's modelling for the Cnidian Aphrodite may inform and illuminate other scenarios (in art and in ekphrasis) where mortal women are compared to, or otherwise envisaged as, the goddess Aphrodite. For a mortal woman to be likened to a goddess was a standard trope of ekphrasis and other description.[36] Moreover, from the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus at least, royal women were not only likened to, but also identified with, and honoured as deities. Arsinoe II, wife of Ptolemy Philadelphus, was assimilated with a variety of deities, especially Aphrodite,[37] as was Bilistiche, Ptolemy's consort after Arsinoe's death. Both women were honoured in cult with temples dedicated to Arsinoe-Aphrodite and, later, Bilistiche-Aphrodite (more on which below). So we might say that likeness, as in the trope 'like a goddess', (which keeps the identity of *comparans* and *comparandum* distinct) is at one end of a continuum of association that has at the other end equivalence, as in cultic assimilation, (in which the two becomes merged). The question then: what did it mean for the *woman* who was the object of the comparison or assimilation?

Eve d'Ambra gives a confident and unequivocal answer to this question in relation to a another set of statues: probably funerary monuments, dating from the first century CE and found in Rome. They depict the heads of Roman matrons atop the bodies of recognisable statues of Aphrodite: the Cnidian Aphrodite and the Capitoline Venus.[38] The stern faces of the Roman woman are in striking contrast to the fleshy sensuality of the bodies beneath. Unlike the Cnidian Aphrodite into which one could see, if one chose to do so, just one referent, Aphrodite or Phryne, these statues demand that one see goddess and mortal simultaneously. D'Ambra writes:

> [The] matron's physical presence and social status were enhanced by the acquisition of the resplendent divine body, evoking the beauty of the goddess and of the famed Greek work of art on which the statue is modelled.
>
> For Aphrodite/Venus, beauty served as an erotic attraction; for the Roman matron, beauty reflected virtue and the display of the voluptuous female form, even if understood as a mythological conceit or a convention of art, had to be redefined as a sign of fertility.[39]

[36] Cf. e.g. Hom. *Il.* 19.282, 24.699; Eur. *Hec.* 555–59; Ov. *Am.* 2.17.
[37] Cf. Theoc. *Id.* 15.
[38] For plates and further details of the statues see Hallett (2005), appendix B, 331–2.
[39] D'Ambra (1996) 219–21.

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For d'Ambra, then, the construction of the women as (both themselves and) Aphrodite in these statues serves to enhance their physical presence, social status, virtue and fertility. Now, it must right to consider as *part of* the context for interpreting these sculptures Venus's position as mother of all Romans through her bearing of Aeneas, an aspect of the goddess that was much emphasised in the architectural and sculptural programmes of Julius Caesar and Augustus. However, it is surely misguided to think that any representation of Venus can have been easily sanitised.[40]

It is even less likely that work of art so heavily freighted with eroticism as the Cnidian Aphrodite, can have been revised and domesticated so absolutely and definitively. Not long after Ovid was writing in his *Fasti* (4.133–8) about the cult of the Venus Verticordia, the Venus who, in d'Ambra's words, 'turned the hearts of women from lust to purity', Alciphron and Athenaeus were writing about Phryne modelling for the statue (and Lucian was telling the salacious tale of the youth who tried to have sex with the statue). The Cnidian Aphrodite was no vacant sign: it would take a renegade reader, a wilfully perverse viewer, to look at the hybrid statues and see no trace of the *hetaira*. These statues might well have been *intended* to commemorate Roman women's virtue, but the contradictions of Venus and the cultural history of the Cnidian Aphrodite, make a univocal reading impossible.[41] Seeing Phryne in Cnidian Aphrodite (and thus in the body of the hybrid statue) foregrounds an important tension in ancient aesthetics: the tension between the popular belief that beauty in a mortal woman was a visual code for divinity and should therefore be reserved as a property of the social elite for whom virtue was an essential characteristic, and the fact that Aphrodite had a cultic association with prostitutes, and so likening a woman to *this* goddess threatens to compromise her virtue and statue rather than (or even as) it elevates her.

This tension is played out in Chariton's *Callirhoe*, perhaps the earliest of the Greek prose romances. The representation of Callirhoe, I suggest, can profitably be read through and against representations of Phryne, whether by original design or as part of the cultural knowledge that later readers brought to the text (our lack of knowledge about the relative dating of some of these texts withholds certainty). Callirhoe is first introduced in terms which configure her as a religious and art object (*agalma* can mean cult statue) and which emphasise her beauty and the affinity with Aphrodite as well as extraordinary visual magnetism it gives her:

[40] As a sexually aggressive ancient graffito on the temple of Mars Ultor in Rome, which housed cult statues of Mars, Venus and Julius Caesar, demonstrates: cf. Boyle (2003) 179.
[41] Cf. Nasrallah (2010) 268.

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> θαυμαστόν τι χρῆμα παρθένου καὶ ἄγαλμα τῆς ὅλης Σικελίας. ἦν γὰρ τὸ κάλλος οὐκ ἀνθρώπινον ἀλλὰ θεῖον, οὐδὲ Νηρηΐδος ἢ Νύμφης τῶν ὀρειῶν ἀλλ' αὐτῆς 'Αφροδίτης [παρθένου].[42]
>
> This girl was an amazing example of femininity and an icon for all of Sicily, for her beauty was not merely mortal, but of a sort which is practically divine – again, not like the beauty of a Nereid or a mountain spirit, but like that of Aphrodite herself when she was in her prime (1.1.2).

In certain striking ways, I suggest, (and we shall come to the key differences shortly), Callirhoe is the novelistic counterpart of Phryne. Both possess phenomenal beauty for which they are renowned 'throughout the whole of Greece'.[43] Both (for different reasons) bear an uncanny resemblance to Aphrodite. 'Lady, when you see Aphrodite,' says Plangon to Callirhoe, 'you will seem to be looking at an image of yourself' (*eikona...seautes*, 2.2.3–6). Both have associations with Aphrodite that range from likeness to equivalence.[44] Both have intimate and complicated visual relationships with Aphrodite that involve them impersonating her (deliberately or not), and are complicated by visual simulacra of both themselves and the goddess.

As Froma Zeitlin puts it, there is a 'zone of confusion' that is created between Callirhoe as an apparent epiphany of the Aphrodite and Callirhoe as a statue, that is 'mediated through descriptions that recall famous works of art.'[45] This 'zone of confusion' resembles that created between Phryne, Aphrodite and the statue that signifies them both. However there are two moments in particular that in my view more markedly and pointedly fashion Callirhoe as shadowed by Phryne. The first is the display of a golden statue of Callirhoe, commissioned and dedicated by Dionysius, and situated next to the statue of Aphrodite in goddess's shrine (3.6.3). It is Callirhoe's image in this statue that Chaereas recognises and faints, but his reaction is

[42] The text here is uncertain; Goold retains παρθένου but brackets it: Goold (1995) 30.

[43] Callirhoe's beauty is described as '*epiphanesteron*' (4.7.5), the same adjective that is used of Phryne (see above, n. 1). The character Bacchis attributes Phryne's celebrity to her trial: 'that scene in court has made you famous not only in Athens, but throughout Greece' (Alciphron 4.4). Callirhoe's beauty is described as divine at: 1.14.1–2, 5.9.1, 6.3.4–5 and 6.5.2. On divine beauty and the heroines of the other Greek novels, see Jax (1933) and Scott (1938).

[44] For Callirhoe this is demarcated geographically. At the beginning and end of the novel, when she is in Syracuse, she is compared to Aphrodite; when she crosses the sea to Ionia, she is repeatedly mistaken for the goddess.

[45] Zeitlin (2003) 79.

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misinterpreted by the temple attendant as being one of awe, presuming he has seen Aphrodite herself (3.6.3–4). Even in the Roman period, golden statues of mortals (with the exception of some controversial images of emperors) were rare, and golden statues of women even rarer.[46] Of course, this serves to emphasise all the more Callirhoe's exceptional and divine beauty. However, it is also evocative of the famous gold statue of Phryne, fashioned by Praxiteles and dedicated to the temple of Apollo at Delphi some time during the fourth century: the earliest gold statue of a mortal woman known from classical antiquity. Sources differ about whether the statue was gilded or gold,[47] about its placement,[48] and about who dedicated it, the people of Delphi or Phryne herself.[49] Neither the statue nor its base with the inscription 'Phryne, daughter of Epikles, of Thespiae' survives, but it was clearly distinctive and notorious. It was, according to the Cynic Crates (or perhaps Diogenes the Cynic) 'a memorial to Hellenic decadence (*akrasia*).[50]

The second configuration that portrays Callirhoe through and against Phryne is the description of the woman bathing. Newly enslaved, Callirhoe is given a bath by her master's maidservants:

> εἰσελθοῦσαν δὲ ἤλειψάν τε καὶ ἀπέσμηξαν ἐπιμελῶς καὶ μᾶλλον ἀποδυσαμένης κατεπλάγησαν· ὥστε ἐνδεδυμένης αὐτῆς θαυμάζουσαι τὸ πρόσωπον ὡς θεῖον, <ἀ>πρόσωπον ἔδοξαν <τἄνδον> ἰδοῦσαι· ὁ χρὼς γὰρ λευκὸς ἔστιλψεν εὐθὺς παρμαρυγῇ τινι ὅμοιον ἀπολάμπων· τρυφερὰ δὲ σάρξ, ὥστε δεδοικέναι μὴ καὶ ἡ τῶν δακτύλων ἐπαφὴ μέγα τραῦμα ποιήσῃ.

> So Callirhoe went in and the maids anointed her with oil and carefully massaged it off and they were even more amazed by Callirhoe when they saw her undressed. When dressed they had been astonished by her face,

[46] Cf. Whitehorne (1975) and Keesling (2006).

[47] Pausanias says gilded, not golden (10.15.1), but Athenaeus describes it as gold (13.591b), as do Aelian (*Var. Hist.* 9.32) and Dio Chrysostom (*Or.* 37.2). Plutarch is inconsistent, referring to it as golden (*Mor.* 336c–d, 401d) and gilded (*Mor.* 753f).

[48] Pausanias has it standing next to statues of Apollo dedicated by the peoples of Epidaurus and Megara; Athenaeus says it was placed between portrait statues of Archedamus III of Sparta and Philip II; Plutarch variously as surrounded by portraits of generals and kings (*Mor.* 400f–401b) and placed among kings and queens (*Mor.* 753).

[49] Pausanias claims that Phryne dedicated to herself, whereas Athenaeus attributes the dedication to 'the neighbours' (*periktiones*), most probably the people of Delphi.

[50] Plut., *Mor.* 336d and 401a; Ath. 13.591b.

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> claiming that it was divine, but now seeing what was normally covered, they forgot about her face. For her skin was radiant in its white brilliance, shining out like a sparkling star. Her flesh was so delightfully soft that you would fear that even the touch of a finger would bruise it cruelly. (1.2.2)[51]

Richard Hunter is surely right to suggest that this description is evocative not just of any statue, but of the Aphrodite of Cnidos, versions of which showed Aphrodite with a towel, as if about to bathe.[52] Furthermore, in the final book of the novel, Callirhoe's beauty on returning home is commented upon: 'To them, Callirhoe seemed even more beautiful still, so that you would have said that you were seeing Aphrodite herself rising up out of the sea.' (8.6.11). This description is overtly reminiscent of the *Aphrodite Rising from the Sea* by Apelles. To be sure, there are other artistic scenes (notably that of the sleeping Ariadne) through which Callirhoe is envisaged. Indeed, Callirhoe is not so much described in the novel as supplemented (replaced, but with the original lack still drawn attention to) through images of statues and paintings. However, in these two descriptions she is described in terms of celebrated artistic representations of Aphrodite and, moreover, the very images of Aphrodite for which Phryne was said to have been the model. Phryne is an important intertextual figure for Callirhoe, the character who becomes an animation of the Aphrodite statue and painting for which the *hetaira* once modelled.

Various ramifications follow. First, an ontological anxiety about there being endless regression with no essential substance: that is, the possibility that one can never reach the original when one looks at a woman (or statue of a woman). Callirhoe is fashioned as the Aphrodite of Cnidos, who is modelled on Phryne.[53] This anxiety has ramifications beyond Chariton's text. Phryne's role as model can be seen as inverting, or perhaps adding an extra dimension to, the relations between woman and artwork commonly found in descriptions of beautiful women. For example, in Lucian's dialogues *Images* and *For Images*, Panthea, the *hetaira* and consort of the emperor Lucius Verus, is described as a bricolage of famous artworks. Her face, for example, is said to resemble that of the Cnidian Aphrodite. Whereas Phryne is the model (*archetupon*) for statues and paintings, statues and paintings are the models (*ta archeypta kai paradeigmata*, *For Images* 10) for Panthea. Panthea is an image or likeness (*eikon*) whose

[51] On the voyeurism of this scene see Elsom (1992) and Egger (1994).

[52] Hunter (1994) 1074–5. He also makes the point that the idea of flesh that would be bruised by a mere touch is a motif of naturalistic art criticism e.g., Herodas 4.59–62 and Ovid on Pygmalion and his statue: *Met.* 10.256–8. Cf. also Zeitlin (2003) 80.

[53] Cf. Steiner (2001) 295–304, Goldhill (2001) 184–93 and Vout (2007) 213–39 who also discusses the relationship between the dialogues and the Panthea and Araspas episodes of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*.

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physical appearance is a hybrid of descriptions of statues and paintings, 'to be portrayed each by itself in a single picture that is a true imitation of the model (*to archetupon*)', 15). Similarly, in Heliodorus' *Ethiopian Tales*, Charicleia, whose appearance has been shaped by her mother's looking at a painting of Andromeda during conception, is said to resemble the figure in the picture that is her model or prototype (*to archetupon*, 10.14.7). Phryne reminds us that there is another dimension to this relationship: that there can be a real woman behind the artwork that is in turn the model for real women. We might see the anxiety that this raises of there being no endpoint, no real *archetupon*, as an extreme case of what Tim Whitmarsh has called 'ekphrastic contagion', in which the features of ekphrastic description seep beyond their individual contexts and into the texts (and, I would add, world) at large.[54]

Second, seeing Callirhoe as a distorted Phryne increases, and gives some intertextual heft to, the narrative's flirtation with Callirhoe playing the courtesan. The 'compromised virgin' fantasy is a common motif in the ancient novel, with some heroines being enslaved in brothels, but still escaping with their chastity intact.[55] Callirhoe is not subjected to that (nor is she a virgin, but a twice-married woman), but her phenomenal beauty, her enslavement, and her being treated like 'property' by the pirates, lead to her public exposure and notoriety. Moreover, Callirhoe's explicit concern that Dionysius might treat her as a 'concubine' (*pallake*) instead of marrying her, envisages her in that role, even as she manages to avoid it in reality.[56] This is the duplicity (or, perhaps, hypocrisy) of the world of Aphrodite *parthenos*,[57] a paradoxical goddess whose literary predecessor, the Aphrodite who impersonated a *parthenos* in order to seduce the mortal Anchises in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, can be detected here.

The narrative responses to this characterisation impose limits upon the fantasy and upon how far Callirhoe's virtue is compromised. Unlike Phryne, whose beauty affords her enough wealth to rebuild the walls of Thebes and who takes delight in seducing lovers, Callirhoe is not allowed to 'own' her beauty, or to use it as a source of empowerment. A good example of this is her response when Dionysius insists that he has seen a goddess:

> Have you not heard what Homer teaches us?
> Like strangers from a foreign land, the gods
> bare both the insolence and the virtuousness of men. (2.3.7, quoting *Odyssey* 17, 485, 487).

[54] Whitmarsh (2002).
[55] Cf. Morales (2004) 218–20.
[56] *Callirhoe* 2.11.5; cf. also 3.1.6.
[57] *Callirhoe* 1.2. Cf. Heiserman (1977) 77 and Hunter (1994) 1076–7.

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> At this point, Callirhoe broke in and said, 'Stop mocking me and calling me a goddess when I am not even a particularly lucky mortal.' But when she spoke her voice sounded divine to Dionysius. (2.3.7–8)

Callirhoe is allowed no self-mastery here: both her appearance and her voice work against her being seen for whom she is. Her outstanding beauty causes men to fall in love with her but this is not something Callirhoe wants. She even prays to Aphrodite that she *not* attract any men other than Chaereas (2.2.8). Like Helen of Troy, she laments the 'treacherous beauty' (*kallos epiboulon*) that had brought calumny upon her (5.5.3–4).[58] Callirhoe's beauty is explicitly described in terms that connote political power (*edemagogasin*) and yet (unlike Phryne) she is not shown using, manipulating or owning that power. Kings and whole peoples prostrate themselves at her feet yet it is made clear that it is unwanted attention on her part. In fact the only episodes in which Callirhoe seems to own her beauty are those in which she gets married: in her wedding procession after she has prayed to Aphrodite to grant her Chaereas in marriage (1.1.7, 15–16), and later, preparing to marry Dionysius:

For the first time since being in the tomb, Callirhoe was all dressed in her finery, when once she had decided to get married, she thought that her beauty should be worthy of her noble family and fatherland (καὶ πατρίδα καὶ γένος τὸ κάλλος ἐνόμισεν). (3.2.16).

Callirhoe is only shown as collusive in her desirability when it is in the service of marriage, and even then her beauty betokens her fatherhood and lineage, rather than herself. The cry of the wedding crowd confirms her lack of individuality at this moment: 'It is Aphrodite who is getting married!' (3.2.17). In sum, we could say that the moral economy of the novel allows a woman of status to explore the fantasy of being so-beautiful-as-to-be-thought-divine if she sticks to certain rules that are in part generated by Callirhoe's responses to how she is viewed and described. These are that she can live the life of a divine beauty (an option not normally available to respectable women) if and only if she does not enjoy it, she disavows herself from it (her visual magnetism happens despite herself, not because of it) and she does not own the power that her beauty has the potential to afford her. Then and only then, can Callirhoe live (a version of) the life of Phryne.

The other narrative response to Callirhoe's having some of the characteristics and experiences of a *hetaira* is to insist on her elite status. Indeed, the narratives of Phryne

[58] Helen of Troy is an important figure for the characterisation of Callirhoe. Callirhoe is frequently fashioned as another Helen, but also, on occasion, as Penelope, with the intertextual resonances here underscoring the moral complexity of the character and her situation.

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and Callirhoe when juxtaposed reveal (and perpetuate) cultural anxieties about social status and visuality. To some of the characters in the novel, Callirhoe's tale is a journey 'from rags to riches'. The attendant at Aphrodite's shrine, where the statue of Callirhoe is also displayed, points to the statue and says to Chaereas: 'Do you see this gold statue? She was a slave, but Aphrodite has made her mistress of all of us.' (3.6.4). Of course the reader knows, for this is a common trope in the ancient novel, that the enslavement is temporary and that Callirhoe is really a woman of impeccable status, the general Hermocrates' daughter no less. Indeed, in the scopic economy of the Greek novels, beauty is an index of status: the elite are gorgeous and commoners are ordinary or ugly.[59] The moral of the narrative is unmistakable: it is only acceptable for a slave girl to become a goddess when the slave girl is not a slave girl at all, but a free born woman from an esteemed family.

Phryne's biography, in contrast, really does tell of a journey 'from rags to riches'; she was from a poor and unassuming family and earned her wealth through liaisons with the rich and famous men. One reason why the Phryne narratives are so compelling (and for some so disturbing) is that they fantasise about a woman being beautiful who is not a member of the social elite (or at least not the respectable social elite), and who is very far from chaste. In doing so they open up a space for questioning some of the easy equations promoted in the Greek novels. They also demonstrate the concerns that arise from the notion that beauty is an index of divinity. One of the logical ramifications of this cultural tenet is that beauty could enable a woman to overstep the boundaries of her social position, that it might be the social climber's golden ticket.

That Phryne provoked this anxiety is evident from a discussion in Plutarch's *Dialogue on Love* where the men are debating the pros and cons of a woman having wealth and status. One of the discussants aligns Phryne (whom he does not mention by name but it is clear to whom he is referring) with Bilistiche, a Macedonian ex-slave, *hetaira*, and lover of Ptolemy Philadelphus whom the king elevated to cult-status as Aphrodite-Bilistiche.[60] The speaker denounces them both and characterises them as base women (*paulos* at 753F has moral and class connotations) who have risen socially by exploiting weak and effeminate men:

> Ἡ δὲ Βελεστίχη, πρὸς Διός, οὐ βάρβαρον ἐξ ἀγορᾶς γύναιον, ἧς ἱερὰ καὶ ναοὺς Ἀλεξανδρεῖς ἔχουσιν, ἐπιγράψαντος δι' ἔρωτα τοῦ βασιλέως ''Ἀφροδίτης Βελεστίχης'; ἡ δὲ σύνναος μὲν ἐνταυθοῖ καὶ συνίερος τοῦ

[59] That beauty is an index of high social status is repeatedly emphasised throughout *Callirhoe*: cf. especially 1.1.6 and 2.1.5.

[60] See above and, on Bilistiche and her relationship with Ptolemy, cf. Cameron (1990) 295–304.

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Ἔρωτος, ἐν δὲ Δελφοῖς κατάχρυσος ἑστῶσα μετὰ τῶν βασιλέων καὶ βασιλειῶν, ποίᾳ προικὶ τῶν ἐραστῶν ἐκράτησεν;

Wasn't Bilistiche, by Zeus, a barbarian female bought in the market place, she to whom the Alexandrians now have shrines and temples dedicated through the king's lust to 'Aphrodite-Bilistiche'? And that temple-sharer over there, who shares worship with Eros, whose gilded statue stands at Delphi with those of kings and queens, what dowry did she have with which to gain power over her lovers? (*Mor.* 753e–f)

The Adventures of Phryne, a novel never written, but glimpsed through the pages of Chariton, could, in relation to social status at least, have been a much more radical one than that of *Callirhoe*.

In conclusion, if ekphrastic writing is 'an education in how to look',[61] then it is also, when what is described is a *person*, an education in *how to be looked at*: how to experience and manage one's place in the visual field. The descriptions of Callirhoe, read through and against those of Phryne, give some insight into the experience of ekphrasis from the perspective of the woman who is described. More broadly, this article has argued that the accounts of Phryne, as spectacle in the lawcourt and as artist's model for the Cnidian Aphrodite, can be read allegorically, about the operations of art and ekphrasis. Simon Goldhill asks 'What is ekphrasis *for*? His answer: that it is for the production of the sophisticated Roman viewing subject, 'a cultivated and cultured citizen of Empire'.[62] This article suggests that the ekphraseis of the Cnidia, when, *and only when*, read in the broader context of the discourse on Phryne, make this an ethical and political, as well as an aesthetic sophistication.

HELEN MORALES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

[61] Elsner (2002) 15.
[62] Goldhill (2007) 2 , 19.

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